



California Public Utilities Commission

General Order 156 Certification

What is General Order 156?

General Order (GO) 156 sets the framework for the CPUC Supplier Diversity Program that encourages utilities, electric service providers, community choice aggregators, and other covered entities to increase procurement of goods and services from women, minority, disabled veteran, LGBT (lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender), and/or persons with disabilities business enterprises (diverse suppliers).

What is certification?

Certification is a verification process to confirm that a business is a diverse supplier.

What are the benefits of certification?

- Provides official recognition of a business's diverse status
- Serves as a conduit to meet private companies and government agencies
- Offers promotion and visibility to utilities, electric service providers, community choice aggregators, and other GO 156 covered entities.
- Provides access to resources, bid information and networking opportunities

Why is certification important?

- GO 156 covered entities can only include purchases with CPUC certified diverse suppliers in its annual filings
- Provides third party verification of ownership/control of businesses and protects both the supplier and the GO 156 covered entity
- All GO 156 covered entities use the CPUC Supplier Clearinghouse database when searching for diverse suppliers
- Local, regional, and national referrals of diverse suppliers among GO 156 covered entities
- Access to GO 156 covered entities sponsored educational/business development seminars, workshops, business development trainings etc.



Where can I get certified?

The CPUC-supervised Supplier Clearinghouse certifies women, minority, LGBT, and persons with disabilities business enterprises. Disabled veteran business enterprises are certified by the California Department of General Services.

What are the eligibility requirements for certification?

- At least 51% of the business owned by one or more woman, minority, LGBT, or person with disability individuals
- The business management and daily operations are controlled by one or more of those individuals

How long is the certification process?

- Upon receipt of all the required documents, the process takes approximately 45 to 90 days. Factors that delay the process include:
 - Missing documents
 - Instances when supplemental/additional documents are required
 - Whether an on-site visit is necessary, or in the case of applicants outside of California, in lieu of an onsite visit, whether a comprehensive telephone interview is necessary

What is the fee for certification?

- There is no fee for certification.

How long is my certification valid?

- Up to three years.

Certification vs. Qualification

Certification: a business verified by the Supplier Clearinghouse as a genuine diverse business enterprise.

Qualification: a diverse business that can successfully provide its capabilities that may include (but not limited to), a business plan, credentials, qualifications, and experience to those companies looking to procure products and services.

