SUPPLIER DIVERSITY GUIDE
FOR CAMPUS USERS

ILLINOIS STATE UNIVERSITY PURCHASING OFFICE

WHAT'S IN
THIS GUIDE?

This supplier diversity guide is meant to provide basic information regarding ISU's supplier diversity program as it affects campus units. This guide primarily tackles issues that occur below the formal solicitation threshold, which is $100,000 for general commodities. This guide is meant to be used as a go-to resource for uncertain campus users who either want clarifi-cation on ISU's supplier diversity program or need step-by-step guidance on how to search the CMS BEP/VBP directory.

If you need information or further clarification, contact the Supplier Diversity Coordinator in the Purchasing Office.

- An overview of supplier diversity efforts at ISU

- A summary of the multiple quote requirement

- An explanation of how to search the CMS BEP/VBP directory

- A glossary of frequently used acronyms

If you have a question that isn't covered in this guide, contact the Purchasing Office:

ISUPurchasing@ilstu.edu
(309) 438-1946

If you need assistance finding certified diverse vendors for your next project, contact Brienne Reid, the Purchasing Office's Supplier Diversity Coordinator:

bdreid@ilstu.edu
(309) 438-5031

WHAT IS
SUPPLIER DIVERSITY?

ISU's supplier diversity program supports campus units by locating businesses from underutilized and disadvantaged populations, as well as providing resources and assistance for those businesses to better prepare for working with the University.

While ISU promotes supplier diversity in all its facets, the University has specific statuory requirements under various state laws that focus the supplier diversity program to improve spending goals. For example, the University's Purchasing Office uses the state CMS Business Enterprise Program (BEP) and Veterans Business Program (VBP) certifications when searching for available certified diverse vendors, as the University has specific supplier diversity requirements that involve these two state programs.

BUSINESS ENTERPRISE PROGRAM (BEP)

MINORITY-OWNED SMALL BUSINESSES

WOMAN-OWNED SMALL BUSINESSES

PERSON WITH DISABILITY-OWNED SMALL BUSINESSES

VETERANS BUSINESS PROGRAM (VBP)

VETERAN-OWNED SMALL BUSINESSES

SERVICE-DISABLED VETERAN-OWNED SMALL BUSINESSES

For the sake of ISU's multiple quote requirement, other certifications—WBENC, City of Chicago, IDOT DBE, &c.—are acceptable! While some programs may be cited frequently due to their statutory requirements, ISU is committed to supporting a wide spectrum of supplier diversity efforts.

DO I NEED
MULTIPLE QUOTES?

Purchases at or over $20,000 require a minimum of three quotes, and at least one of those multiple quotes must come from a certified diverse vendor. The following breaks down the important monetary thresholds for most situations. There are special thresholds and requirements for purchases involving furniture, professional services, and architect and engineer services. Contact Purchasing for more information about these specific purchases.

$100,000+

A formal solicitation (bid, RFP, &c.) is required.
Requisitions are required.
Purchasing needs to review contracts.

**$20,000-
<$100,000**

Multiple quotes (three min.) are required.
Requisitions are required.
Purchasing needs to review contracts.

**$5,000-
<$20,000**

Multiple quotes are strongly recommended, but not required.
Requisitions are required.
Purchasing needs to review contracts.

>$5,000

Multiple quotes are not required.
Requisitions are not required.
Purchasing needs to review contracts.

After gathering multiple quotes, you must use the option with the lowest cost. If there is some reason why you believe you should use a different vendor, submit a justification explaining that choice with your requisition for Purchasing to review.

If there aren't other vendors who can provide the product/service you need and this has been verified by Purchasing, submit the justification provided by the Supplier Diversity Coordinator with your requisition to prevent delays.

GETTING YOUR SEARCH STARTED

As a part of a purchase at or over $20,000, you will be asked to find certified diverse vendors to solicit a quote from. While ISU Purchasing will accept other certifications, the easiest way to find vendors is to use the BEP/VBP directory, run by Illinois Central Management Services (CMS).

The Business Enterprise Program (BEP) and Veterans Business Program (VBP) are state-managed supplier diversity certification programs. The BEP is for minority-, woman-, and person with disability-owned small businesses. The VBP is for veteran- and service-disabled veteran-owned small businesses.

These programs forward statutory goals of increasing the amount of money spent with diverse business-es in the state, and ISU strongly sup-ports them.

You can find the BEP/VBP directory by visiting:

WWW.CMS.DIVERSITYCOMPLIANCE.COM
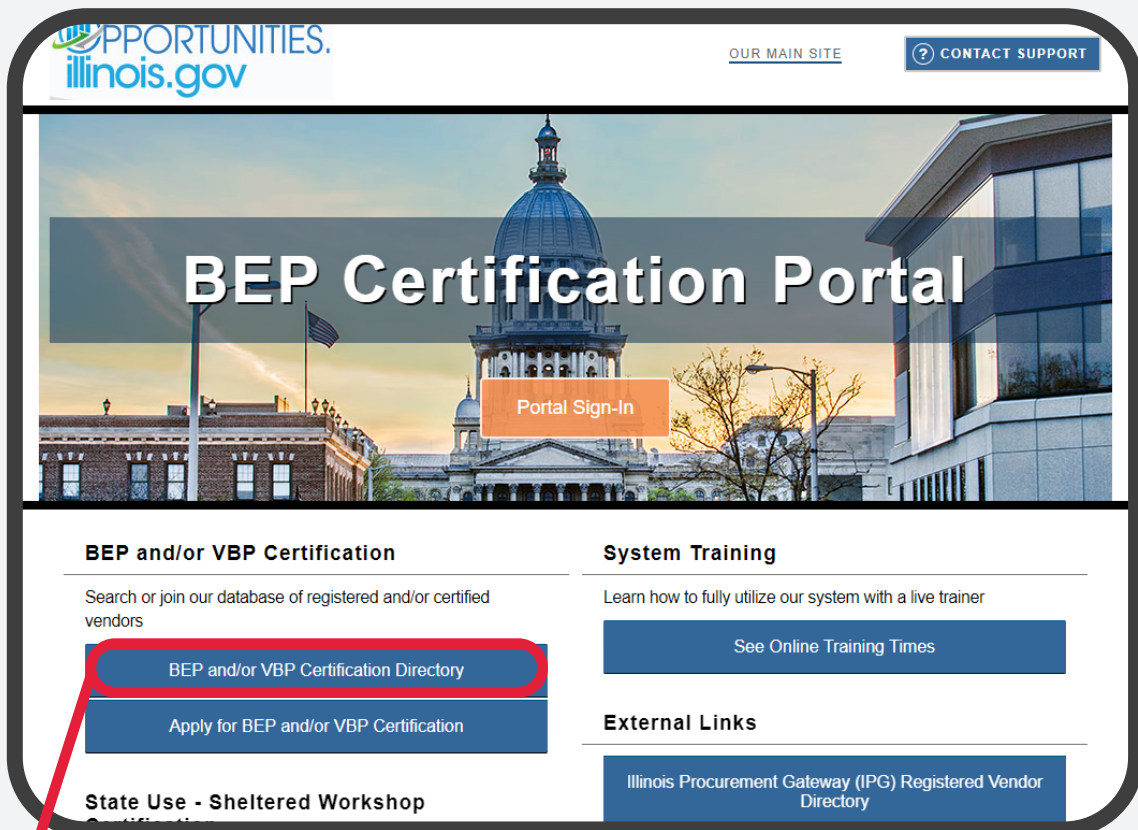
To search and browse the directory, click on the top-left option labelled "BEP and/or VBP Certification Directory."

SEARCHING THE
DIRECTORY

Rather than sorting through business certifications manually or needing to search through a downloaded spreadsheet, the CMS directory is fully searchable and sortable by a variety of factors.

There are three search options that typically yield the best results out of the CMS BEP/VBP directory:

1 SEARCH BY NAME

Searching by a vendor's name is helpful to verify whether a vendor is currently certified and to check their certification profile, which details what type of certification they hold and what NIGP commodity codes they are certified with.

2 SEARCH BY KEYWORD

Searching by keyword can be a good way to begin the search process for a certified diverse vendor who can provide the services or products you need. The keyword search can be troublesome at times, however—if the keyword and name of the commodity code doesn't match, this can bring up null results.

3 SEARCH BY NIGP COMMODITY CODE

Searching by NIGP commodity code is the most precise, powerful way to search the BEP/VBP directory, but also requires additional work and understanding of how the directory works.

Less is more! Because the BEP/VBP directory will search precisely what you enter, even a slight misspelling of a business name will cause the search to fail. When in doubt, only enter the first few letters of the business name.

SEARCH BY
NAME

If you already know the vendor's name and you just need to verify their certification status or find information through their certification profile, the Search by Name option should provide you with the easiest way to quickly locate that vendor and

access the information you're looking for. This search method is not useful if you are looking for an otherwise unknown vendor. Searching by keyword or commodity code would be much more helpful in that situation.

Certifications
- ☑ Minority Business Enterprise (MBE)
- ☑ Persons with Disability Business Enterprise (PBE)
- ☑ Service Disabled Veteran Owned Small Business (SDVOSB)
- ☑ Sheltered Workshop (SWS)
- ☑ Veteran Owned Small Business (VOSB)
- ☑ Women Business Enterprise (WBE)
- ☑ Women/Minority Business Enterprise (WMBE)

Search by Business Name or DBA

Business Name/DBA

Tip: Try just a few letters of the firm's name.

Search by Business Description

Business Description

Tip: Try just a few letters of a keyword.

Search by Commodity Code

Commodity Codes   Click to Lookup Commodity Codes

Enter the name of business you're looking for in the corresponding text field. The search function is very picky with spelling on the CMS directory, so try only the first few letters of the vendor's name if you don't get positive results on your first try. This search option will also search for names the business may be "doing business as" (or DBA).

Search Results   1568 firms with 1656 certifications found

Click the certification type for contact information and certification details

Vendor	Location	Certification
#9 Design, LLC, DBA North Arrow Architecture	Villa Park, IL	WBE
*PRADO & RENTERIA CPAS, Prof. Corp.	Chicago, IL	WMBE
.VIZ CONSULTING CORPORATION	CHICAGO, IL	WMBE
1st Choice Specialty Services Inc,	Lansing, IL	MBE

Click here to access a vendor's certification profile, which details their contact information and NIGP commodity codes.

SEARCH BY
KEYWORD

If you're looking for BEP/VBP vendors who may be able to provide the products and/or services you need, the simplest way to locate these vendors' contact information is to search by business description, or a short keyword associated with what product and/or service you're buying. Business descriptions are generated from the descriptions of that vendor's NIGP

commodity codes, so may not always align with common names for products and/or services. Trying possible variations in your keywords may improve your search results. The search function is also fairly strict—leave off extra letters or words ("machine" vs. "machines," for example) whenever possible!

Certifications
☑ Minority Business Enterprise (MBE)
☑ Persons with Disability Business Enterprise (PBE)
☑ Service Disabled Veteran Owned Small Business (SDVOSB)
☑ Sheltered Workshop (SWS)
☑ Veteran Owned Small Business (VOSB)
☑ Women Business Enterprise (WBE)
☑ Women/Minority Business Enterprise (WMBE)

Search by Business Name or DBA

Business Name/DBA

Tip: Try just a few letters of the firm's name.

Search by Business Description

Business Description

Tip: Try just a few letters of a keyword.

Search by Commodity Code

Commodity Codes | Click to Lookup Commodity Codes

Enter your keyword in the corresponding text field.

Search Results — 1568 firms with 1656 certifications found

Click the certification type for contact information and certification details

Vendor	Location	Certification
#9 Design, LLC, DBA North Arrow Architecture	Villa Park, IL	WBE
*PRADO & RENTERIA CPAS, Prof. Corp.	Chicago, IL	WMBE
.VIZ CONSULTING CORPORATION	CHICAGO, IL	WMBE
1st Choice Specialty Services Inc,	Lansing, IL	MBE

Click here to access a vendor's certification profile, which details their contact information and NIGP commodity codes. If you are finding a very limited number of vendors in your keyword searches, record their NIGP codes and try searching by commodity code.

SEARCH BY NIGP
COMMODITY CODE

The most accurate method to search the BEP/VBP directory is to input the appropriate NIGP commodity codes that best describe the products and/or services you need. NIGP commodity codes are five-digit numbers that are used to organize vendors by their core competencies.

It's important to note that NIGP commodity codes may not use the most common language to describe products and services. For example, there is no code for "personal computers," but there is one for "microcomputers."

Search by Commodity Code

Commodity Codes   [Click to Lookup Commodity Codes]

Click here to open the commodity code search and browse options.

Search by Commodity Code

Commodity Codes   [Click to Lookup Commodity Codes]

Search Commodity Codes

Enter a search term and click **Search**. If multiple codesets are available, you can change the selected codeset in the drop down list under the search box. Click **Browse Codes** to view the code set list. When finished, click **Finish** to close this panel.

[_____] [Search]   [Browse Codes] [Finished]

[NIGP: National Institute of Governmental Purchasing ▼]

If you already know your five-digit code, enter it here.

If you don't know your five-digit code, click here to browse a code list.

Search by Commodity Code

Commodity Codes   [Click to Lookup Commodity Codes]

Browse Commodity Codes

Browse the code list by clicking **Drill Down** or the linked code number (available if there are lower tier codes). Click any **Add** link to select a code; click **Finished** to close this panel. Click **Search Codes** to search by code number or keyword. If multiple codesets are available, you can change the selected codeset in the drop down list.

[Search Codes] [Finished]

[NIGP: National Institute of Governmental Purchasing ▼]

Actions	Code Type	Code	Code Description
Drill Down Add	NIGP	005	Abrasives

There are two sets of codes in this code list: three-digit general codes and five-digit specific codes. You need to click "Drill Down" to find and add five-digit codes to your search.

HOW DO I FIND USEFUL
COMMODITY CODES?

There are hundreds upon hundreds of NIGP commodity codes in the directory's browsable list. Finding the right, most appropriate commodity code my seem like trying to find a needle in a haystack at times. However, there are a few useful tips that can make this process less arduous.

1 USING "FIND"

Commonly bound to keyboard inputs of either CTRL+F or COMMAND+F, the "Find" function lets you search through the entire list of three-digit general codes quickly. While this doesn't necessarily help with finding specific five-digit codes right away, it can reduce the amount of manual work you need to do to at least locate the three-digit general code your specific code may be under.

2 USING OTHER VENDORS' CODES

If you find or already know of one certified BEP/VBP vendor who does the same kinds of services or sells the same kinds of goods as what you're looking for, you can try searching with the codes that vendor is certified with. Keeping a record of these codes can be helpful for future searches. Just be careful to notice if a code has changed year-to-year!

3 USING OTHER SITES

The NIGP code system is used across the country among various governmental entities. As a result, some entities have created their own searchable online databases that are more friendly than the CMS directory. These sites can be very useful in finding five-digit specific codes through quick keyword searches. However, be aware that you should still double-check that the code description on the site you're searching through matches the CMS code descriptions.

4 USING YOUR OWN SPREADSHEET

Using another governmental entity's website, you can copy-and-paste the entire NIGP code list into a spreadsheet. Be careful that you double-check all codes, however! This spreadsheet can't update with changes to the code list without you manually updating it, after all.

GATHERING
MULTIPLE QUOTES

Once you've found one or more BEP/VBP vendors to solicit a quote from, you can send out requests to as many of those certified diverse vendors as you'd like. The multiple quote process requires at least one quote for purchases at or over $20,000 come from a certified diverse vendor. If you'd like to submit more than one quote from a certified diverse vendor, that's not only acceptable, it's encouraged!

Quote requests should be the same for all vendors, regardless of their certification status. It's important that you keep your intended project scope as clear as you can so that you can get the best comparison between vendors. It's best to keep price comparisons as close to "apples-to-apples" comparisons as possible, although this is difficult for some services and products.

Also, it's important to remember to provide vendors with a reasonable amount of time to respond to your initial request. Many projects may have tight deadlines, but vendors cannot provide accurate quotes according to what you request if you aren't giving them enough time to estimate the cost for the project. We recommend a minimum of 48 hours for simple product purchases and routine services, but would suggest extending that timeframe depending on the increasing complexity of the project.

If there are several vendors that appear through your directory searches and there is enough time before the project deadline, we suggest sending an email to all vendors to test interest. You aren't obligated to quote every vendor contacted with this initial interest email, but this gives you a better idea of what the market is like for the kind of product or service you're interested in purchasing and potentially provides you with information on vendors who may not be right for this purchase but could provide valuable products or services for other needs.

If you have any issues finding vendors for a project or have any questions regarding the multiple quote requirement once you've found vendors, contact ISU's Supplier Diversity Coordinator in the Purchasing Office.

If multiple quotes are required and a requisition is submitted without proof of additional quotes, proof of a quote from a certified diverse vendor, or a justification from the Supplier Diversity Coordinator, your requisition may be rejected.

GLOSSARY AND
CONTACT INFO

GLOSSARY OF TERMS & ACRONYMS

CMS	*Central Management Services*
BEP	*Business Enterprise Program*
• MBE	*Minority-owned Business Enterprise*
• WMBE	*Minority Woman-owned Business Enterprise*
• WBE	*Woman-owned Business Enterprise*
• PBE	*Person with Disability-owned Business Enterprise*
VBP	*Veterans Business Program*
• VOSB	*Veteran-owned Small Business*
• SDVOSB	*Service-disabled Veteran-owned Small Business*
SBA	*Small Business Administration (federal)*
HUBZone	*Historically Underutilized Business Zone*
DBE	*Disadvantaged Business Enterprise*
SBE	*Small Business Enterprise*
LGBTBE	*LGBT-owned Business Enterprise*
(IL)BCC	*(Illinois) Black Chamber of Commerce*
NMSDC	*National Minority Supplier Development Council*
WBENC	*Women's Business Enterprise National Council*
LGBTCC	*LGBT Chamber of Commerce*
U-Plan	*Utilization Plan*
PA / LOI	*Participation Agreement / Letter of Intent*
GFE	*Good Faith Efforts*
RFQ	*Request for Quotes*
QBS	*Qualifications-based Selection (solicitation)*
RFP	*Request for Proposal (solicitation)*
IFB	*Invitation for Bid (solicitation)*

CONTACT INFO

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