

NGLCC Supplier Diversity Initiative Frequently Asked Questions



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 four major areas: procurement opportunities, including certification and facilitating corporate relationships, standards, and best practices; financial services opportunities 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 four areas, the NGLCC offers programs and services to benefit LGBT Business Enterprises (LGBTBEs), Corporate Partners, and professionals.

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 qualified LGBTBEs to appropriate contracting opportunities within corporate supply chains. The SDI is the main bridge between corporate America and LGBT-owned businesses and entrepreneurs.

What is an LGBTBE?

An LGBTBE is a Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual or Transgender Business Enterprise that has been certified by the NGLCC as being at least 51% owned, operated and controlled by LGBT individuals that are U.S. citizens or Legal Resident Aliens.

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.

Is certification as a diverse supplier unique to LGBT companies?

No. In fact, certification as an LGBT business enterprise (LGBTBE) is the third national certification 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-owned enterprises (LGBTBEs). 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?

Certification as an LGBT Business Enterprise gives your business the opportunity to compete for sourcing contracts with the NGLCC's Corporate Supplier Diversity 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 National Business and Leadership Conference and regional events.
- Inclusion in the NGLCC online database of certified businesses, accessible by NGLCC Corporate Partners and fellow LGBTBEs
- 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 LGBTBE to the NGLCC's national network
- Eligibility to receive sourcing opportunities e-mails from the NGLCC and its Corporate Partners
- Invitations to participate in continuing education opportunities on business development topics provided by NGLCC, its Corporate Partners and Organizational Allies
- Empowerment of the LGBT community by branding your business as LGBT-owned

Where do I begin the certification process?

The certification application is now online at <http://nglcc.cvmsolutions.com>.

Which corporations currently accept LGBT certification?

The NGLCC's list of Corporate Partners grows frequently. Visit <http://www.nglcc.org/programs/supplierdiversity/participation> to see which corporations are now accepting LGBTBEs in their diverse supply chain.

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
- At least one LGBT status qualifier
- U.S. Citizenship or U.S. Resident Alien Status

Can an LGBT person(s) and a non LGBT person(s) jointly own a company?

Yes, an 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 certification process is as follows: A business submits the certification application, along with the required supporting documentation and non-refundable processing fee to the NGLCC. NGLCC staff reviews the application to ensure all documentation is present and communicates to the business applicant if more information is needed. After the application is complete, a site visit is scheduled for the business. Please note that home-based businesses are eligible for consideration for certification. At the subsequent meeting of a NGLCC Certification Committee, based on the findings of the site visit, the application, and the supporting documentation the Committee will make a final recommendation. Within 10 business days after the Committee grants certification, a welcome package will be sent which includes a letter, a certificate, and the unique certification number assigned to the business.

How long does it take to process my certification application?

Once your complete application is received by the NGLCC, it will take 60 to 90 days to process. Please note that failure to submit a complete application will result in delays in that processing time and that a site visit is a mandatory element of the initial certification process.

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?

The fee for certification varies given the membership status of an applicant business. If the applicant business is a National Member of the NGLCC, or a member of one of the NGLCC's state and local affiliates, it is eligible for the discounted member certification fee of \$200. For NGLCC Brass Pioneer level (\$500) or higher members, the certification fee is included. If the applicant business is not a member of the NGLCC or a state and local affiliate, the certification fee is \$400. Recertification has an associated fee of \$200 for both members and non-members.

What form(s) of identification are valid for proof of citizenship or resident alien status?

A birth certificate, 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 Certification Committee has been trained to 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 perspective into the business. By examining the financial statements, the NGLCC Certification Committee can learn a great deal about the ownership, control, management, and independence of an applicant business. The financial statements are not used to make a determination of the financial viability of an applicant business, as the certification as an LGBT Business Enterprise 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 in NGLCC Headquarters. The NGLCC staff that has access to those documents is limited to those who play 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 Committees sign the NGLCC Nondisclosure 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 NGLCC Certification Committee members. Certification Committee members and NGLCC staff 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 corporations?

Corporations are given access to your company's name and location, as well as contact information for the contact and owner listed on the application. Corporations can access the commodity and business functions of your business. The year established/acquired, state of incorporation, number of employees, gross annual revenues, security clearances, bonding capacity, and transportation operating status are also available to the corporations. 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.

Why do I need a site visit? Do I have to pay for it?

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 in consultation with the LGBTBE seeking certification. There are no surprise site visits.

What are you looking for in site visits?

At the site visits we are getting a feel for the business: everyday processes, culture, business practices etc. We are also looking to illustrate that the business is owned, operated and controlled by the LGBT business owner(s).

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?

Upon receiving your certification letter and certificate in the mail, make sure to take the time to read the enclosed Toolkit. This Toolkit will help you with the next steps of researching our Corporate Partners and registering with them 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, utilize the NGLCC/CVM database to obtain contact information for reaching out to our Corporate Partners. Attending NGLCC events and business development opportunities will strengthen your connections with Corporate Partners and other LBGTBEs.

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 one year from the date certification is granted. To maintain continuity of your certification, recertification is required on an annual basis.

How do I get recertified?

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

Is the process and documentation for recertification the same as it is for becoming certified?

Recertification as an LBGTBE 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 financial information. Site visits are mandatory every three (3) years.

Where can I learn more information?

Please visit the NGLCC Supplier Diversity Initiative online at www.nglcc.org/supplierdiversity, email us at supplierdiversity@nglcc.org, or give us a call at 202.234.9181.