Industry Partners,

The U.S. Department of Transportation (USDOT) published a Disadvantaged Business Enterprise (DBE) Final Rule which made changes to the Interim Final Rule (IFR), and became effective on September 25, 2026. This ruling applies to the DBE and Airport Concession DBE (ACDBE) programs nationwide. Additionally, on Sept. 28, 2026 the USDOT issued DBE Final Rule FAQs related to the regulation modifications.

The final rule permanently removes race- and sex- based presumptions of disadvantage. Business owners must now individually demonstrate social and economic disadvantage to qualify for DBE/ACDBE certification. The rule also establishes deadlines for recertifying businesses under the new eligibility standards.

Key changes include:

1. **Personal Narratives (PN)** for each disadvantaged owner are required for all new applications for DBE/ACDBE certification. PNs must include at least one objective distinguishing feature (ODF) (e.g., an identifiable condition or status) linked to one or more instances, impediments and economic harm the owner experienced due to the ODF.
2. **A deadline has been set for the reevaluation of all DBEs**. All Unified Certification Programs (UCPs) must complete reevaluations by December 24, 2026.
3. **A written notice of disqualification due to non-responsiveness** will be sent to all DBEs that have not submitted a reevaluation application by December 24, 2026. Owners who do not plan to apply for reevaluation are encouraged to notify their certifiers as soon as possible.

Note: A 90 day grace period may be extended to non-responsive firms after this date. However, any firm that fails to submit a reevaluation application by March 24, 2027 will be automatically disqualified, as per 49 CFR 26.111

Thank you to all the firms that have submitted reevaluation applications. Your participation in the DBE program is very much appreciatedTocheck your firm's certification status log in to your account at https://adotdoors.dbesystem.com/. If you have not yet submitted your reevaluation application, please be sure to do so by **December 24, 2026.**

Sincerely,

The Arizona Unified Certification Program (AZUCP) partner agencies