



USDOT Rule Change for DBE/ACDBE Programs

We are contacting you to share important news about the Disadvantaged Business Enterprise (DBE) and Airport Concession Disadvantaged Business Enterprise (ACDBE) certification programs. We will cover several topics, in as much detail as we can provide at this time:

1. Federal rule change by the U.S. Department of Transportation
2. Upcoming DBE Listening Session – [Register via Zoom](#)
3. Suspicious email sent to DBEs and ACDBEs

Federal rule change summary

USDOT recently issued an interim final rule (IFR) that went into effect on Oct. 3, 2025. The full text of the IFR is available in the [Federal Register](#). This rule change removes race- and gender-based presumptions of social and economic disadvantage in the federal DBE and ACDBE programs.

We understand that this raises many questions for certified businesses, applicants, and our partners. OMWBE is working with the Washington State Department of Transportation to evaluate this rulemaking, its implications, and associated timelines. We will provide additional information and guidance with you as soon as possible.

What is changing?

- In the past, certain groups (such as women and federally recognized minority business owners) were automatically presumed disadvantaged.
- Under the new rules, Unified Certification Programs (UCPs) may no longer rely on race- or gender-based presumptions when determining DBE/ACDBE eligibility.
- The new rules state all new applicants and currently certified firms must provide documentation showing they meet both social and economic disadvantage criteria.
- UCPs, including OMWBE, must re-evaluate the eligibility of all currently certified DBEs and ACDBEs.

What to expect from OMWBE?

- **Clear guidance:** OMWBE will publish updates through our website, the Access Equity certification portal, and direct communication.
- **Staff preparedness:** Our team will be briefed on the most current information available, to ensure you receive accurate and uniform answers to your questions.
- **Support:** As federal guidance is released and best practices emerge across states, we will keep you informed and provide the tools you need to navigate this change.

Frequently Asked Questions

What does this mean for my current certification?

We are reviewing the rule to understand its impact on existing certifications. At this time, no immediate action is required from you. When updates or documentation are needed, we will communicate next steps directly and provide clear instructions.

Do I need to reapply right now?

No. You do not need to take any immediate action. We are reviewing the published rule and will provide instructions when new documentation is required.

What if I have questions about how the rule applies to me?

Our staff are available to answer your questions, but please know that we may not have every detail yet. We are coordinating with WSDOT to share new information as soon as it is available.

Is OMWBE coordinating with other states?

Yes. We are actively monitoring implementation of this rule change across the country and coordinating with other states to ensure a consistent approach.

DBE Listening Session

WSDOT and OMWBE are hosting a joint DBE Listening Session to discuss the interim final rule issued by USDOT, and what it means for DBE and ACDBE certified businesses. We will share the information available to us at this time. This meeting will not be recorded.

When: Thursday, Oct. 16, 2025 | 10-11 a.m.

Where: Zoom Webinar virtual meeting

[Register Now](#)

What else should I know?

Over the past week, many DBE and ACDBE certified businesses reported receiving an email from an entity called “WriteMyNarrative.” This email references the federal rule change and offers business owners a free tool to draft Personal Narratives.

We advise you to take caution with this email, which appears to be marketing spam.

Facts about the email:

- This company is not affiliated with OMWBE or WSDOT.
- There are no public details about who owns the website.
- We do not know how the information collected by WriteMyNarrative will be used, and by whom. Please take caution to protect your privacy.

Terms & Acronyms

- IFR – Interim Final Rule
- UCP – Unified Certification Program
- DBE – Disadvantaged Business Enterprise
- ACDBE – Airport Concession Disadvantaged Business Enterprise
- OMWBE – Office of Minority and Women’s Business Enterprises
- WSDOT – Washington State Department of Transportation
- USDOT – United States Department of Transportation

We recognize that this change may be stressful and appreciate your patience while we gather the answers you need. Please expect to hear from OMWBE soon.