

Congress Must Reauthorize the Disadvantaged Business Enterprise (DBE) Program

This good-faith program helps ensure that the benefits of federal infrastructure investment stay rooted in local communities.

★ DBEs Are Critical to Rhode Island's Economy

Across the country, more than **50,000 DBE-certified small businesses** employ over **500,000 people**, many of whom live in the communities where these businesses operate. In Rhode Island alone:

- **690 DBE-certified businesses** currently operate and compete for contracts.
- These firms create an estimated **6,900 good-paying jobs** in their communities.

DBEs are often **trusted, local specialty contractors**, providing stable jobs for working families and reinvesting in the places they call home. In rural areas, DBEs are frequently among the **largest local employers**.

★ The DBE Program Works—For Rhode Island and the Nation

The DBE program levels the playing field in a historically exclusionary industry.

It ensures that:

- **Qualified minority- and women-owned businesses** have access to contract opportunities.
- **Taxpayer dollars stay local**—supporting small, independent businesses instead of being siphoned off by larger, out-of-state firms.
- Local contractors who live with the infrastructure they build have a **vested interest in getting the job done right**.

These businesses undergo rigorous certification to qualify as DBEs, and they are ready to deliver.

★ The Stakes Are High: What Happens Without Reauthorization

Without reauthorization, the DBE program—and the local jobs and businesses it supports—will be at serious risk.

- Many small businesses could lose access to critical infrastructure contracts.
- Communities across Rhode Island could face **layoffs, reduced wages, and business closures**.
- America's infrastructure sector would suffer from **reduced competition and innovation**, with large firms dominating contract awards.

★ Congress Must Act

Failure to act would have **devastating consequences** for Rhode Island's small businesses and local economies. Congress must reauthorize the DBE program to ensure:

- **Fair competition** in the transportation construction industry.
- The continued **vitality of America's subcontracting economy**.
- That **infrastructure investments truly reach** the communities they're intended to serve.