General Order 156 – What is Certification?

What is General Order 156?

General Order 156 is a CPUC supervised voluntary procurement program. The program encourages active participation of the Investor-Owned Utilities (IOUs) to procure or contract goods and services from Women – Minorities – and Disabled Veteran Business Enterprises (WMDVBE).

What is certification?

Certification is one tool that may lead to meeting majority companies in the private sector and government agency's seeking to do business with WMBEs.

What are the benefits of certification?

- Official recognition of your Women- or Minority-owned business enterprise (WMBE) status
- Promotion and visibility to the CPUC and thirty four major utilities that participate in the CPUC supplier diversity program
- Involvement frequent marketing and bid announcement events

Why is certification important?

- Utilities can only include purchases with CPUC certified MWDVBE suppliers in its annual filings.
- Provides third party verification of ownership/control of businesses and protects both the supplier and the utility
- All Utilities utilize the CPUC Clearinghouse database when searching for diversity suppliers to include in bid opportunities
- Local, regional and national referrals of minority, women and disabled veteran owned businesses among utilities
- Access to utility sponsored educational/business development seminars, workshops, business development training.

What are the eligibility requirements for certification?
• At least 51% owned by a WMBE
• 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 required documents, the process takes approximately 45 days to 90 days. Factors that delay the process include:
  ➢ Which Verification Process the applicant will use;
  ➢ Missing documents required in the verification process;
  ➢ Questionable or inconsistent information on the application that may require supplemental documents;
  ➢ 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 with the applicant 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: Businesses verified by the Supplier Clearinghouse as a genuine diverse business enterprise.

Qualification: WMBE’s who can successfully provide capabilities which could include, (but not limited to) a business plan, credentials, qualifications, and experience for those companies looking to procure products and services from the WMBE supplier.