NCDOT Unified Certification Program (UCP)
Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ)

1. **What is the Unified Certification Program (UCP)?**

The **Unified Certification Program (UCP)** ensures that all businesses seeking to become **Disadvantaged Business Enterprises (DBEs)** undergo a fair and consistent certification process. This program maintains fairness for businesses receiving funding from the **U.S. Department of Transportation (USDOT)**.

2. **What is the purpose of the MOU?**

The Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) outlines the agreement between the parties involved to collaborate on the Unified Certification Program (UCP). It sets the terms and conditions for their cooperation and ensures that all parties adhere to the same standards and procedures.

3. **Who are the parties involved in the MOU?**

The MOU is typically signed by organizations that receive funding **directly** from **USDOT agencies** such as the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA), and the Federal Transit Administration (FTA). These groups must sign the UCP agreement. Other organizations that receive funding indirectly do not have to sign but must follow the UCP regulations.

4. **How is the MOU enforced?**

The MOU includes monitoring and enforcement provisions to ensure all parties comply with the agreement's terms. This may include regular reporting, audits, and more by the USDOT or other authorities.

5. **What rules do the UCP follow?**

The UCP adheres to special rules set forth by the **U.S. government** known as the **49 CFR, Part 23 and 26**. These rules ensure that all businesses are treated fairly during the certification process to become DBEs.

6. **What if a business is from another state?**

Before a business can apply in North Carolina, it must **first obtain certification in its Jurisdiction of Certification (JOC).** NCDOT **may require additional documentation** to

ensure that the business complies with North Carolina's requirements. The UCP adheres to fair treatment laws, so no business is discriminated against based on origin.

7. Who does the UCP apply to?

The UCP applies to any organization that receives funding from **FHWA, FAA, or FTA**. This includes entities such as the North Carolina Department of Transportation (NCDOT), airports, and city transit systems like buses and trains.

8. How does the certification process work?

North Carolina has a **"one-stop" certification process**, which means businesses **only must apply once**, and their certification will be accepted by all USDOT-funded groups in the state.

9. Who handles DBE certifications?

NCDOT handles most DBE certifications. Some airports certify their own vendors, but only for certain businesses inside the airport. For example, Raleigh-Durham Airports certify food, gift shops, and advertising businesses inside their airports. NCDOT certifies rental car businesses at all airports and manages all Airport Concessions DBE (ACDBE) certifications, including reminding airports when businesses need to be recertified.

10. How does NCDOT keep track of certified businesses?

NCDOT maintains a list (DBE directory) of all certified businesses, which is available online and in print. This list is updated promptly to ensure accuracy

11. What do organizations have to do with their certification data?

Organizations must ensure their DBE list is correct before sending it to NCDOT. They are responsible for cleaning up their data before giving it to NCDOT and will help share costs to maintain the UCP.

12. Where can I find the DBE directory?

The DBE directory is available online. It includes the business name, address, phone number, and the type of work the business does.
What happens if a party fails to comply with the MOU?

If a party fails to comply with the terms of the MOU, there may be consequences such as penalties, loss of funding, or other actions as specified in the agreement. If any issues arise, the MOU may include a dispute resolution process.

13. When must a state agency participate in the UCP?

If you need a DBE program, you must participate in the Unified Certification Program (UCP). According to the **49 CFR Part 26.21**, the following categories must have a DBE program that meets the requirements of this part:

1. All recipients of Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) funds are authorized by a statute to which this part applies.
2. Federal Transit Administration (FTA) recipients receiving planning, capital, and/or operating assistance will be awarded prime contracts (excluding transit vehicle purchases) exceeding $250,000 in FTA funds in a Federal fiscal year.
3. Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) recipients receiving grants for airport planning or development who will award prime contracts exceeding $250,000 in FAA funds in a Federal fiscal year

14. Does NCDOT participate in the UCP?

Yes. On November 23, 2004, the North Carolina Department of Transportation (NCDOT) got the green light from the U.S. Department of Transportation (USDOT) to start the Unified Certification Program (UCP).

15. Do I need to seek certification from other agencies that I am interested in doing business with?

The UCP is designed to make the certification process easier for businesses. Instead of applying for Disadvantaged Business Enterprise (DBE) certification with each agency separately, a business only needs to apply once with the North Carolina Department of Transportation (NCDOT). If approved, this certification is accepted by all federal recipients in the state. However, entities or agencies that do not receive federal funding are not required to certify DBEs under the UCP process.

16. Is there a copy of the UCP document available?

Yes, a copy of the program plan can be downloaded online.

17. How does the NCDOT show agreement with the UCP?

To confirm your agreement, the approval authority in your organization needs to sign the UCP MOA.

If you have more questions, contact **NCDOT or your local UCP office**.