



Illinois BEP Certification

The State of Illinois' Business Enterprise Program (BEP) certifies businesses that are at least 51% owned and controlled by minorities, women, or persons with disabilities to expand equitable access to state procurement opportunities. Certification is free and increases your visibility to agencies, universities, and prime contractors seeking diverse suppliers.

KEY BENEFITS

- Access to state contracts—agencies and universities (including Sandburg!) aim to award at least 20% of spend to BEP-certified vendors.
- Inclusion in CEI's public online vendor directory for increased visibility.
- Recognition across municipalities and organizations; access to sheltered market opportunities.
- Certification is completely FREE for eligible businesses through the Illinois Commission on Equity and Inclusion (CEI).

ELIGIBILITY SNAPSHOT

- At least 51% ownership and control by a minority, woman, or person with a disability.
- Owner must be a U.S. citizen or lawful permanent resident.
- Annual gross sales under \$150 million.

CERTIFICATION VALIDITY & MAINTENANCE

Full BEP certification is typically valid for seven (7) years. Vendors must submit an annual No Change Affidavit (NCA) confirming there were no changes in ownership, control, management, or gross sales.



STEP-BY-STEP: HOW TO APPLY

1. **Create an Account:** Visit the CEI Certification & Compliance Portal and select 'Create Account'.
2. **Confirm Eligibility:** Ensure you meet ownership, control, residency, and revenue requirements.
3. **Prepare Documentation:** Gather required documents (see checklist below).
4. **Complete the Online Application:** Provide accurate business details and upload required documents.
5. **CEI Review:** Review typically takes up to 60 days; CEI may request interviews or site visits.
6. **Decision & Listing:** Once approved, your business appears in the public vendor directory.
7. **Stay Compliant:** File your annual No Change Affidavit and maintain accurate records.

REQUIRED DOCUMENTS — CHECKLIST

- Business formation & governance documents (Articles of Incorporation/Organization, bylaws, etc.).
- Proof of ownership & control (stock certificates, membership interest records, purchase agreements).
- Financial documentation (recent business tax returns, financial statements).
- Identification & status (citizenship or permanent residency documentation).
- Other supporting materials requested by CEI.

HELPFUL LINKS

CEI BEP Certification Overview & Portal:

<https://cei.illinois.gov/vendor-resources/get-bep-certified.html>



This handout is for guidance only. Always refer to the CEI portal for the most current requirements.