

## FAQ

### Supplier Diversity Certification Program

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**1. What is supplier diversity certification?**

Supplier diversity certification is a formal recognition that a business is at least 51% owned, operated, and controlled by individuals from underrepresented groups (such as women, Indigenous peoples, racialized individuals, 2SLGBTQIA+, persons with disabilities, and veterans). This certification is granted by approved third-party organizations (like CAMSC, WBE Canada, or WEConnect International) after a verification process.

**2. Why is supplier diversity certification important?**

It is important because many large corporations, governments, and institutions have supplier diversity programs with specific spending targets for diverse-owned businesses. Certification is often the key that unlocks access to these procurement opportunities. It levels the playing field, allowing diverse businesses to compete for contracts they might otherwise not have access to, fostering a more inclusive and equitable economy.

**3. What are the key benefits of obtaining supplier diversity certification?**

Certification can provide significant advantages, including:

- a. **Access to New Markets:** Being listed in certifying body directories that are actively searched by corporate procurement officers and have connections with.
- b. **Networking Opportunities:** Connecting with other diverse businesses and potential buyers through events and programs.
- c. **Increased Visibility:** Enhanced credibility and recognition as a verified diverse supplier.
- d. **Capacity Building:** Access to training, mentorship, and development programs often offered by certifying bodies and corporate partners.

**4. What is the Supplier Diversity Certification Program (SDCP) of Invest Nova Scotia?**

The SDCP is a program by Invest Nova Scotia that helped diverse-owned businesses in Nova Scotia offset the costs of obtaining a supplier diversity certification. The goal is to help these businesses access new procurement opportunities with corporations that have supplier diversity procurement programs.

**5. Is the program currently open for applications?**

Yes, the program is now accepting applications. The application period is from April 01, 2026, to February 26, 2027, or until all funding was allocated.

**6. What certifications were eligible for reimbursement under the program?**

The program provides reimbursement for first-time certifications obtained from one of these five approved certifying bodies in Canada:

- CAMSC (Canadian Aboriginal & Minority Supplier Council)
- IWSCC (Inclusive Workplace & Supply Council of Canada)
- CQCC (Canadian Queer Chamber of Commerce)
- WEConnect International Canada
- WBE Canada (Women Business Enterprises Canada)

**7. What were the main eligibility criteria for my business to apply?**

To be eligible, a business needed to:

- Be a Nova Scotia registered business in good standing with a permanent establishment in the province.
- Be diverse-owned (at least 51% owned, operated, and controlled by individuals from eligible groups like 2SLGBTQIA+, Indigenous, Women, Veterans, Persons with Disabilities, Black/African Nova Scotians, or other Racialized People).
- Have a first-time certification from an approved body, dated between February 28, 2026, and February 26, 2027.
- Have most of its workforce residing in Nova Scotia and a product/service with export potential.

**8. What costs does the program cover, and how much is the reimbursement?**

The program reimburses 100% of the certification fee paid by the business to obtain a first-time certification, up to CAD 1,000.00 (Excluding taxes) per certification, with a maximum total of CAD 3,000.00 (excluding taxes) per company (for three new certifications).

*For example, a business may become certified with one organization, such as WBE Canada, and receive reimbursement for that certification through Invest Nova Scotia. The same business can also certify with CAMSC or WEConnect for the first time, provided those certifications are also new, and request reimbursement for each. A business that has not yet received reimbursement through the program may apply for a maximum of three certifications per business.*

**9. Does the program cover any additional costs related to certification or membership?**

The program covers only the supplier diversity certification fee. The certification must be new to the business (renewals are not eligible). Membership fees and expediting fees are also excluded.

**10. How and when can I apply for the reimbursement?**

Applications are submitted online through a specific page on the Invest Nova Scotia website during the intake period. All required documents, as listed in the program guideline, need to be submitted on or before February 26, 2027, deadline.