

PROFESSIONAL DECLARATION OF ELIGIBILITY
FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Q: What is the Professional Declaration of Eligibility?

A: The Department of Procurement Services administers the Professional Declaration of Eligibility Program. This program offers an additional certification option for eligible firms by allowing qualified attorneys, certified public accountants, and certifying agencies to attest that an applicant firm meets the requirements of the City of Chicago's certification program. These qualified attorneys, certified public accountants, and certifying agencies must follow strict guidelines to ensure that only qualified applicants are recommended for certification, and that the application package does not contain any false information. This program also allows these professionals and certifying agencies to attest that the applicant applying for expansion of new specialty areas meets the requirements of the certification program.

Q: Why has this program been established?

A: The regulations governing this program require the Department of Procurement Services to complete our review of certifications 90- days after receipt of all required documents. However, we wanted to establish a way whereby a vendor could participate in a potential contracting opportunity by proving their certification status via a licensed professional before presenting their application to the City. Upon submission of a Professional Declaration of Eligibility to our office, the Department of Procurement Services will make a final determination within five business days.

Q: Who is eligible to apply for certification under this program?

A: Any minority or women-owned firm eligible to do business with the City, that is not seeking certification in construction, and is not a supplier or distributor, may be eligible to apply for certification under this program if the following criteria are met:

1. The firm has not been denied by the City of Chicago for certification within the previous three years.
2. The firm has not withdrawn a certification application with the City of Chicago within previous three years.
3. The firm has not graduated from the City of Chicago's certification program within the previous three years.

Q: Can firms seeking ACDBE and DBE certifications obtain certification under the Professional Declaration of Eligibility?

A: No. Only firms seeking MBE/WBE certification and MBE/WBE firms submitting an expansion request are eligible to apply for certification under this program. Firms may not apply for certification through this program if they are seeking MBE/WBE certification in construction or as a supplier or distributor.

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Q: When will the program be available?

A: Starting December 6, 2010.

Q: Who is eligible to be a Professional of Record?

A: Any attorney or CPA licensed in Illinois for at least 3 years who is currently in good standing with their licensing board and meets the following criteria:

1. Has not been convicted or found liable for fraud, or making false statements.
2. Does not have an ownership interest or familial relationships with the firm or its owner.
3. Is not ineligible to do business with the City.

Q: What forms are necessary to become certified under the program?

A: A firm must submit an Application and all of the supporting required documentation to the professional or certifying agency. All of the forms are located on our website www.cityofchicago.org/procurement. The professional or certifying agency is required to review the application and all supporting documentation and then, if the firm is eligible, submit a signed and dated Professional Declaration of Eligibility Statement in which the professional or certifying agency shall be required to attest to the City and to the person hiring or otherwise retaining the Professional of Record that the firm is indeed eligible under the rules and regulations of the program. In addition, the Professional Declaration of Eligibility Statement must also be signed by the owner of the firm for whom the attorney or CPA is employed. The professional must forward the Application and all of the firm's documentation to the Department of Procurement Services for a final review.

Q: Does the City have a list of Eligible Professionals of Record?

A: No, the city does not endorse a particular professional or certifying agency. Contact your local CPA or attorney for participation.

Q: Does applying for certification under the Professional Declaration of Eligibility guarantee certification?

A: No. The professional or certifying agency is required to process a certification file according to the same rules and regulations as the Department of Procurement Services. If the professional deems that you are not eligible for the program, you will not be certified. All Professional Declaration of Eligibility applications are subject to an audit by the Department of Procurement Services to determine compliance with the requirements of the program's regulations.

Q: Are site visits required under the program .

A: Yes. The professional or certifying agency is required to perform a site visit at the business location of the firm seeking certification.

Q: Are there penalties involved if a Professional or Certifying Agency recommends certification of a fraudulent or front company?

A: Yes. The regulations of the program require serious penalties for a professional or certifying agency if they knowingly submit a fraudulent certification file. Actions will include referral to the City's Law Department for potential prosecution under the City's False Statements ordinance; contacting the Professional's state licensing board; and/or referral to the City's Inspector General for investigation. For complete details of potential penalties, please refer to program's Rules and Regulations located on our website.

Q: Will the Department of Procurement Services be conducting compliance sessions on the requirements of the Professional Declaration of Eligibility program?

A: Yes. The Department of Procurement Services will be conducting monthly compliance sessions, which will include an overview of the Professional Declaration of Eligibility program. Please check our website for dates of the upcoming compliance sessions.