

## THE STEPS TO BECOMING A DVBE / SDVOSB

A state DVBE (Disabled Veteran Business Enterprise) / federal SDVOSB (Service Disabled Veteran Owned Small Business) is like any other business with the exception of its unique contracting status with government which presents additional opportunities and requires additional steps. First and foremost, as with any business, do your research. Know what you're qualified to do, what you have the temperament for and inclination toward doing. Make certain you can secure the capital to start the business and will have the funds to keep it going until it is established. Small Business Development Centers can assist you in business planning and development.

Then once you have a business plan and the necessary capital, as you begin your operations, follow these steps in this order:

- Go to [www.cadvbe.org](http://www.cadvbe.org). At this site you can locate a local chapter and get meeting schedules so that you can join and attend. DVBEs in your local chapter are a great resource and willing to help. The Alliance and its chapters will be asking government agencies and our corporate sponsors to identify "niche" services and commodities that they would like to buy from DVBE. You can learn more about this at the chapter meetings and from the Alliance Office. Plus you can network at these monthly chapter meetings and get a feel of what other DVBE are doing successfully.
- Contact the IRS and get an Employer Identification Number (EIN) so you won't have to use your SSAN for business purposes; this protects you from identity theft. You can do it same the day by fax. The info is and form is available at [www.irs.gov](http://www.irs.gov).
- Pick-up a City or County business license application. File the fictitious notice in the local paper to run for the length required by the licensing requirement (generally two weeks). At the end of the ad's run, get a certification of publication from the paper, fill out the business license application and get it in.
- When you have your business license then go to the CA DGS website at [www.pd.dgs.ca.gov/smbus/getcertified.htm](http://www.pd.dgs.ca.gov/smbus/getcertified.htm) to register on line as a DVBE. Don't forget that you'll need to mail in a copy of your last federal income tax return along with a letter from the VA dated within the last ninety-days stating the percentage of your disability.
- As you register on the DGS website don't fail to also register as an SB (Small Business) as well as a DVBE. This contracting status has benefits as well and the vast majority of DVBE qualify as SB.
- Once certified as a DVBE and SB go to <http://www.cscr.dgs.ca.gov/cscr/>, the CA State Contracts Register (CSCR) and create a profile. Here you pick and choose the types of opportunities you're interested in. As they come available you'll receive email or fax notifications. You can still bid as a prime or sub before you receive your SB/DVBE certifications as long as they arrive before the bid is awarded. By the way, you can post free ads to bid notices as a prime seeking subs or a sub seeking a prime at no cost to you; once you create the ad, send the ad number and confirmation number to [cscr.support@dgs.ca.gov](mailto:cscr.support@dgs.ca.gov) noting that you are a DVBE and request it be published.

- Get a Dunn and Bradstreet (D&B) number (you'll need this to be an SDVOSB), you can do this on-line at [www.dnb.com/](http://www.dnb.com/).
- When you get your D&B number, go to [www.vetbiz.gov](http://www.vetbiz.gov) and get registered in the federal system. From here you will first register in the Small Business Administration (SBA) system and then you will be directed to the Central Contracts Register (CCR) where you will register for federal opportunities. Also Procurement Technical Assistance Centers are good resources to navigate the federal system.
- The state requires \$2M in business insurance as a minimum. You'll also need \$2M in total liability on your vehicles. Don't let those figures put you off – this coverage is not expensive. If you go to [www.cadvbe.org](http://www.cadvbe.org), click on "Find a DVBE" and then type in the word "insurance" in the search you'll find several DVBE insurance brokers who can help you find the right policies at the best price.
- A business card says a lot and it really should really jump out at the person receiving it. A good printer can help with the design as well as the printing. Type in the word "printing" on the Alliance site's search function and you'll find quite a few DVBE printers.
- [your.name@yourbusinessname.com](mailto:your.name@yourbusinessname.com) is the most professional email address you can have and it's worth the small investment. Having a website, even if only a single page, is worth what little it costs and being without a web presence can actually be a detractor. Using the Alliance search function and typing in words such as "hosting", "website", "email", etc you'll find a number of DVBEs that can assist you.
- Now for the last step: This is the link to the DVBE advocates at each agency: <http://www.pd.dgs.ca.gov/smbus/sbainternet.htm.htm>. When you're up and running you should email each to introduce yourself and tell them what your business can do for their agencies.

If you have questions your POCs are Rich Dryden, Executive Director of the California DVBE Alliance, ([rich.dryden@cadvbe.org](mailto:rich.dryden@cadvbe.org)) and Jack Jernigan, Secretary and Communications Chair of the California DVBE Alliance, ([jack@thejernigangroup.com](mailto:jack@thejernigangroup.com)).