

# I'm Certified. Now What?

Certification as a Small Business (SB) or Disabled Veteran Business Enterprise (DVBE) is only the first step to obtain a contract with the state.

## List the right keywords and UNSPSC classifications

State agencies use keywords and UNSPSC classifications to find certified businesses that provide the goods or services they need.

- Think about what a buyer would search for to find your business.
- List synonyms and different versions of keywords – for example, *bulb* **and** *lights*, or *paper* **and** *ream*, or *electricity* **and** *electrical*.
- Explore UNSPSC categories at [dgsapps.dgs.ca.gov/PD/UNSPSCSearch](https://dgsapps.dgs.ca.gov/PD/UNSPSCSearch). List relevant *class* and *commodity* codes.
- Compare your keywords and UNSPSC classifications to your competitors. Go to [caleprocure.ca.gov](https://caleprocure.ca.gov), click *Quicklinks* and then *Find certified SB/DVBE*. Type a keyword and click *Search* to view businesses that list that keyword on their profiles.
- Log on to Cal eProcure and click *Amend SB/DVBE* on your profile page to update your keywords and UNSPSC classifications.

## Sign up for notifications on [caleprocure.ca.gov](https://caleprocure.ca.gov)

Get notified of opportunities for your business's products and services listed on Cal eProcure. When new solicitations list a specific keyword or UNSPSC, you can receive automatic notifications by email.

- In the top right of Cal eProcure, click your user name, then click *Manage notifications*. Under *UNSPSC section*, insert the classifications that you want notification of when they are used to list new solicitations.
- **These UNSPSC notifications are different than the codes you list to show what you sell on your profile.**

## Research which departments purchase what you sell

Find out which agencies buy your company's products or services, and at what price, at [caleprocure.ca.gov](https://caleprocure.ca.gov).

- Click *Get Public Procurement Information*. Then, click *View Past Purchases*.
- Search for keywords under *Description* or by UNSPSC classifications (in *Advanced Search*).
- Search by department to learn which products and services they procure.
- Click *Download Detailed Results* to find the item you searched for in each procurement. See if the item was purchased through a contract (*LPA*) or a competitive bid, how many were purchased, for what price, and by which department.

## Contact the SB/DVBE Advocate for individual departments

SB/DVBE Advocates are state employees who can assist you with information about contracting with their department.

- Download the *SB/DVBE Advocate Directory* at [www.dgs.ca.gov/PD-Advocates](https://www.dgs.ca.gov/PD-Advocates).
- Email advocates in departments you're interested in working with. When contacting advocates, include your company name, contact information, certification number, and capabilities statement.

## Apply for a California Multiple Award Schedule (CMAS)

Join the list of qualified suppliers that buyers use to procure many products and services at set prices and terms by applying to become a California Multiple Award Schedule (CMAS) supplier. Learn more at [www.dgs.ca.gov/PD-CMAS](http://www.dgs.ca.gov/PD-CMAS) or by calling (916) 375-3463.

## Advertise your business on Cal eProcure bid solicitations

Subcontractors can place *Vendor Ads* on Cal eProcure bid solicitations to seek work with potential primes. Ads are free; list your Certification ID in all ads.

## Work with local government agencies

Many local city and county governments, utility and transit agencies, state colleges, and special districts also accept the state's business certifications for their own procurement goals.

Find a list and links at:  
[www.dgs.ca.gov/PD-Reciprocity](http://www.dgs.ca.gov/PD-Reciprocity)

## Attend Office of Small Business and DVBE Services outreach events

The Office of Small Business and Disabled Veteran Business Enterprise Services attends and sponsors events to provide businesses advice on applying for work with state agencies.

Find upcoming events, go to:  
[www.dgs.ca.gov/pd/events](http://www.dgs.ca.gov/pd/events)

## Learn about your benefits as a certified business

Certification provides a number of benefits in state contracting. Small Businesses can receive a 5-percent bid preference on applicable solicitations and higher interest on any late payments, while DVBEs may receive another preference of up to 5 percent, depending on the contract. Learn more at [www.dgs.ca.gov/pd-certification](http://www.dgs.ca.gov/pd-certification).

## Get free business advice

Several organizations receive federal and state funding to provide free advice and resources to businesses. Your local Procurement Technical Assistance Center (PTAC) or Small Business Development Center (SBDC) can provide you with many resources in person or by phone.

Find PTACs and SBDCs at:  
[www.sba.gov/local-assistance](http://www.sba.gov/local-assistance)

Nationwide PTACs are also listed at:  
[www.aptac-us.org](http://www.aptac-us.org)

Free mentoring and education:  
[www.score.org](http://www.score.org)

### Several organizations focus on veterans in business:

Elite SDVOB Network  
[www.elitesdvob.org](http://www.elitesdvob.org)

National Veterans Transition Services  
[www.nvtsi.org](http://www.nvtsi.org)

Southwest Veterans Business Resource Center  
[www.swvbrc.org](http://www.swvbrc.org)

U.S. Veteran Business Alliance  
[www.gousvba.org](http://www.gousvba.org)

Veterans Business Outreach Center  
[www.vbocix.org](http://www.vbocix.org)

Veterans In Business Network  
[www.vibnetwork.org](http://www.vibnetwork.org)