Top 20 Questions on NMSDC Certification:

1. Why does NMSDC certify minority businesses?

NMSDC certifies minority business enterprises (MBEs) to be suppliers of various services and/or products for large corporations, to ensure only qualified suppliers, eligible for NMSDC assistance, are serviced. Corporations rely on NMSDC to protect their reputation by ensuring only bona fide minority vendors benefit from this program.

2. Who processes the application?

NMSDC has 24 Affiliate Councils with certification staffers who process these applications. Each Council has a team of corporate persons on the Certification Committee who review and recommend acceptance or denial of certification.

3. What does the certification staffer review in the application?

NMSDC reviews applications for 51% minority ownership, management and operational control of a business. The minority’s role is the key determining factor in the application.

4. How long will it take to process the application?

Councils usually take between 45 to 90 days to process applications. The policy manual requires completion of processing within 90 days. The process includes a thorough review of the
applications, a site visit, and collection of all supporting documents. Lastly, a vote is required from the council’s Board of Directors.

5. Who are qualified minority groups for NMSDC certification?

Qualified minority groups are Asian American, Asian Indian American, African American, Latin American, and Native American. For specific list of countries of origin, please look the Certification section of the NMSDC website – www.nmsdc.org.

6. Why does NMSDC’s definition of minority differ from the government’s definition of minority?

NMSDC is a private, non-governmental, non-profit 501(c)(3) organization. Our charter specifies the above definition by our founding group.

7. How are decisions for certification made?

Once the application is received at an Affiliate Council, a certification staffer reviews for required documents, then reviews the information available, conducts a site visit and presents it to the Certification Committee. The committee then makes a recommendation to the Board who ultimately decides whether the applicant is a certified MBE. The certification process should not vary from one Council to another through all steps taken.

8. Can an applicant withdraw their application?

An applicant may withdraw their application if the request is received in writing before the application goes to the Certification Committee.

9. If the applicant is denied, when can the applicant reapply?

Following either an upheld denial from the appeal process or 30 days from an appeal process, an applicant may only reapply after one year from the date of application.

10. Are applicants permitted to apply online and update their contact information online?

Yes, online applications are available and encouraged by the National Network Office. Once certified, MBEs are encouraged to update their contact information when there is a change.
11. How do applicants renew a certification application?

Applicants for renewal are required to fill out the recertification form and include the previous year’s tax forms.

12. If I am an MBE seeking reciprocal certification outside my home service area, to whom do I send my application?

As of January 1, 2014, you no longer need to obtain reciprocal certification to do business with a national member in another state or NMSDC region.

Previously, for reciprocal services to be initiated between the home certifying Affiliate Council and the Council approached for reciprocal service, a reciprocal service form was completed using the Affiliate Portal (AP). Now, the Affiliate Council will provide subscription services to certified MBEs in good standing with their home certifying Council. The AP is being configured to allow subscriptions to be provided to those certified MBEs who wish to receive services over and above those provided with a basic certification. The certified MBE will not have to provide proof of certification from their home certifying Council. The PRISM database (which is replacing MBISYS®) will provide the certified MBE profile to the affiliate from which the certified MBE is requesting a subscription.

13. How do certification staffers process a certified MBE subscription?
Subscriptions are offered for processing via application and verification with the “home” Council of up-to-date certification of the MBE. All subscriptions will be handled online. ALL certified MBEs receive basic services and support.

14. What are the fees for MBE subscriptions?

Subscription services fees will vary by Council and should fall within a consistent range for all MBEs. “Home” Council certified MBEs are not automatically subscribed.

15. Can an applicant still renew a certification when it has expired?

No, once an MBE certification has expired, the applicant has to submit a new application.

16. What do certification staffers do if there has been a change in ownership, operations and/or management of a certified MBE?

Staffers review the changes and the impact on the ownership, control and management of the business. If the minority ownership is less than 51% and control of management and operations is no longer in the hands of the minority individual(s), continued certification is doubtful. They then investigate and take appropriate action through the Certification Committee and Board of Directors. These factors will decide whether the MBE is permitted to keep their certification.

17. Are councils required to provide certification orientation?

All Affiliate Councils will provide a pre-certification briefing, or orientation, to dispel any misconceptions, clarify policy and give a better understanding of the process for applicants.

18. Are Councils permitted to show or give a copy of the Certification Policy Manual to others outside from the Certification Committee such as applicants, MBE Input Committee members or other Council Board members?

No, only Certification Committee members and the certification staffer(s) are permitted to have a copy of the manual. These individuals are also required to sign and have on file at the Council a non-disclosure form (see attached).

19. Does NMSDC accept any other form of certification such as 8(a) or federal or state government certification?


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No, NMSDC does not accept any other certification from any other entities; however, number of local and state governments do recognize our certification. In a growing number of states, NMSDC certification is required to do business with public buying entities.

20. Are site visits required and how are they done?

NMSDC is unique in our certification process because we require a site visit as part of the certification process. Certification staffers are to schedule a visit with the applicant, have their contact information for location, and bring the site visit form to verify and ask questions on the applicant business.