



October 14, 2025

Dear Firm Owner:

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. Under the new rules that USDOT states are effective immediately, the Illinois Unified Certification Program ("ILUCP") is required to reevaluate the disadvantaged status of **all currently certified DBE firms** to determine whether they can be recertified under the new rule. Until this reevaluation is completed for the ILUCP, contract goals may not be set.

In order to complete the reevaluation as quickly as possible and resume 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 recertified as a DBE firm, each of the socially and economically disadvantaged owners of your firm must submit a Personal Narrative and Personal Net Worth Statement to their host agency **no later than 5:00 p.m., Central Standard Time, November 24, 2025.** The 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.

Enclosed with this letter is information about how to submit the personal narrative and statement of personal net worth and anticipated questions and answers related to the personal narrative and statement of personal net worth. Please ensure that personal narrative and personal net worth statements are submitted by each of the socially and economically disadvantaged owners of

October 14, 2025

Page 2

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 disadvantage 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 5:00 p.m., Central Standard Time, November 24, 2025 will be decertified** and will need to reapply for DBE certification to resume participation in the DBE program. Please submit your personal narrative and personal net worth statements to your host agency by following the instructions attached to this letter.

The ILUCP Partners remain 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. An informational meeting hosted by the Illinois UCP about the reevaluation process is scheduled for October 17, 2025 at 3:00 p.m. at Malcolm X College, 1900 W. Jackson Blvd., Chicago, IL 60612. Additional webinars and workshops are being scheduled and more information about those events can be found at <https://idot.illinois.gov/doing-business/certifications/dbe/il-ucp.html>. Individualized assistance is also available through each agency. Please reach out to your host agency with any questions.

Sincerely,

The Illinois Unified Certification Program

