

SUPPLIER DIVERSITY INITIATIVE

FREQUENTLY ASKED



WHAT IS THE NATIONAL GAY & LESBIAN CHAMBER OF COMMERCE®?

The National Gay & Lesbian Chamber of Commerce (NGLCC®) was founded as the national business advocacy organization of the lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) community and focuses on: procurement opportunities, including certification and facilitating corporate relationships, standards, and best practices; programming geared towards helping members start or grow their business; general membership benefits, including business and service discounts, group purchasing power, professional development opportunities, publications, advocacy, and information exchange; and workplace diversity and opportunity. Within these areas, the NGLCC offers programs and services to benefit its four major constituency groups: LGBT Business Enterprises® (LGBTBEs®), corporate partners, affiliate chambers and federal government agencies.

WHAT IS THE NGLCC SUPPLIER DIVERSITY INITIATIVE?

Through the NGLCC Supplier Diversity Initiative (SDI), the NGLCC serves as the exclusive third-party certifying organization of LGBTBEs. The primary goal of the SDI is to connect eligible LGBT-owned businesses that wish to pursue contracting opportunities within the corporate supply chain. The SDI is the main bridge between corporate America and the entrepreneur/owners of LGBTBEs.

WHAT IS A LGBTBE?

A LGBTBE is a Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual or Transgender Business Enterprise (LGBTBE) based in the United States that is at least 51% owned, operated and controlled by LGBT individuals.

WHAT EXACTLY DOES IT MEAN TO BE A CERTIFIED LGBTBE?

Being certified by the NGLCC means that a business has gone through an in-depth certification process that confirms the business is owned, operated, and controlled by an LGBT individual or LGBT individuals for the purposes of participation in the NGLCC SDI.

WHAT ARE THE MINIMUM CRITERIA FOR CERTIFICATION?

- Fifty-one percent (51%) ownership by an LGBT person or persons.
- Proof of effective management of the business (operating position, by-laws, hire-fire and other decision-making roles).
- Control of the business as evidenced by signatory power on loans, leases and contracts.
- Contribution of capital and/or expertise.
- Must establish LGBT status via documentary evidence.
- U.S. Citizenship or U.S. Resident Alien Status.

IS CERTIFICATION AS A LGBT DIVERSE SUPPLIER UNIQUE IN THE INDUSTRY?

No. In fact, certification as a LGBTBE is one of many national certifications available for diverse businesses. The National Minority Supplier Development Council (NMSDC) has been the national certification organization for ethnic minority business enterprises (MBEs) for more than 35 years and has resulted in tens of billions of dollars in procurement contracts throughout its history for its certified members. Additionally, the Women's Business Enterprise National Council (WBENC) is the major certifying body for women business enterprises (WBEs). The NGLCC and its Corporate Partners saw a need for an LGBT diversity certification to allow business development opportunities for LGBT business owners. To meet this need, the NGLCC Supplier Diversity Initiative (SDI) was founded as the exclusive certifying organization for LGBTBEs.

WHAT ARE THE BENEFITS OF CERTIFICATION FOR MY BUSINESS?

Access. Certification as a LGBTBE gives your business the opportunity to compete for sourcing contracts with the NGLCC's Corporate Partners. These [Corporate Partners](#) are committed to creating a diverse supply chain that is inclusive of LGBT businesses, and have targets for spend with diverse business enterprises. Getting your business certified is a necessary element of gaining access to these millions of corporate dollars, and also includes these additional benefits:

- National recognition by America's top corporations as a certified LGBTBE.
- Eligibility to exhibit at NGLCC's international business conference and regional events.
- Inclusion in the NGLCC online database of certified businesses, accessible by NGLCC Corporate Partners.
- Access to a current list of supplier diversity and procurement professionals from NGLCC Corporate Partners and government agencies seeking LGBT suppliers.
- Use of the NGLCC Certified Business logo on your marketing materials, which identifies your business as a certified LGBT Business Enterprise through the NGLCC to the NGLCC's national network.
- Eligibility to receive sourcing opportunities e-mails from the NGLCC and its Corporate Partners.

WHICH CORPORATIONS CURRENTLY ACCEPT LGBT CERTIFICATION?

The NGLCC's list of Corporate Partners grows frequently. Visit <http://nglcc.org/who-we-are/corporate-partners> to see which corporations are now accepting LGBTBEs in their diverse supply chain.

CAN A LGBT PERSON(S) AND A NON-LGBT PERSON(S) JOINTLY OWN A COMPANY?

Yes, a LGBT person and a non-LGBT person can own the company jointly; however, the LGBT person must be the majority owner with at least 51% ownership and must demonstrate that his/her management and control of the company, his/her contribution of capital and/or expertise, and his/her assumption of all profits and risks are commensurate with his/her ownership percentage.

HOW DOES THE CERTIFICATION PROCESS WORK?

The 4-step certification process is as follows. A business MUST:

1. Visit my.nglcc.org to complete the online application process. You will have the opportunity to build a business profile and market your enterprise to NGLCC Corporate Partners and other certified LGBTBEs for upcoming opportunities. You will also be asked to submit supporting documents, which establish that your business is 51% LGBT owned and operated. If you have not done so already, we encourage you to join your nearest NGLCC Affiliate Chamber. Affiliate Chamber's provide their members with powerful local networking and educational opportunities. Affiliate Chamber members are able to apply for certification at no cost; a \$400 value!
2. After the application is complete, a site visit is scheduled for the business. Please note that home-based businesses are not exempt. It is acceptable if the visitor and applicant business mutually prefer to meet off-site (such as a coffee shop).

3. Once your application is a complete, it will be reviewed by our **National Certification Committee**, which makes a final decision on eligibility for certification.
4. Within 3-5 business days following the National Certification Committee, our team will be in contact with you for any follow-up that is needed; otherwise, you will receive your certificate and welcome toolkit as well as dates for your **LGBTBE Orientation**, so that you can get a jump start on making the most of your certification. Stay tuned!

HOW LONG DOES IT TAKE TO PROCESS MY CERTIFICATION APPLICATION?

Once your complete application is received by the NGLCC, it can take between a week to 90 days to process, depending on when the National Certification Committee meets, if there is additional documentation required to ascertain LGBT status or control, and the scheduling of the site visit. For more details, please contact a NGLCC supplier diversity representative.

HOW DO I CHECK THE STATUS OF MY CERTIFICATION?

Once the NGLCC has received your application and documentation, you will receive email notification from the NGLCC that your application and materials have been received. The email will contain all the contact information for you to use to follow up on the status of your application.

IS THERE A FEE FOR CERTIFICATION?

As of 2011, the NGLCC decided to waive all processing fees for applicants that submit valid, current membership at their local NGLCC affiliate chamber. To find out which chambers are officially affiliated, please visit www.nglcc.org or e-mail supplierdiversity@nglcc.org for a list. An applicant does not necessarily need to be based locally in order to be a member of an affiliate chamber.

For applicants who wish not to join the local NGLCC affiliated chamber, the processing fee is currently \$400 initially, and \$200 every subsequent year for renewal (recertification).

WHAT TYPE OF IDENTIFICATION IS VALID FOR PROOF OF CITIZENSHIP OR RESIDENT ALIEN STATUS?

A birth certificate, valid passport, or a legal resident alien card (green card) will work for validating legal residency in the United States.

WHO REVIEWS THE APPLICATION AND DOCUMENTATION I SUBMIT?

The NGLCC's National Certification Committee members follow the [Supplier Diversity Initiative Standards & Procedures](#). The Committee reviews all information and makes recommendations regarding the eligibility of each applicant to be certified. Committee members sign non-disclosure agreements and recuse themselves if they have knowledge of a given applicant, either as a supplier, customer, or competitor.

WHY DO YOU NEED MY FINANCIALS?

Financials provide an important, unequivocal perspective into the business. By examining official IRS tax returns and financial statements, the National Certification Committee can undoubtedly determine information about the ownership, control, management, and independence of an applicant business (in concert with the other documents). The financial statements are not used to make a determination of the financial viability of an applicant business, as the certification as a LGBTBE is only a certification of the LGBT status of the business, not a certification of the viability of the business or business plan.

WHAT STEPS ARE TAKEN TO ENSURE THE CONFIDENTIALITY OF MY DOCUMENTS?

All documents are kept under lock and key at NGLCC Headquarters. The NGLCC staff that has access to those documents is limited to your Regional Account Manager, who plays an integral role in preparation for Certification Committee meetings and in informing applicants of their application's status. Any committee members in a competitive industry do not have access to the file, nor are they present during any discussion of your application. All members of NGLCC staff and the NGLCC Certification Committee sign the NGLCC non-disclosure agreement.

WHO WILL SEE THE FINANCIAL INFORMATION I HAVE SUBMITTED TO THE NGLCC?

All parts of an application are considered proprietary information, and the security of applications is a priority for SDI administrators. People who see the application are limited to NGLCC staff and National Certification Committee members. Each of these have signed non-disclosure agreements which are kept on file in NGLCC Headquarters. These steps are taken to maintain the security of your information.

HOW MUCH OF MY APPLICATION IS MADE AVAILABLE TO CORPORATE PARTNERS?

NGLCC Corporate Partners strive to find the best, competitive suppliers in the industry. Whilst we encourage on a daily basis for Corporate Partners to include LGBTBEs in the supplier chain to maintain diversity, ultimately Corporate Partners look at key factors that determine whether or not they will reach out to a LGBTBE for a contracting opportunity. Therefore, corporations have access to the following:

- your company's name, location, and contact information for the contact and owner listed on the application
- website
- the commodity and business functions of your business, including NAI Codes and SI Codes
- year established/acquired
- number of employees
- gross annual revenues
- security clearances
- bonding capacity
- transportation operating status
- certification-related information including date of initial certification, expiration date

The business applicant must provide either oral or written consent to the NGLCC before it will release other information.

HOW MUCH OF MY APPLICATION IS MADE AVAILABLE TO OTHER CERTIFIED LGBTBEs?

Through our online certification management tool, certified LGBTBEs can search for one another. The only information from your application that is visible to other certified LGBTBEs is the following: your company name; company location; commodity and business functions/descriptions; and contact information for the business owner and primary contact.

WHAT IS A SITE VISIT?

Site visits are a mandatory element of the initial certification process, in accordance with industry standards and corporate America's standards. Site visits provide a key perspective into the day-to-day operation of a business. By seeing the facility and asking a set of questions that is complementary to the questions asked in the application, the site visit completes the picture of the business applicant. The site visit plays an essential role in demonstrating the ownership, operation, control, and management of a business and allows the NGLCC to become more familiar with certified businesses. In the event a site visit must be cancelled or rescheduled due to scheduling conflicts or lack of preparation on the part of the applicant business, a fee may be incurred which must be paid by the applicant, otherwise there is no fee for the site visit. **All site visits are scheduled and coordinated with the LGBT business owner seeking certification. There are no surprise site visits.**

WHAT HAPPENS AFTER MY SITE VISIT?

The site visit form will be returned to the NGLCC office where your application will be held until the next Certification Committee meeting. At the meeting, all information, including application, supporting documentation, and the site visit form, will be reviewed by the Committee. Upon completion of the review, the Committee will vote to either: certify, not certify, or request additional information. Your business is then contacted to let you know the status of your application, and you will receive a letter explaining the findings of the Certification Committee.

WHAT DO I DO AFTER I RECEIVE MY CERTIFICATION?

After you receive your certification letter and certificate in the mail, the next step is to register with the NGLCC's Corporate Partners through the NGLCC's website. Registration with each Corporate Partner is slightly different, and it is critical to get your business into the databases of each of our Corporate Supplier Diversity Partners. After you are registered, work with NGLCC staff to learn the best ways to reach out to our Corporate Partners through letters, phone calls, and NGLCC matchmaking events.

IS THERE AN APPEALS PROCESS IF I AM DENIED CERTIFICATION?

Yes, if you are denied certification, you may appeal the decision following the guidelines detailed in the Supplier Diversity Initiative Standards & Procedures.

HOW LONG DOES NGLCC CERTIFICATION LAST?

Certification as an LGBT Business Enterprise lasts for two years from the date certification is granted. To maintain continuity of your certification, recertification is required on a biannual basis.

HOW DO I GET RECERTIFIED?

Recertification information is sent approximately 90 days before certification expires. However, LGBTBEs are responsible for maintaining current certification. Note: Recertification as an LGBTBE is **not** automatic.

IS THE PROCESS AND DOCUMENTATION FOR RECERTIFICATION THE SAME AS IT IS FOR BECOMING CERTIFIED?

Recertification as an LGBTBE is much less labor-intensive than the initial certification process. You will be asked to submit updated information, including any changes that may have occurred in either ownership or management of the business as well as updated LGBT status qualifiers and financial information. **Site visits are mandatory every four (4) years.**

WHERE CAN I LEARN MORE INFORMATION?

Please visit us [online](#) or email us at supplierdiversity@nglcc.org, or give us a call at 202.234.9181.

NGLCC IN THE NEWS: 2012

The following highlights some of the recent, noteworthy achievements of the NGLCC in the past year:

GOVERNMENT / FEDERAL PROCUREMENT

- 2 MOUs (Memorandums of Understanding) with U.S. Department of Commerce & U.S. Small Business Administration; many more in progress
- Inaugural Federal Procurement Fair for LGBTBEs™ at the U.S. Department of Commerce in 2012; 12 participating agencies including:
 - U.S. Department of Commerce
 - U.S. Department of State

- U.S. Department of Homeland Security
- U.S. Department of Agriculture
- U.S. Department of Health & Human Services
- U.S. Department of the Interior
- U.S. Department of Labor
- U.S. Office of Personnel Management
- U.S. Postal Service
- U.S. Small Business Administration
- U.S. Agency for International Development
- General Services Administration

INTERNATIONAL WORK / TRADE MISSIONS

- First-ever U.S. government certified trade mission to Argentina (2010), with support of U.S. Department of Commerce Commercial Services
- Inaugural LGBT Summit of the Americans with business representatives across Latin America combined with trade mission in Colombia (2012)
- Several LGBTBEs invited for import/export opportunities
- Support of U.S. Ambassadors and officials of the U.S. Import/Export Bank
- Official launch of the Colombian and Argentinian LGBT Cámaras de Comercio.

AFFILIATE CHAMBER WORK

MetLife fuels corporate sponsorship for Chamber Development Initiative; NGLCC celebrates addition of Mid-America Gay & Lesbian Chamber of Commerce (Kansas City, MO) to its affiliates.

CORPORATE PARTNER SUCCESS STORIES

Sodexo, Wells Fargo, Toyota Financial Services, Genentech, UPS, Accenture, U.S. Bank, Kellogg's, SuperValu, and Office Depot among the recent corporate partners that utilize LGBTBEs for major contracting opportunities. Diageo, WilmerHale, and Google become corporate partners.

BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT OPPORTUNITIES

Several LGBTBEs receive scholarships funded by Wells Fargo to attend executive education programs at Dartmouth University and UCLA.

SIGNATURE EVENTS

- **National Business & Leadership Conference**
 - Over 500 in attendance, 58% increase at this first-ever, sold-out event
 - \$10,000 awarded to LGBTBE who won "Roll the Dice" entrepreneurial competition
 - Over 300 matchmaking sessions conducted, some of which can be directly attributed to corporate contracts
 - Celebrated 440 Certified LGBTBEs
- **National Dinner**
 - 10th Anniversary Celebration
 - Honored U.S. Secretary of State Hillary Clinton & Actress Judith Light for significant achievements in the LGBT community
 - U.S. Deputy Secretary of State, Dan Baer; U.S. Asst. Secretary of Labor, Kathy Martinez; and D.C. Mayor Vincent Gray praise NGLCC's work and mission.



Certifying LGBT Businesses. Connecting Our Communities.

729 15TH STREET NW, 9TH FL, WASHINGTON, DC 20005 P 202.234.9181 F 202.234.9185

nglcc.org