

Small Business Feedback on Procurement Needs:

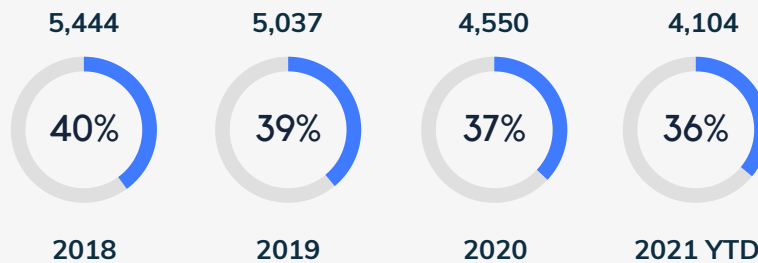
- Small business set-asides for professional services.
- Mandatory bid and RFP debriefings and sharing of bid response documentation.
- There should be more transparency in the evaluation process.
- Frustration with the state bid and RFP processes. The requests and requirements swing wildly from RFP to RFP. Some can be completed in an hour while others take multiple days even though they are similar types of projects.
- Streamline the submission requirements for bids and RFPs to encourage small business participation.
- There should be some sort of independent evaluation of bid and RFP submissions.
- All solicitations should be required to be posted and not automatically awarded to the same vendors year after year.
- Some sort of preference should be given to in-state small businesses and minority owned businesses in the procurement process.
- There should be accountability and penalty for government agencies that do not abide by participation goals of cities and states.
- Much of the state money for transportation projects now goes through localities (counties, cities in VA). If those procurements come out through the Commonwealth, then they are required to have a DBE goal for participation. When these contracts are administered through the cities and counties, there is almost never a DBE goal for participation. In the past number of years, the way VDOT has administered money for their program has shifted over a third of their budget to the cities and counties to run, which means we, as a DBE-certified firm, have a much smaller pool of money and projects where we can really compete.
- Bid specifications need to be clear. As an office furniture provider, we are told different things by different agencies. Some require a contractor's license to install furniture while others don't. We are not sure what is actually required because when we contact the licensing entity they say a contractor's license is not required but the bid/RFP indicates it is. This is very costly and confusing.

"In my experience, it appears that the procurement process is political and designed to keep minority businesses out of the award process. I have had debriefings where my scores were changed after the evaluation process, I have experienced a recall of the RFP and was not informed of its reissue, so the procurement could be awarded to the same business that held the contract before."

The Virginia Department of Small Business and Supplier Diversity

Procurement Workgroup
• DATA ANALYSIS •

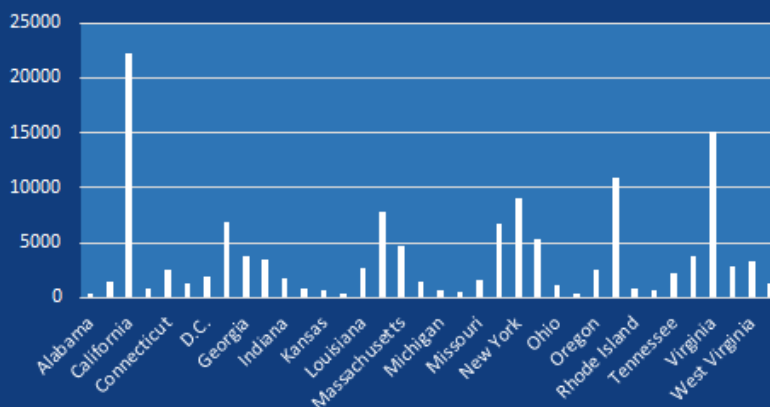
Percentage of actively certified businesses in eVA who have received purchase orders



Application Processing Time



Number of Certified Businesses Per State



Behind California, Virginia certifies more businesses than any other state in the nation. California houses 4 million small businesses, while Virginia is home to 745,886.

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Implemented Certification Processing Improvements:

- Certification is completely automated.
- The length of certification has been extended from 3 to 5 years.
- The waiver period has been shortened from 12 to 6 months.
- A streamlined recertification process has been implemented.
- Expedited certification is provided for applicants that are bidding on an open solicitation.
- The appeals process has been expanded to allow newly certified and previously certified businesses to access the process.

Federal self-certification,

“as a result of inadequate monitoring and controls, such as not implementing a full certification program, potentially ineligible businesses may continue to incorrectly certify themselves as WOSBs.”

—2017 United States Government Accountability Office
(Report on WOSB Federal Self-Certification)

While self-certification could create a fraudulent misuse of funds, a thorough vetting process ensures qualified and deserving businesses receive the government support they need.

Additional Information on Self-Certification

- <https://www.jdsupra.com/legalnews/long-awaited-changes-to-wosb-edwosb-28737/>
- <https://www.natlawreview.com/article/small-business-administration-s-new-rules-to-cut-down-false-certifications-women>
- <https://federalnewsnetwork.com/contracting/2019/06/amid-small-business-contracting-boom-sba-looks-to-end-self-certification-for-set-aside-programs/>
- <https://smallgovcon.com/service-disabled-veteran-owned-small-businesses/congress-approves-government-wide-sdvosb-certification-requirement-transfers-cve-to-sba/>