

Disadvantaged Business Enterprises (DBE) rule revision notice

The U.S. Department of Transportation (USDOT) has revised its Disadvantaged Business Enterprises (DBE) rules. The revised rules became effective on October 3rd, 2025, the day that the new rules were published in the Federal Register. You can find the newest revisions on the [Federal Register website](#).

Under the DBE program, MaineDOT, as a recipient of USDOT funding, has been required to set goals for participation in federally-funded projects by small businesses owned and controlled by "socially and economically disadvantaged" individuals. Until the USDOT's October 3rd rule change, women and certain racial and ethnic groups were presumed to be socially and economically disadvantaged under USDOT's DBE rules.

USDOT's October 3rd rule made some significant changes to the DBE program, including eliminating this presumption and creating new criteria for showing social and economic disadvantage based on individual factors unrelated to race, ethnicity, or sex. The new rule also requires MaineDOT to re-evaluate all current DBEs under the new criteria and to recertify only those that meet the new standards. Businesses that cannot show that they meet the new standards will be decertified as DBEs, or if they are a new applicant, will not be certified as a DBE.

While USDOT's new rule leaves a number of unanswered questions, we wanted to provide you with information that is available to us at this point since contracts for your work on MaineDOT projects include DBE program requirements.