



# State of Georgia Business Certification Program

## Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

### What is the new State of Georgia Business Certification program?

The new Georgia Business Certification program was established through [House Bill \(HB\) 128](#), which was signed by Governor Brian P. Kemp on **Monday, April 24, 2023**, in Augusta, Georgia! HB 128 is a direct response to the [Governor's executive order](#) issued on July 13, 2022, which directed the Department of Administrative Services (DOAS) to address challenges that small businesses, with a focus on **minority-owned, women-owned, and veteran-owned businesses**, experience in the state's procurement process.

The bill aims to expand DOAS' minority business enterprise certification program to include woman-owned and veteran-owned businesses. It also gives DOAS the authority to adopt policies to implement the certification program.

### When will the new certification program take effect?

The new business certification program is effective January 1, 2024.

### How does this program differ from the previous program?

Previously, Georgia law only authorized DOAS to certify small, minority-owned businesses that had been certified through the federal disadvantaged business enterprise (DBE) program. House Bill 128 amended Georgia law to remove the requirement that small, minority-owned businesses must meet the federal definition of a disadvantaged business enterprise. In addition, DOAS' certification authority was expanded from a single certification type to include six certification options:

- minority-owned
- veteran-owned
- woman-owned
- small, minority-owned
- small, veteran-owned
- small, woman-owned

### Who qualifies to apply for this certification?

Georgia-based minority-owned, woman-owned, and veteran-owned businesses can apply to obtain the state's business certification.

### What defines a minority-owned business?

A minority-owned business is any business that is at least 51% owned and controlled by one or more minorities and is authorized to do and is doing business under the laws of the State of Georgia, paying all taxes duly assessed, and domiciled within this State (O.C.G.A. Section 50-5-131). The State of Georgia recognizes five ethnic minority groups: African American, Asian-Pacific American, Asian-Indian American, Hispanic, and Native American.

### What defines a veteran-owned business?

A veteran-owned business is any business that is at least 51% owned and controlled by one or more veterans; and is authorized to do and is doing business under the laws of the State of Georgia, paying all taxes duly assessed, and domiciled within this State (O.C.G.A. Section 50-5-131). Veteran means an individual who served on active duty with the Army, Air Force, Navy, Marine Corps, Space Force, or Coast Guard for any length of time and did not receive a dishonorable discharge. Veteran also means an individual who served as a reservist or member of the National Guard who was called to federal active duty.

### What defines a woman-owned business?

A women-owned business that is at least 51% owned and controlled by one or more women and is authorized to do and is doing business under the laws of the State of Georgia, paying all taxes duly assessed, and domiciled within this State (O.C.G.A. Section 50-5-131).

### How can I obtain the state's business certification?

The certification process is a streamlined process that is being done through partnership with approved certifying organizations. In order to obtain the state of Georgia business certification, you must first apply and be approved by one of the following organizations.

- The **Georgia Department of Transportation** certifies Disadvantaged Business Enterprises (DBE). For information or to apply to be a DBE firm, please visit their website: <https://www.dot.ga.gov/>.
- The **Georgia Minority Supplier Development Council** certifies Minority Business Enterprise (MBE) firms. For more information or to apply to be an MBE, please visit their website: [www.gmsdc.org](http://www.gmsdc.org).
- The **Greater Women's Business Council** certifies Women Business Enterprise (WBE) firms. For more information or to apply to be a WBE, please visit their website: <https://gwbc.clubexpress.com>.
- The **National Veteran Owned Business Association** certifies Veteran Business Enterprises. For information or to apply for certification, please visit their website at <https://www.navoba.org/>.

- The **U.S. Small Business Administration** certifies Economically Disadvantaged Women-Owned Small Businesses (EDWOSB), Women-Owned Small Businesses (WOSB), Veteran-Owned Small Businesses (VOSB), and 8(a) Certified companies. For information or to apply for certification, please visit their website at [www.sba.gov](http://www.sba.gov).
- The **U.S. Pan Asian American Chamber of Commerce** certifies Asian American and other Minority-Owned businesses. For information or to apply for certification, please visit their website at <https://uspaacc.com/>.

### **How can I submit an application to receive the state's certification?**

To submit an application, please login to [Team Georgia Marketplace™](#) (TGM) and select the “**Business Certification**” tab to begin the process. If you are not yet registered in [Team Georgia Marketplace™](#), please select “**User Registration**” to register. Once you are registered in Team Georgia Marketplace™, you will be able to access the **Business Certification** tab to complete your application.

### **Is there a fee to apply for certification?**

No, there is no application fee to apply for certification through the Georgia Business Certification Program. For more information on the applicable fees (if any) for certification through one of the approved certifying organizations, please visit the organization's website for more information.

### **How long does it take to get certified?**

Please allow approximately 30 - 60 days from the date your application is submitted to receive a decision. You will be contacted if additional information is needed.

### **What should I do if I am already registered in TGM, but experiencing technical difficulties logging into my profile?**

If are already registered, and are having technical difficulties accessing your TGM profile, please contact the Procurement Helpdesk by sending an email to [procurementhelp@doas.ga.gov](mailto:procurementhelp@doas.ga.gov) or by telephone at (404) 657-6000.

### **Where can I obtain additional information regarding the State of Georgia Business Certification Process?**

Please visit our website at [www.doas.ga.gov](http://www.doas.ga.gov) for more information.