



December 16, 2025

Dear Firm Owner:

As you know, on October 3, 2025, the United States Department of Transportation ("USDOT") issued updated regulations that impact DBE certification by eliminating the presumption that firm owners are socially and economically disadvantaged based on their race or gender. This regulatory change requires that the Illinois Unified Certification Program ("ILUCP") to reevaluate the disadvantaged status of all its certified DBE firms and cannot set contract goals on new projects or count DBE participation on existing contracts until this reevaluation is completed.

The ILUCP remains committed to completing the reevaluation process as quickly as possible and resuming operation of the DBE program. **Owners of all DBE firms must provide a personal narrative to demonstrate that a majority of the owners of the firm are socially and economically disadvantaged individuals.** To complete this requirement and be reevaluated as a DBE firm, we ask that each of the socially and economically disadvantaged owners of your firm submit a Personal Narrative and Personal Net Worth Statement to their host agency **no later than January 31, 2026.** The Personal Narrative submission must:

- (1) demonstrate that the owner is socially and economically disadvantaged based on his or her own experiences and circumstances that occurred within American society, and without regard to race or sex;
- (2) establish the existence of disadvantage by a preponderance of the evidence based on individualized proof regarding specific instances of economic hardship, systemic barriers, and denied opportunities that impeded the owner's progress or success in education, employment, or business, including obtaining financing on terms available to similarly situated, non-disadvantaged persons;
- (3) state how and to what extent the impediments caused the owner economic harm, including a full description of type and magnitude, and establish the owner is economically disadvantaged in fact relative to similarly situated non-disadvantaged individuals; and
- (4) attach to the Personal Narrative a current Personal Net Worth Statement and any other financial information the owner considers relevant.

Please ensure that personal narrative and personal net worth statements are submitted by each of the socially and economically disadvantaged owners of the firm. In order to be a certified DBE, at least 51% of the firm's owners must be socially and economically disadvantaged. The determination of the firm will not be based in whole or in part on the race or sex of the owners.

All submissions will be reviewed and each firm that submits the required statements will be notified in writing whether the firm is recertified or decertified. **Any firm that fails to submit the required statements by January 31, 2026, will be ineligible for DBE participation until they submit the required documentation demonstrating DBE eligibility under the new standards.**

To help better serve you and all DBE firms, we ask that you complete and return the attached form as soon as possible to indicate whether or not you plan to submit a personal narrative and personal net worth statement for reevaluation. If you are not planning to submit for reevaluation, or for any reason no longer wish to participate in the DBE program, we ask that you let your host agency know right away.

The ILUCP remains committed to the DBE program and the important benefits it provides to the State of Illinois. We are here to assist you during this transition period. Additional information, including information on how to obtain individual assistance, can be found at <https://idot.illinois.gov/doing-business/certifications/dbe/il-ucp.html>. Please reach out to your host agency with any questions.

Sincerely,

The Illinois Unified Certification Program



**ALL OWNERS COMPLETE AND SIGN THE BELOW QUESTOINNAIRE
AND RETURN TO IDOT BY DECEMBER 31, 2025.**

Please mark and sign below the applicable box related to your intent:

☐ The 51% owner(s) of the firm **will** submit a Personal Narrative and updated Personal Net Worth (PNW) Statement for reevaluation of my DBE eligibility.

☐ I would like to be contacted for individual assistance with my Personal Narrative and PNW for submission.

Date: _____

Owner 1

Owner 2

Owner 3

Owner 4

** If more than 4 owners, please attach additional pages*

☐ The 51% owner(s) of the firm **will not** submit a Personal Narrative and updated Personal Net Worth (PNW) Statement for reevaluation of the firm's DBE eligibility. The undersigned acknowledge that if they do not submit a Personal Narrative and updated PNW Statement, they will not be eligible for DBE participation. The firm will still be permitted to participate as a prime or subcontractor on IL UCP projects.

Date: _____

Owner 1

Owner 2

Owner 3

Owner 4

** If more than 4 owners, please attach additional pages*

Return via email at DOT.Certification@illinois.gov, or via USPS at:

Illinois Department of Transportation
Bureau of Small Business Enterprises
2300 S. Dirksen Parkway Springfield, IL 62764