The federal Disadvantaged Business Enterprise (DBE) Program serves (1) to create a level playing field for DBEs and Airport Concession DBEs (ACDBEs) to compete fairly for federal highway, aviation, and transportation contracts; (2) to help remove barriers to participation by DBEs and ACDBEs on contracts; (3) to help develop firms that can compete successfully in the marketplace outside of the DBE program; and (4) to provide appropriate guidance in establishing and providing opportunities for DBEs and ACDBEs.
The Pennsylvania Unified Certification Program (PA UCP) provides “one stop shopping” for DBEs seeking certification and for prime contractors looking for certified DBEs. Once certified, DBEs can participate in projects funded by U. S. Department of Transportation Federal Aviation Administration (FAA), Federal Highway Administration and/or Federal Transit Administration. By selecting certified DBEs, prime contractors are assured that they meet or exceed the DBE goals or requirements included in many publicly funded contracts.

Is there a cost to become certified?
No, certification is free to DBE applicants.

How are the DBE Program & the City of Philadelphia Office of Economic Opportunity (OEO) Program different?
The DBE Program certifies firms to participate in federally funded projects, while the OEO registers firms to participate in City-funded projects. Another difference is that the DBE Program operates under federal law and the Mayor’s Executive Order #14-08, while the OEO functions under the Mayor’s Executive Order #14-08, Mayor’s Executive 5-10, and Mayor’s Executive Order 02-05. The DBE program is exclusively for small businesses and uses personal net worth and business size caps.

How do I qualify as a DBE?
A DBE must be: a for-profit small business at least 51% owned and managed by one or more socially and economically disadvantaged individuals who:
1. capitalized the firm with their own funds,
2. actively manage the company, and
3. control daily business operations.

What are the requirements for an ACDBE?
Airport Concession DBEs (ACDBE) must be located on airport property; meet the same requirements as a DBE; and be engaged in consumer goods sales or public services, under an agreement with the recipient of FAA funds, another concessionaire, or the owner or lessee of a terminal. Suppliers of goods, management contractors, advertisers and web-based businesses may qualify, as long as operations take place on airport premises.

Who requires DBE Certification for their federally funded projects?
- The City of Philadelphia
- Delaware River Port Authority
- Pittsburgh Airport Authority
- SEPTA
- PennDOT
- PA Turnpike Authority
- Port Authority of Allegheny County
- Allegheny County Department of Minority, Women and Disadvantaged Business Enterprise
- U.S. Department of Transportation
  Federal Aviation Administration, Federal Highway Administration and Federal Transit Administration
- 60 other smaller local transportation related agencies

How can a prime contractor or City agency find a certified DBE, or confirm that a certification is current?
Contractors can search online for DBE certified firms on the PA UCP Directory by inserting the name of a DBE, the North American Industry Classification System (NAICS) Code for work to be subcontracted, or a brief description of the type of work. Prime contractors should only use firms with current certifications; it cannot be assumed that a firm will become certified in time for a bid closing. When searching, the less information you input, the more results you get. For instance, if you search for ACME, all firms with ACME as part of their name will show. If you search by ACME Construction, only firms whose name includes those words in that order will be listed. The Directory is located at: www.paucp.com

How Do I Contact the OEO?
The OEO can be reached at 215-683-2000 and visited online at www.phila.gov/oeo