



# California Public Utilities Commission

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## General Order 156 – What is Certification?

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### What is General Order 156?

General Order (GO) 156 is a CPUC supervised voluntary Supplier Diversity Program. The program encourages active participation of the investor-owned utilities (IOUs) to procure or contract goods and services from women, minority, disabled veteran and/or LGBT- (lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender) owned business enterprises (WMDVLGBTBE).

### What is certification?

Certification is a verification process to confirm that a business is women, minority, disabled veteran and/or LGBT-owned.

### What are the benefits of certification?

- Provides official recognition of a business's WMDVLGBTBE status
- Serves as a conduit to meet private companies and government agencies
- Offers promotion and visibility to over thirty major IOUs that participate in the CPUC Supplier Diversity Program (GO 156)
- Provides access to resources, bid information and networking opportunities

### Why is certification important?

- IOUs can only include purchases with CPUC certified WMDVLGBTBE suppliers in its annual filings
- Provides third party verification of ownership/control of businesses and protects both the supplier and the IOU
- All IOUs use the CPUC Supplier Clearinghouse database when searching for diverse suppliers
- Local, regional and national referrals of WMDVLGBTBE among IOUs
- Access to IOUs sponsored educational/business development seminars, workshops, business development trainings etc.



### **Where can I get certified?**

The CPUC-supervised Supplier Clearinghouse certifies women, minority, and LGBT-owned business enterprises (WMLGBTBE). Disabled veteran-owned business enterprises (DVBE) are certified by the California Department of General Services.

### **What are the eligibility requirements for certification?**

- At least 51% owned by a WMLGBTBE
- The management-and daily business operations are controlled by one or more of those individuals

### **How long is the certification process?**

- Upon receipt of all the required documents, the process takes approximately 45 to 90 days. Factors that delay the process include:
  - Missing documents
  - Instances when supplemental/additional documents are required
  - Whether an on-site visit is necessary, or in the case of applicants outside of California, in lieu of an onsite visit, whether a comprehensive telephone interview is necessary

### **What is the fee for certification?**

- There is no fee for certification.

### **How long is my certification valid?**

- Up to three years.

### **Certification vs. Qualification**

**Certification:** a business verified by the Supplier Clearinghouse as a genuine diverse business enterprise.

**Qualification:** a diverse business that can successfully provide its capabilities that may include (but not limited to), a business plan, credentials, qualifications, and experience to those companies looking to procure products and services.

