

Online Application



This instruction guide is for currently certified firms seeking renewal and firms applying for the first time. The information presented is drawn from example scenarios and may not exactly match your situation. Refer to your specific online application for instructions. If you require assistance with completing the applications or have questions about your eligibility, contact the organization.

Getting Started

As part of the application process, you will be required to answer questions and provide documentation that is considered private and confidential. For this reason, you must use a user account to log into the system. Access to your application is strictly limited to the person that creates the application (you), any other specific company staff you authorize (always create new accounts for other employees, do not share accounts), and certification/support staff that you specifically authorize.

The application system is secure. All communications between you and the system are encrypted, your company information is stored on computer servers in a secure facility, and confidential data is encrypted at all times.

Access the online certification application system

Navigate via the organization's website to the start of the online application process and select one of the three options.

To continue, please select an option below:

Option 1	Option 2	Option 3
Recertification	Recertification	New Certification
Your firm is currently certified and you know your username and password to access this system.	Your firm is currently certified and you do not know your username and password to access this system.	Your firm is not currently certified.
» Login	» Lookup Account	Create Account

After logging in to your account, click the **Apply for Certification** link on the right side of the page or select **View > My Certifications** from the left menu. If you have questions about this process or need more information, please contact [Customer Service](#).

1. If you have accessed this system before for certification or other related function (contract/concession compliance, vendor registration) and know your username and password, select **Option 1** and login. Continue to "Accessing the Application".
2. If you have never accessed this system before but are currently certified by this agency, an account has already been created for your firm. Select **Option 2**.
3. If you are not currently certified with this agency, select **Option 3**. You will be able to create a new account for your firm. During the process, if a match is found with an existing record, you will be alerted. Once the new account is created, you will be automatically redirected to the start of the certification application.

NOTE: Some organizations require that all firms seeking business with them must submit a separate vendor registration through this same system. These registrations are unrelated to applications for certification, but must be completed prior to starting the online application. In these cases, you will be automatically redirected to the vendor registration form upon login. Complete the form and then follow the link at the end to the certification process.

Account Lookup

On the Account Lookup page (Option 2), enter information about your firm into one or more fields and click **Search**. Click **Username/Password Reminder** in the Search Results for an immediate username/password notice.

Search Results	
Business	Contact Person
Bilingual Yellow Pages	[Request New User]
» Contact Person	[Username/Password Reminder]
E: test@ test3.com	[Change Info]
P: 555-555-5555 F: 555-555-5555	
A: 3200 E. Airfield Drive, DFW Airport, TX	
Corporate Communications Center, Inc.	[Request New User]
» Contact Person	[Username/Password Reminder]
E: test@ test25.com	[Change Info]
P: 555-555-5555 F: 555-555-5555	
A: 3200 E. Airfield Drive, DFW Airport, TX	

Search Tips

On the Account Lookup page, enter information about your firm into one or more fields and click **Search**. Click **Send Reminder** in the Search Results for a username/password notice.

- **Start with one parameter.** Usually you can find the record you are looking for by using one or two parameters. The more specific your search terms, the less likely you are to find the record because of spelling, order, or other variations in your search.
- **Keep search parameters short.** Use “ACME” instead of “ACME Construction, Inc.” You can even use partial words, such as “enviro” instead of “environmental consultant.”
- **All searches are wildcard.** “ACM” and “CME” will return ACME.
- **The system ignores punctuation.** C. C. is the same as C C; C & C is treated the same as C and C.
- **Searches are not case sensitive.** ACME is treated the same as acme.
- When searching by first name, be aware that users may be listed by alternate names. For example: James, Jim, Jimmy, or J.

Common Issues Encountered

I can't find my company.

All companies currently certified with the organization are in the system. Try different search criteria.

I didn't receive the username/password email.

Check your spam folder in case the system message has been blocked. Look for emails from the organization.

My contact information listed in incorrect.

Click **Change Info** to the right of your name and submit the form on the next page. Customer Support will update your account so that you can access the system.

My company is listed, but I am not personally listed.

Another representative of your company is currently authorized to access the system. Account sharing is not permitted under any circumstance. To add an account for your use, ask a current authorized user to add an account for you, or click the **Request New User** link to the right of your company's name and submit the form on the next page.

The person listed for my company is no longer with the business.

Click **Request New User** and submit the form on the next page to request a new user account. Once you login, any old user accounts can be deactivated.

Accessing the Application

If you started with Options 1 or 3 on the start page, you will be automatically directed to the list of available certification applications. Otherwise, click **Apply for Certification** after you login on the right side of the Dashboard.

NOTE: Some organizations require the submission of a vendor registration form prior to the certification application; complete the registration form and continue to the application list by using the link on the final page of the registration.

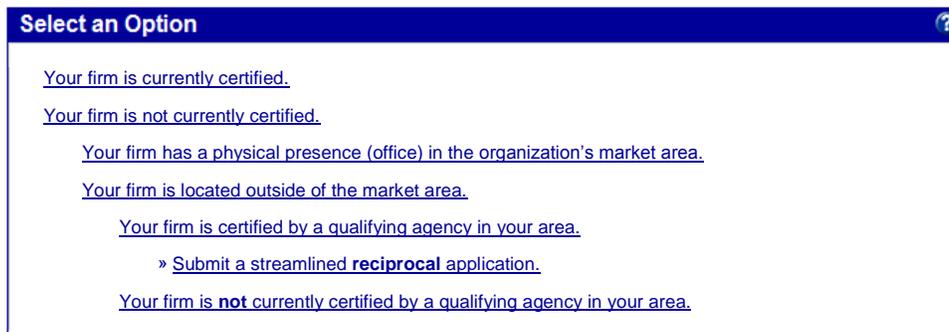
In the Select an Option list, click the options that apply to your firm. The page will expand to offer additional options as it guides you to the correct application.

Initial view for a sample scenario. Not all users will see the same options.



The screenshot shows a blue header bar with the text "Select an Option" and a question mark icon on the right. Below the header, there are two blue links: "Your firm is currently certified." and "Your firm is not currently certified."

View after selecting multiple options



The screenshot shows a blue header bar with the text "Select an Option" and a question mark icon on the right. Below the header, there are seven blue links: "Your firm is currently certified.", "Your firm is not currently certified.", "Your firm has a physical presence (office) in the organization's market area.", "Your firm is located outside of the market area.", "Your firm is certified by a qualifying agency in your area.", "» Submit a streamlined reciprocal application.", and "Your firm is not currently certified by a qualifying agency in your area."

NOTE: If unsure of which application to submit, contact the organization before starting the process. Submitting the incorrect application form will result in processing delay and possible denial.

Company & Contact Information

To create an application, you will need to select a company type and application auto-fill option. The company type is used to customize the questions and documents on the application form. The auto-fill option provides the opportunity to use another application to fill in the questions on the form, saving time and effort in completing the process.

Eligibility Requirements

At the bottom of the application start page is a list of eligibility requirements. Review each carefully and select an answer. Click **Continue** when ready to proceed. If any of the answers are incorrect, you will be prevented from continuing. Consider carefully the explanation noted. You can return to the list and resubmit, but if your firm and its ownership are not qualified for certification, it will be denied.

Eligibility Requirements	
Is your firm at least 51%-owned by a socially and economically disadvantaged individual(s) who also controls the firm?	<input type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> No
Are the owners U.S. citizens or lawfully admitted permanent residents of the U.S.?	<input type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> No
Is your firm a small business that meets the Small Business Administration's (SBA's) size standard and does not exceed \$22.41 million in gross annual receipts for firms applying for DBE certification.	<input type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> No
Is your firm organized as a for-profit business?	<input type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> No
Does the personal net worth (PNW) of any socially and economically disadvantaged owner exceed \$1.32 million with regulatory exclusions?	<input type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> No

Document List Preview

Before the application is created, you will be shown a list of documents that must be submitted with your application. If you are unable or unwilling to provide the required documentation, your application will be denied. Check the box at the bottom of the page and click **Create Application** to continue.

Always Required Documents		
All always required documents must be provided with the application. Failure to submit an always required document will result in a delay in processing and/or could result in denial.		
Document	Download File	Document Description
Notarized Personal Financial Statement with appropriate supporting documentation.	Download	Must be attached by all owners upon which disadvantaged status is being relied (\$1% or greater ownership must be represented by the submitted forms). Download, complete, notarize and attach.
Year-end balance sheets and income statements for the past three years (or life of firm, if less than three years); a new business must provide a current balance sheet.		
Your firm's tax returns (gross receipts) and all related schedules for the past three years.		If firm is a sole proprietorship or is less than three year old, attach personal tax returns in lieu of business returns.
Personal tax returns for the past three years, if applicable, for each owner claiming disadvantaged status		
Descriptions of all real estate (including office/storage spaces, etc.) owned/leased by your firm and documented proof of ownership/signed leases		Attach copies of signed lease or purchase/title agreement(s) for all facilities used by the firm. If you business is operated out of your primary residence, attach a statement of this arrangement.
Documented proof of contributions used to acquire ownership for each owner (e.g. both sides of cancelled checks)		
Bank authorization and signatory cards		
Schedule of salaries (or other compensation or remuneration) paid to all officers, managers, owners, and/or directors of the firm		

Required Documents		
Required documents must be provided when applicable to your firm. Failure to submit a required document without an explanation as to why any such attachment was not provided will result in a delay in processing and/or could result in denial.		
Document	Download File	Document Description
Trust agreements held by any owner claiming disadvantaged status, if any.		
All relevant licenses, license renewal forms, permits, and haul authority forms.		
Additional supporting documentation not listed above		

Check this box and click **Continue** to start the application process.

Document list displayed is sample and will not match your application.

Answering Questions

The application questions are grouped into sections. You can complete the sections in any order, and the questions in each section can be answered in any order. Every time you take action, a draft of the application is saved, permitting you to return to the application in the future for convenience or if you are timed out of the system.

Click the **Process** button for a particular section to begin. Questions highlighted in red are required and must be answered. Questions highlighted in yellow are optional and should be answered if applicable to your firm. Once all required questions are complete, the section status will change to complete. When all sections and the document list are complete, the entire application is completed and can be signed and submitted.

The screenshot shows the application interface with three buttons at the top: 'Save Draft', 'Save & Return', and 'Cancel'. Below the buttons is a 'Section Status' section with a blue header and a red bar. It displays 'Section 1: General Information Section Status' as 'Incomplete' with a red bar. Below this, it shows '- 5 incomplete out of 5 required' and '- 3 incomplete out of 3 optional'. The 'Section Questions' section has a blue header and a red bar for '1.A. Legal Name of Firm *' with a text input field containing 'Prime Contracting, Inc.'. Below that is a yellow bar for '1.B. DBA Name' with a text input field containing 'PrimeCo'.

Some questions are formatted as a table to permit multiple lines to be entered. Fill in the fields for a line and click the **Add more lines; save page** link to save the data and add more blank lines to the table. To remove a line, delete the data from all fields and save.

The screenshot shows the 'Section Questions' section with a blue header and a red bar for '2.A. List of Owners of the Company *'. Below this is a table with columns: Name, Status, Gender, Ethnic Group, Date of Ownership, Ownership Percentage, and Voting Percentage. The table has two rows, each with empty input fields. Below the table is a link: 'Add more lines; save page' to add blank lines. Delete data from all fields in a line and save page to clear line.

Security

The application system is secure. All communications between you and the system are encrypted, your company information is stored on computer servers in a secure facility, and confidential data is encrypted at all times. Access to your application is strictly limited to the person that creates the application (you), any other specific company staff you authorize (always create new accounts for other employees, do not share accounts), and certification/support staff that you specifically authorize.

Seeking Assistance

During the application process, you may require assistance. To contact Customer Support, click the **Customer Support** link at the top or bottom of every page. Type the issue and click **Send**. Your query will be routed to the appropriate staff use for response. The more detailed your submission, the faster the support team will be able to determine a resolution and respond to your query.

ONLINE APPLICATION

Your application is secure and visible only to you. If it is necessary for support staff to access the application, they will request that you grant access to the application for a specific period of time. To grant access, click the **Utilities** tab at the top of the page while in the application. Select a staff contact from the drop down, duration to authorize access, and click **Grant Access**. The user will receive an email alert. You can revoke access at any time.

The screenshot shows a web interface for managing certification actions. At the top, a blue header bar contains the text "Certification Actions" and a help icon. Below this, there are two input fields: "Date for Deletion" with the value "7/15/2011 (Extend)" and "Contact Person" with the value "Dawn Anderson" and a link "(Add user not on list)". Below these fields, there is a "Grant Access To" section with a dropdown menu set to "Select a user", a "for" dropdown set to "1 day", and a "Grant Access" button. Below the dropdown menu, an "Access List" is visible, showing "No other users currently authorized to view" and a list of users: "Prime Contracting, Inc. - Kathleen Jones", "Prime Contracting, Inc. - Mary Johnson", "Prime Contracting, Inc. - Richard Williams", and "Prime Contracting, Inc. - Robert Samson".

NOTE: You must submit your application by the listed "Date for Deletion" as organizations require that submissions use up-to-date forms and document. If you need a few days more, you may be able to self-extend the date by click the **Extend** link on the **Utilities** tab. Once your application is automatically deleted, you must start again.

Supporting Documents

Your application requires submission of certain documents. The documents required are based upon your company type and can be submitted in electronic or hardcopy.

Please note that as a condition of your application for certification, you are required to maintain in your office the original documents provided. The agency will review these original documents, including the signed and notarized certification affidavit, during the site visit, if applicable. Furthermore, the agency reserves the right to inspect in person and/or request original documents by mail of any supporting document at any time during the term of certification.

When you first view the document list, you will be required to select electronic or hardcopy format. All documents must be submitted in the same format. If you decide that you would prefer to use the other format after making an initial selection, you can clear the list at any time and repeat the process.

Always Required vs Required Documents

The documents listed are split into two sections. All documents must be attached or marked as Not Applicable to complete the application.

1. **Always Required** documents must be provided with your application. There are no exceptions and failure to provide all of these documents will result in an immediate delay in the processing of your application.
2. **Required** documents must be provided if applicable to your firm. Review the document type and included notes to determine the relevance of the document. If the staff reviewer determines that a document not provided is needed, they will contact you to obtain the file, resulting in a delay in the processing of your application. If a document is not applicable to your firm, you must mark it **Not Applicable**.

Attaching Electronic Documents

To attach an electronic file, click the **Attach** link. In the popup window (you may need to allow your Internet browser to permit popup windows), click the **Browse** button to find the relevant file. Click **Attach File** to upload to your application; for larger files it may take several minutes for the process to complete. You can

Always Required Documents	
Attach (Refresh)	Document (Refresh)
Attach	Affidavit of Recertification
Attach	Personal Financial Statement

upload as many files as needed for a particular document type. Once the file is uploaded and listed on the page, you can close the window. On the document list, click **Refresh** to update the status of the list.

Acknowledging Hardcopy Documents

If you choose to provide your documentation in hardcopy format, you must still acknowledge the documents. Click the checkbox next to each file you will be providing and click **Acknowledge**. When you are ready to submit the application, a cover page and document list will be provided for your package.

Always Required Documents	
Mark as Acknowledged	Document
<input type="checkbox"/>	Affidavit of Recertification
<input type="checkbox"/>	Personal Financial Statement

File Limitations of Electronic Documents

The types of files that you can attach are restricted to maintain system security. We recommend that you use PDF, DOC, XLS, and JPG formatted files. Other files types may not be easily readable by staff and may delay the review of your application.

Attached files are limited to 10 MB. This is not a limitation of the system, but a reasonable maximum size that staff users are able to open and view on their computers. Larger files cannot be easily read or printed. If your electronic files exceed the 10MB limit, you will need to rescan at a lower resolution or compress the file.

Signing the Application

Once all sections and the document list have been completed, you will be able to access the **Signature** tab. Type your name as a digital representation of your signature, your title, confirm the date and company name, and click **Sign Application**. You will be automatically redirected to the application submission page.

*** required entry**

Electronic Signature	
Signature * (type your name)	Bill Johnson
Your Title *	President
Your Organization *	Prime Contracting, Inc.
Today's Date *	4/16/2011 (mm/dd/yyyy)

By electronically signing this certification application, I hereby attest that the information contained herein and attached in electronic format is accurate and correctly represents the business, its owners, and its management.

NOTE: If you need to make a change to your application after signing but before submitting, return to the **Signature** tab and click **Clear Signature**.

Submitting the Application

Click **Submit Application** to send your application. The page will refresh and you will be displayed final information based on your document format choice.

NOTE: Once submitted, you cannot edit or recall your application.

For Hardcopy Documents

Because you chose to submit your supporting documents in hardcopy format, there is an additional step required.

Use the links displayed in the **Required Actions** section to download and print final documentation. The Supporting Document List link will provide a printable checklist that you can use to ensure that all documents are provided.

Order the documents according to the list, place the printed Supporting Document List on top, then the Cover Page on the top of the packet. Seal the documents in a secure envelope. Send or drop off the package at the address listed at the bottom of the cover page.

Your application will not be reviewed until all documents are received. A weekly reminder will be sent until you provide the documents.

For Electronic Documents

There is nothing further to do. Your application will be received by staff and processed.

Click **BUTTON** to view the full application to print or convert to PDF for saving.

Required Actions	
Cover Page	View and Print Cover Page <small>(Click Back on your browser after printing to return to this page)</small>
Affidavit of Recertification	View and Print (for ALL disadvantaged owners who qualify the company as a DBE) <small>(Document will open in new window.) (This document must be printed, completed, signed, and notarized.)</small>
Personal Financial Statement	View and Print (for ALL disadvantaged owners who qualify the company as a DBE) <small>(Document will open in new window.) (This document must be printed, completed, and signed.)</small>
Supporting Documents	View and Print Supporting Document List <small>(Click Back on your browser after printing to return to this page)</small>

[View and Print Application For Your Records](#)

Application Review Process

Once received, your application will be closely reviewed by staff. The application form and supporting documents will be read closely to verify if your firm meets or continues to meet the requirements for certification.

During this review, additional information is often identified as necessary. Staff will create a "Question" in the system for you to answer, which may also require submission of additional documentation. You will receive a notification when a question is asked. The response must be submitted within the system as the question and answer may contain confidential data and are not for disclosure outside the security of your account. The review of your application may be suspended if you do not respond to the question in a timely manner.

To response to a question, access the application and click the **Q&A** tab. Click the question to be answered in the list.

Questions						
Question	Status	Request Date	Due Date	Doc Req'd	Sent To	Actions
Please provide a resume for the new owner "Dawn Anderson" listed in the application.	Pending Applicant Response	4/16/2011	4/23/2011	Yes	Dawn Anderson	Answer
The tax return is missing a signature. Please sign and reattach to this question.	Pending Applicant Response	4/16/2011	4/23/2011	Yes	Dawn Anderson	Answer

Answer the question, attach any requested documentation, and submit the response. If you chose hardcopy documentation, you will be presented with a cover page after submitting the answer for you to include with your document submission.

Your response to the question has been saved.

You must now view and print the cover page (click Print Cover Page button below), add all hardcopy documentation required, and mail or drop off the package at the location indicated on the bottom of the cover page.

The review of your application will continue only after receipt of your documents.

[Print Cover Page](#)

Returned Applications

If you have not provided key information on the application, the organization may not consider it to be a valid submission. In this case, the organization might "return" the application to you for further review and resubmission. You will receive an email alert if this happens along with a reason for the action. Follow the instructions provided to resubmit.

Ineligible Applications

If your firm does not meet the basic eligibility criteria for certification but you still submit and application, the organization may mark your application as "ineligible" and apply a penalty time period during which you cannot reapply. In this circumstance, you will receive an email alert along with a reason. No further action can be taken on the application, although you may contact the organization for further explanation and clarification.

Unresponsive Applications

If you choose to submit the supporting documentation in hardcopy format, you are required to provide the files within a certain time period during which you cannot reapply. In this circumstance, you will receive an email alert along with a reason. No further action can be taken on the application.

What is the status of my application?

Throughout the process, you will receive notifications when status changes. This status can also be viewed on the application in the system. At the conclusion of the application review, you will receive a letter noting the final decision.