

FLORIDA UNIFIED CERTIFICATION PROGRAM AGREEMENT

RECITALS

WHEREAS, 49 CFR Part 26 Subpart E- Certification Procedures Section 26.81, requires that all United States Department of Transportation (USDOT) Recipients participate in a statewide Unified Certification Program (UCP); and

WHEREAS, this Agreement establishes the UCP for the State of Florida; and

WHEREAS, the UCP will comply with all certification procedures and standards set forth in Subparts D and E of 49 CFR Part 26 on the same basis as recipients; and

WHEREAS, the UCP will cooperate fully with oversight, review, and monitoring activities of USDOT and its operating administrations; and

WHEREAS, the UCP will implement USDOT directives and guidelines concerning certification matters; and

WHEREAS, all certification by the UCP shall be pre-certification, i.e., certifications that have been made final before the due date for bids or offers on a contract on which a firm seeks to participate as a DBE; and

WHEREAS, the UCP will render uniform certification decisions on behalf of all USDOT financial assistance recipients in Florida with respect to participation in the USDOT Disadvantaged Business Enterprise (DBE) Program; and

WHEREAS, the UCP will provide “one-stop shopping” to applicants for DBE certification, such that an applicant need apply only once for a DBE certification that will be honored by all UCP Members in Florida; and

WHEREAS, the UCP shall develop and maintain an electronic DBE Directory of all firms certified in Florida that will be available to the public on the Internet and in print and continuously updated with additions, deletions, and other changes; and

WHEREAS, the UCP shall have sufficient resources and expertise to carry out the requirements of 49 CFR Part 26 Subpart E; and

WHEREAS, all obligations of recipients with respect to certification and nondiscrimination must be carried out by UCPs, and that recipients may use only UCPs that comply with the certification and nondiscrimination requirements of 49 CFR, Part 26.

NOW, THEREFORE, in consideration of the promises and covenants herein contained Florida UCP Members, agree to the following:

ARTICLE 1 – VISION

Florida's USDOT Recipients share the common goal of creating a level playing field on which DBE firms can compete fairly for USDOT assisted contract awards, while enhancing the administration of the DBE Programs through the exchange of information and coordination of activities. In order to achieve the common goal, Recipients will establish the UCP for the State of Florida.

ARTICLE 2 – DEFINITIONS

Terms and Definitions used by the UCP shall be those specifically defined in this Agreement, and in 49 CFR, Section 26.5, which is incorporated by reference herein:

2.01 Certifying Member

A Florida Recipient as defined in 2.05, and UCP Member as defined in 2.10 and 3.01 who has a current DBE Program Plan approved by an appropriate USDOT Operating Administration that includes provisions for DBE certification and revocation processes.

2.02 Disadvantaged Business Enterprise (DBE)

A for-profit small business concern, that is at least 51% owned by one or more individuals who are both socially and economically disadvantaged, or, in the case of a corporation, in which at least 51% of the stock is owned by one or more such individuals; and whose management and daily business operations of the entity are controlled by one or more of the socially and economically disadvantaged individuals who own it.

2.03 Non-Certifying Member

A Florida Recipient as defined in 2.05, or UCP Member as defined in 2.10 and 3.1 who has a current DBE Program Plan approved by an appropriate USDOT Operating Administration that does not include provisions for DBE certification and revocation processes.

2.04 Personal Net Worth

The net value of the assets of an individual remaining after total liabilities are deducted. Pursuant to 49 CFR Section 26.67 and as used herein, the personal net worth of each disadvantaged owner of an applicant or a DBE firm, excluding the individual's ownership interest in the applicant or a DBE firm and the individual's equity in his or her primary place of residence, must not exceed \$750,000. As of the effective date of this Agreement, the personal net worth requirement is not applicable to airport concessions.

2.05 Recipient

Any entity, public or private, to which USDOT financial assistance is extended, whether directly or through another recipient, through the programs of the Federal Aviation

Authority (FAA), Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) or the Federal Transit Authority (FTA), or who has applied for such assistance.

2.06 **Small Business Concern**

A Small Business Concern is as defined in Small Business Administration regulation 13 CFR Part 121 and in 49 CFR, Part 26; Section 65.

2.07 **Socially and Economically Disadvantaged Individuals**

Any individual who is a citizen or lawfully admitted permanent resident of the United States and who is:

- (a) Any individual who a recipient finds to be socially and economically disadvantaged individual on a case-by-case basis.
- (b) Any individual in the following groups, members of which are rebuttably presumed to be socially and economically disadvantaged:
 - (i) “Black Americans” which includes persons having origins in any of the Black racial groups of Africa;
 - (ii) “Hispanic Americans” which includes persons of Mexican, Puerto Rican, Cuban, Dominican, Central or South American, or other Spanish or Portuguese culture or origin, regardless of race;
 - (iii) “Native Americans” which includes persons who are American Indians, Eskimos, Aleuts, or Native Hawaiians;
 - (iv) “Asian-Pacific Americans” which includes persons whose origins are from Japan, China, Taiwan, Korea, Burma (Myanmar), Vietnam, Laos, Cambodia (Kampuchea), Thailand, Malaysia, Indonesia, the Philippines, Brunei, Samoa, Guam, the U.S. Trust Territories of the Pacific Islands (Republic of Palau), the Commonwealth of the Northern Marianas Islands, Macao, Fiji, Tonga, Kirbati, Juvalu, Nauru, Federated States of Micronesia, or Hong Kong;
 - (v) “Subcontinent Asian Americans” which includes persons whose origins are from India, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, the Maldives Islands, Nepal, or Sri Lanka;
 - (vi) Women;

- (vii) Any additional groups whose members are designated as socially and economically disadvantaged by the SBA at such time as the SBA designation becomes effective.

2.08 Executive Committee

A single standing committee, comprised of the Manager of the Equal Opportunity Office in the Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT) or his/her designee, a Certifying Member selected annually by and among the FAA UCP Members, and a Certifying Member selected annually by and among the FTA UCP Members.

2.09 Sub-Recipient

Any entity, public or private, to which USDOT financial assistance is extended through another Recipient.

2.10 UCP Members

All Florida Recipients participating in this Agreement as described in 3.01 and 11.05, including both Certifying and Non-Certifying Members.

ARTICLE 3 – ORGANIZATION OF THE UCP

3.01 Members of the UCP – Recipients

Pursuant to Section 26.81(a), all USDOT recipients in this State shall participate in a UCP.

All recipients, including airports and transit properties, that receive funds directly from FHWA, FAA or FTA must agree in writing to participate as members in the UCP.

Signatures to the UCP agreement of all USDOT recipients in this State shall be maintained on file in the FDOT Equal Opportunity Office.

3.02 Responsible Certifying Member

It is the intent of this Agreement that a Certifying Member will be responsible for certifying DBE's who perform work in their respective fields of expertise (highway and bridge, aviation, and transit). If a DBE firm performs work unique to aviation or transit, and there is no available FAA or FTA Certifying Member in the local area, the FAA or FTA Members will coordinate and agree on the designation of a Responsible Certifying Member. The FAA or FTA Member designated as the Responsible Certifying Member shall either be located in the vicinity of the applicant or DBE firm or have an on-going contract or business relationship with the firm. Non-certifying Members shall likewise consider the location of the applicant or DBE firm and any on-going contract or business relationships with the firm when forwarding an application or a DBE file to a Responsible Certifying Member. To this end Responsible Certifying Members shall be responsible for DBE certifications as follows:

- a) FDOT shall be the Responsible Certifying Member for those firms primarily engaged in the delivery of highway, road and bridge related goods and services. These goods and services may include, but are not limited to, heavy highway construction contractors, road and bridge contractors, specialty construction contractors, engineering consultants, specialty consultants, highway, road and bridge related material suppliers and fabricators and highway, road and bridge related maintenance services.

- b) An FAA UCP Member shall be the Responsible Certifying Member for those firms that are primarily engaged in the delivery of aviation related goods and services, including concessionaires. These goods and services may include, but are not limited to, food service and other aviation specialty firms.
- c) An FTA UCP Member shall be the Responsible Certifying Member for those firms that are primarily engaged in the delivery of transit related goods and services. These goods and services may include, but are not limited to, transit services generally, transit maintenance services and transit related materials and supplies.

3.03 DBE Directory Management

UCP Members hereby acknowledge that FDOT is the major recipient of FHWA funds in the State of Florida, has the largest DBE certification program in the State, and maintains a Directory of certified DBEs that is available electronically and in printed form to Florida Recipients, contractors, and other interested members of the general public.

3.03.1 FDOT shall serve as Manager for the UCP's electronic DBE Directory, which shall include all DBE certifications made by Certifying Members.

3.03.2 FDOT, as DBE Directory Manager, shall assume the following responsibilities with regard to the DBE Directory:

- (a) Keep and maintain the up-to-date electronic DBE Directory;
- (b) Ensure its availability to all UCP Members and other interested parties;
- (c) Make available printed copies of the Directory upon request; and
- (d) Provide Certifying Members with access to certification information in the DBE Directory through the Internet.

3.03.3 Certifying Members will, within 3 business days of receipt of any new application for DBE certification, complete input to a Directory application screen, whenever a new application for DBE certification is received, so that other Certifying Members will not process or otherwise duplicate work on any DBE application.

3.03.4 When a Certifying Member makes a DBE certification approval decision, information shall be submitted, through the Internet, by the Certifying Member, directly to the DBE Directory within three (3) business days of said approval. Pursuant to 49 CFR, Section 26.31, this information shall include:

- a) Firm Name, Street Address, P.O. Box, Telephone and Facsimile Numbers, and e-mail address;
- b) Name of Majority Owner, Gender, and Minority Code;
- c) Type(s) of work performed by the DBE using North American Industry Classification system (NAICS) adopted by the SBA on October 1, 2000, and other work specialty codes as needed;
- d) Name of Certifying Member;
- e) Expiration Date of DBE Certification; and
- f) Any other appropriate information, as agreed upon by UCP Members.

3.03.5 Certifying Members shall also input, through the Internet, within three (3) business days of the action, information as required in 3.03.3 on firms denied DBE certification. This information will be input on the DBE Status Page.

3.03.6 Firms denied DBE certification by a Certifying Member are eligible to re-submit a DBE application after one (1) year.

3.04 **Transition of Currently Certified DBEs**

Each UCP Member shall electronically submit its current DBE Directory to the DBE Directory Manager (FDOT) for inclusion into the UCP's DBE Directory. Each UCP Member Directory shall include complete information as required in 3.03.4, and a statement attesting to the fact that each DBE firm submitted has been certified under the provisions of 49 CFR Part 26.

3.04.1 The Executive Committee shall meet and review those certified DBE firms submitted by Certifying UCP Members, and will determine the appropriate Certifying Member who will be responsible for future certification and re-certification of the DBE.

3.04.2 Upon determination by the Executive Committee of the appropriate Certifying Member, the Certifying UCP Member having possession of the DBE firm's certification file will be notified, and shall immediately forward that DBE file to the responsible Certifying Member, who shall assume custody and responsibility for the DBE file.

3.04.3 Presently certified non-Florida DBE firms must document current DBE certification by the DOT of the state in which they are domiciled or that state's UCP, if it is in place, prior to being included in the DBE Directory.

3.04.4 Designation of a Responsible Certifying Member for a non-Florida DBE firm shall follow the same process as described above.

3.05 **Executive Committee Duties**

It is agreed that upon approval by the Secretary of the USDOT, the Executive Committee shall begin implementing the provisions of this agreement and the Implementation Plan, attached as Exhibit C.

3.05.1 The Executive Committee shall meet as necessary to provide oversight and ensure compliance with 49 CFR Section 26.81. The Executive Committee shall at all times seek the participation, and may call special meetings of all UCP Members to ensure compliance with said regulation.

3.05.2 The Executive Committee may establish special committees, by majority vote, which may include, but are not limited to, Airport Concessions, UCP Member Dispute Resolution, UCP Process, Quality Assurance, Training, and Intake.

3.05.3 The Executive Committee will ensure that the UCP has sufficient resources and expertise to carry out the requirements of 49 CFR Section 26.81.

3.05.3 The Executive Committee will advise all UCP Members when it appears resources and expertise are not sufficient to carry out the requirements of 49 CFR Section 26.81.

ARTICLE 4 – RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF UCP MEMBERS

4.01 Types of UCP Members

Florida recipients acknowledge that this Agreement provides for two (2) classes of members, Certifying Members and Non-Certifying Members as defined in 2.01 and 2.03, and that each class shall have specific rights and responsibilities as set forth herein.

4.02 Certifying Member Rights and Responsibilities

Each Certifying Member shall have the following rights and responsibilities:

- (a) Comply with the terms and conditions of this Agreement.
- (b) Collect and evaluate information received regarding DBE certification applications, conduct site visits, and make certification decisions as to DBE status, in accordance with 49 CFR Part 26.
- (c) Promptly provide current information to the DBE Directory as required by and in the manner prescribed in 3.03 above.
- (d) Update the DBE Directory with all new and updated information (renewals, removals, change of address, etc.).
- (e) Retain and maintain appropriate DBE certification files.
- (f) Make file information available to other USDOT recipients and other state UCPs in response to questions or complaints, upon written request.
- (g) Upon request of a UCP Member, may conduct a site visit to a DBE applicant in its vicinity.
- (h) Process annual updates to verify continuing eligibility of DBE firms certified by it.
- (i) Perform specific file reviews at any time upon request by a UCP Member.
- (j) Make timely final decisions on DBE applications as outlined in 49 CFR Section 26.83(k) or within (90) ninety days of receipt of all information.
- (k) Provide information on any certified DBE upon request by a UCP Member.

4.03 Non Certifying Member Rights and Responsibilities

Each Non-Certifying Member shall have the following rights and responsibilities:

- (a) Comply with the terms and conditions of this Agreement.
- (b) Promptly forward DBE applications to the Responsible Certifying Member.

- (c) Provide information on any certified DBE upon request by a UCP Member.

ARTICLE 5 – RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE UCP

5.01 Certification Decisions

The UCP shall maintain processes and programs that conform to the overall certification standards set out in 49 CFR Part 26.

Certification decisions made by UCP Certifying Members shall be binding on all DOT recipients with respect to participation in the DBE Program. In the event of a conflict, the UCP, through the Executive Committee, shall make a final decision, subject to the provisions of 49 CFR, Part 26.

5.02 “One-Stop Shopping”

The UCP shall provide “one-stop shopping” to applicants for DBE certification in Florida, such that an applicant is required to apply only once for a DBE certification that will be honored by all UCP Members.

5.03 Processing Out-of-State Applications

The UCP will not process a new application for DBE certification from a firm having its principal place of business in another state unless the firm has already been certified in that state. When a Certifying Member processes an out-of-state application, a full certification application file with all supporting documentation will be compiled by the Certifying Member, including a copy of the Site Visit Report obtained from the applicant’s home state or from the state’s UCP if it is in place, before the firm is included in the DBE Directory.

5.04 Reciprocity With Other UCPs

It is understood that:

- (a) The UCP, through its Executive Committee, may enter into written reciprocity agreements at any time with UCPs of other states subject to approval of USDOT.
- (b) Such reciprocity agreement(s) must outline the specific responsibilities of each participating UCP.

- (c) The UCP, and its Members, may accept a DBE certification decision, made by another UCP or state DOT, on a case-by-case basis.
- (d) The UCP, and its Members, shall share information concerning Florida DBE firms or applicants with other UCPs and state DOTs upon written request.

5.05 UCP Information Program

UCP Members and the Executive Committee will provide information on the Florida UCP to the public and to DBE applicant firms; provide individuals and firms seeking DBE certification with UCP applications; accept DBE applications from any applicant firm, and forward DBE applications to the appropriate Certifying Member for processing.

5.06 Meetings for Continued UCP Monitoring

The UCP, through its Executive Committee, shall hold a statewide membership meeting at least once a year or more often as needed for continued monitoring of the UCP, and on-going processes.

5.06.1 The Executive Committee shall notify UCP Members in writing of the date and location of the meeting at least (30) thirty days in advance of the meeting.

5.06.2 A majority of those recipients having agreed in writing to participate as members of the UCP shall constitute a quorum for conducting UCP business.

5.06.3 When a quorum is established at a meeting, a majority vote of those members present and voting shall be required to pass on a matter.

ARTICLE 6 – CERTIFICATION PROCEDURES

6.01 Certification Application

UCP Members agree to utilize the USDOT Disadvantaged Business Enterprise Certification Application format attached as Exhibit A.

6.02 Certification Process

The UCP and its Members shall follow DBE certification processes and adhere to standards set forth in 49 CFR Part 26, Subparts D and E, Certification Procedures, as well as those guidelines set forth herein or otherwise attached hereto.

6.03 Certification Site Visits

Certifying Members shall conduct a site visit to the principal place of business of an applicant firm prior to DBE certification and submission or direct input via the Internet to the DBE Directory.

- (a) Certifying Members will utilize the On-Site Review Checklist, which is included as Exhibit D herein.
- (b) Certifying Members may conduct site visits for one another when requested, in instances where the member requested is geographically close to the DBE's location.

ARTICLE 7 – APPEALS, COMPLAINTS AND DISPUTES

7.01 Appeals/Third Party Complaints

DBE Certification appeals and third party complaints may only be filed with the Certifying Member whose action is being appealed or complained about and shall be handled in accordance with 49 CFR Part 26, Sections 26.85, 26.87, and 26.89.

7.02 Member Agreement

This Agreement recognizes that each Certifying Member has a DBE Program Plan approved by USDOT, and that each such Program Plan may be unique. Therefore, it is herein agreed, that actions under this Section shall, in addition to the foregoing requirements of 49 CFR Part 26, comply with the process and procedure provided for in those individual DBE Program Plans.

External or Internal Complaints regarding certification decisions of a Certifying Member may only be filed with that Certifying Member, and shall be processed in accordance with 49 CFR Part 26, Section 26.87, or as otherwise provided for herein.

7.03 Notice Requirements

An action by a Certifying Member (certification denial, de-certification, etc.) shall be in writing, and shall:

- (a) Be delivered via Certified U.S. Mail, Return Receipt Requested.
- (b) Be specific as to the action being taken.
- (c) Be specific as to the basis of the action.
- (d) Be specific as to the facts relied upon.
- (e) Advise the party of the right to appeal.
- (f) Provide detailed information on the appropriate appeal process.

7.04 Member Disputes

UCP Members shall make every effort to resolve disputes that may arise between them.

7.04.1 Unresolved Member Disputes

When UCP Members are unable to resolve an internal dispute, the matter will be submitted to the Executive Committee for resolution. The decision of the Executive Committee shall be binding on all those UCP Members subject to the provisions of 49 CFR Part 26.

ARTICLE 8 – TRAINING

8.01 Executive Committee Oversight

The Executive Committee shall retain DBE certification oversight of UCP Members. FDOT will be responsible for DBE certification training of UCP Members. Upon approval of the Executive Committee, FDOT may provide, or otherwise arrange for, DBE certification training for any Certifying Member upon request or it may require a Certifying Member to attend DBE certification training in order to ensure compliance with the provisions of this Agreement and 49 CFR Part 26.

8.02 Training Costs

Certifying Members requesting DBE certification training through FDOT, or who have been required to obtain such training, agree to bear the costs and expenses for said training.

ARTICLE 9 – DBE DIRECTORY

9.01 Organization of the Directory

The DBE Directory shall be organized and maintained by FDOT, using industry standard state-of-the-art software. All UCP Members agree to maintain compatible software and systems in order to best use the electronic DBE Directory, and to timely provide DBE certification information and updates for the DBE Directory.

9.02 Availability

The DBE Directory shall be available electronically on the Internet (and in printed form, when requested) to UCP Members, contractors, and other interested parties.

ARTICLE 10 – FEES/COSTS

10.01 UCP Fees

The UCP may assess its Members such fees as may, from time to time, be required in order to operate and maintain the UCP, ensuring that resources and expertise are sufficient.

The Executive Committee shall certify the need for a fee assessment to Members at statewide membership meeting, and shall recommend a fee amount to the Members.

Members shall vote to approve the imposition of any such fee.

UCP Members that receive less than \$250,000.00 annually from USDOT shall be exempt from the payment of any such fees.

10.02 DBE Applicant Firms

Certifying Members may charge a reasonable fee for DBE certification application processing.

ARTICLE 11 – GENERAL PROVISIONS

11.01 Exhibits

All exhibits to this Agreement are incorporated herein by reference and made a part hereof.

11.02 Interpretation

Article and section headings and Table of Contents are for convenience only and shall not affect construction of this Agreement.

11.03 Amendments

This Agreement may not be amended, modified, or supplemented except by an instrument in writing agreed to the UCP Members. Notwithstanding the foregoing, should any provisions of 49 CFR Part 26 be changed or modified, corresponding provisions of this Agreement shall be modified accordingly.

11.04 Compliance with Law

UCP Members agree that the operation of this Agreement and performance of all obligations hereunder shall at all times comply with 49 CFR Part 26 and with applicable federal and state laws.

11.05 Signed Agreement

This Agreement will become effective upon approval by the Secretary of USDOT, and will be fully operational within (18) eighteen months of approval.

By executing the Signature and Declaration of Status page of this Agreement recipients agree to become Members of the UCP, and agree to accept the terms and conditions of this Agreement.

Following USDOT approval, a recipient may become a member by submitting a fully executed Signature and Declaration of Status page from this Agreement to the Executive Committee, which shall be delivered to FDOT's Equal Opportunity Office, where it shall remain on file.

11.06 **Severability**

Should any part, term, portion, or provision of this Agreement be in conflict with any law of the United States or of the State of Florida, or otherwise be unenforceable or ineffectual, the remaining provisions shall be deemed valid and severable, and not affected thereby.

11.07 **Successors**

This Agreement shall be binding upon and inure to the benefit of any successors or assigns of the UCP Members.

11.08 **Execution**

Execution of this Agreement by UCP Members shall comply with appropriate procedures, resolutions, authorized signatures, and required filings pursuant to the law governing each UCP Member. This Agreement will be executed in counterparts, each of which shall be deemed an original, but all of which together shall constitute one and the same instrument.