 Michigan Specific Women and/or Minority-Owned Business Certifications

Here at Foster Swift, we are committed to connecting our clients with resources to business certifications that are reflective of diversity, equity, and inclusion efforts. Please see the following list of Michigan specific women-owned and/or minority-owned business certifications available to entities in this state. If you are interested in seeking our assistance with gaining certification under any of these programs, please do not hesitate to reach out to us at the following contact information:

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***GREAT LAKES WOMEN’s business council***

The Small Business Association of Michigan (“**SBAM**”) partners with the Great Lakes Women’s Business Council (“**GLWBC**”) to offer its members a Women Business Enterprise (“**WBE**”) certification. The annual cost for the certification depends on the value of the business’ annual sales that year. It can range between $350.00 to $1,250.00 per year. Note that members of the SBAM can achieve a $100.00 discount due to SBAM’s partnership with GLWBC (see [Women Business Enterprise Certification - SBAM | Small Business Association of Michigan](https://www.sbam.org/women-business-enterprise-certification/)).

The requirements to qualify for the GLWBC’s WBE include the following: (1) your entity must be organized in the state of Michigan; (2) a woman must own 51% or more of the company’s equity interest; and (3) such woman must be either a United States citizen, a resident alien or other foreign person possessing a United States immigration visa, or a non-United States citizen operating a registered business within the state of Michigan.

The benefits for WBE certified companies may include: (a) access to contracting opportunities; (b) educational support through trainings, coaching, and mentoring programs; (c) opportunities to attend exclusive networking events; (d) expanded visibility in the corporate supply chain diversity; and (e) access to a list of over 10,000 certified WBEs to purchase services from or participate in partnerships with.

For more information about the GLWBC WBE certification, please see the following link: [Women Business Enterprise Certification - SBAM | Small Business Association of Michigan](https://www.sbam.org/women-business-enterprise-certification/).

***Michigan Minority Supplier Development Council***

The minority business enterprise (“**MBE**”) certification is available through the National Minority Supplier Development Council (“**NMSDC**”). In particular, Michigan’s Minority Supplier Development Council (“**MMSDC**”) is responsible for certifying NMSDC MBE-certified organizations throughout the state of Michigan. In order to qualify as an MBE, a business must verify that it is owned, managed, and controlled by a minority person.

From there, an eight-step process is required by MMSDC. First, interested applicants must attend a mandatory pre-certification briefing. This briefing is currently held virtually (though previously has been held in-person in Detroit, Michigan). The cost for a pre-certification briefing is $25.00. Next, after gathering information about the certification from the briefing, applicants must submit the application form, required documentation, and a non-refundable $350.00 fee. This step-by-step guide lists some of the information you may be expected to provide with your application: [Step-By-Step Guide to Application - Michigan Minority Supplier Development Council](https://minoritysupplier.org/for-mbes/step-by-step-guide-to-application/). After confirming the application is complete, MMSDC schedules a site visit to your organization. The minority owner must be present at the site during such visit. MMSDC will finalize the review of your application and you will receive an approval letter & invoice if you have been granted the certification. There is an appeal process (if appealed within 30 days of the decision) if your application is denied. Foster Swift is more than willing to assist with the application process post your pre-certification briefing.

In addition to the $25.00 pre-certification briefing and $350.00 non-refundable application fees, you will be expected to pay an invoice to MMSDC based on your entity’s gross annual sales. This invoice represents the recurring annual fee your enterprise will be required to pay in order to remain a certified MBE, as well.

The benefits to this certification through MMSDC and NMSDC include: (1) offering access to personalized events for MBEs to develop and make connections with other experts and peers in your industry; (2) listing your business in the national minority supplier database through NMSDC; and (3) growing your business through MMSDC resources, such as its Michigan’s Minority Business Development Agency (offering consulting services at minimum costs to MBEs) and using its Detroit riverfront office space for meetings.

For more information about the MMSDC’s MBE certification, please see the following link: [MBE Certification Process - Michigan Minority Supplier Development Council](https://minoritysupplier.org/for-mbes/mbe-certification-process/).

***Michigan State Housing Development Authority***

The Michigan State Housing Development Authority (“**MSHDA**”) certificate for an MBE and/or WBE was previously limited to companies operating in the construction trade industries, but now, the certifications are available to all companies, no matter the industry. The application is free to apply for.

The MSHDA MBE and WBE certifications require minority and/or female applicants to disclose the following in order to qualify for the certificates.

For all entity types: (1) evidence that the minority or female receives more than 51% of the net profits and losses attributable to the business, demonstrating a controlling interest in the entity; (2) the name of the person who controls the daily management and operation of the business, where control is defined as both the applicant’s participation in the daily management and operation of the business and evidence that the applicant can exercise authority to independently make significant decisions on behalf of the business; and (3) a copy of the entity’s articles of organization or incorporation; (4) a copy of the business’ license, if required for its specific trade; and (5) copies of the entity’s annual filings with the state of Michigan.

For sole proprietorships specifically: (1) an applicant’s race; (2) an applicant’s gender; and (3) a copy of the entity’s certificate of assumed name or certificate of the business’ “doing business as” name.

For limited liability companies and C corporations specifically: documentation about the entity demonstrating such variables, including the business’ bylaws or operating agreement, and any amendments thereto and minutes demonstrating the entity’s organization or incorporation.

For joint ventures and general or limited partnerships specifically: (1) the names of all general partners or joint venturers; (2) the minority status of all joint venturers or general partners; (3) indication of whether such people are minorities or not; (4) indication of such people’s gender; (5) the state name of minority group; and (6) the ownership interest of the general partners or joint venturers.

For more information about the MSHDA MBE and/or WBE certifications, please see this website: [MBE\_WBE\_Application\_Revised\_Feb\_28\_2019.pdf](https://www.michigan.gov/-/media/Project/Websites/mshda/assets/Folder2/MBE_WBE_Application_Revised_Feb_28_2019.pdf?rev=68b703fc0f2449119ec1632b1eab8687).

***Detroit Business Opportunity Program***

The Detroit Business Opportunity Program (“**DBOP**”) offers multiple certifications to Detroit businesses to promote the city’s growth. These include both an MBE and WBE certification, among eight others. Both applications MBE and WBE certification cost $250.00.

The criteria for the MBE and WBE certification include: (1) the applicant’s business is at least 51% minority-owned or women-owned, as applicable; (2) a woman or minority person, as applicable, is in control of all decisions concerning the business; (3) a majority of the member/management positions are held by a woman or women, or a minority person or persons, as applicable; and (4) the business has satisfied all other requirements administered by the Department of Civil Rights, Inclusion & Opportunity.

Applicants will also need to submit the following documentation: (a) a signed operating agreement or bylaws for the relevant entity; (b) a notarized affidavit of the applicant’s application page; (c) a MBE or WBE declarations page; (d) city and federal tax information; and (e) a copy of their company’s lease or deed.

The benefits to being a DBOP-certified MBE and/or WBE include: (1) exclusive member appreciation events; (2) networking & capability-building opportunities; and (3) visibility on the City of Detroit’s website, among others.

For more information about the DBOP certifications, please see the following link: [Detroit Business Opportunity Program | City of Detroit](https://detroitmi.gov/departments/civil-rights-inclusion-opportunity-department/detroit-business-opportunity-program#:~:text=The%20Detroit%20Business%20Opportunity%20Program,and%20manages%20the%20recertification%20process.).

***Grand Rapids Chamber’s Diverse Business Enterprise Certification***

The Grand Rapids Chamber’s Diverse Business Enterprise (“**DBE**”) certification program is open to minority, veteran, women, tribal, disability, and LGBTQIA+ owned businesses in the Grand Rapids area. The goal of this certification is to increase transparency of diverse businesses and create opportunities for procurement with supplier diversity programs with the city’s largest companies. By having the support of the Grand Rapids Chamber, businesses have an edge over their competitors as they bid for contracts with other local organizations.

In order to qualify for this DBE certification, an entity must: (1) be doing business in the West Michigan region; (2) be 51% owned or controlled by a person who can be placed in one of the following categories: (a) veteran, (b) woman, (c) tribal, (d) recognized minority, such as Native American, African-American, Hispanic-American, Asian/Pacific-American, or Asian/Indian-American), (e) member of the LGBTQIA+ community, and/or (f) person experiencing a disability (as defined by the Americans with Disabilities Act); (3) be a for-profit entity; and (4) have been doing business for at least three months at the time such organization applies for the certification. Entities that may qualify under more than one diverse category are open to apply for multiple recognitions.

We note the West Michigan region includes, but is not limited to, the following counties: Allegan, Barry, Calhoun, Cass, Eaton, Ionia, Kent, Kalamazoo, Montcalm, and Ottawa. This certification is available to for profit businesses in any industry. There is no application fee for the DBE certification, though businesses are expected to annually renew the certification to upkeep it.

For additional information about the Grand Rapids Chamber’s DBE certification, please visit the following website: [Diverse Business Enterprise Certifications - Grand Rapids Chamber](https://grandrapids.org/diverse-business-enterprise-certifications/).