

North Dakota Department of Transportation

DBE NEWSLETTER

— October 15, 2025 —

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NORTH
Dakota | Transportation
Be Legendary.



October 10, 2025

DISADVANTAGED BUSINESS ENTERPRISE (DBE) INTERIM FINAL RULE

The United States Department of Transportation (USDOT) issued an Interim Final Rule (IFR) on September 30, 2025. On October 3, 2025, the IFR was published in the Federal Register. The document contains extensive changes to the overall DBE Program as well as requirements to be met during the transition period. View the IFR online at <https://tinyurl.com/yl6hpe36> or by searching it on the Federal Register website. Below is the impact this will have on NDDOT's current and future projects:

- All previously certified DBEs are no longer certified. As of October 3, 2025, all existing DBE certifications with the North Dakota Unified Certification Program are no longer valid. Therefore, any DBE firms working on or committed to existing projects bid through NDDOT are now considered regular non-DBE subcontractors/suppliers.
- DBE requirements such as Form Cs, Replacement Approval Requests, Advertising/Sign-In, and other similar items cited in the DBE Special Provisions are no longer applicable and will not be required.
- All DBE Special Provisions and goals are removed from future project proposals until further notice.
- Commercially Useful Functions are not required until further notice.
- Prompt Pay requirements still apply. All tiers of contractors are required to report subcontractor and trucking firm payments in the Certification and Compliance System (B2Gnow) on all federal aid projects. As with payments to non-DBE suppliers, payments to DBE suppliers, manufacturers, or distributors are not required to be reported.
- Preference points for utilizing DBE firms have been removed from all future consultant RFPs until further notice.

NDDOT is in the process of updating the program to be in compliance with the IFR. The DBE Program will be updated and reactivated once all IFR requirements are met. Updated requirements will be enforced in the future. Further information will be provided as it is made available. If you have any questions, contact Amy Conklin, Civil Rights Program Manager II, at 701-328-3116 or aconklin@nd.gov

RONALD J. HENKE, PE, DIRECTOR

52/ac

c: Ramona Bernard, Civil Rights Division
U.S. Federal Highway Administration – North Dakota Division

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VISION ZERO
Zero fatalities. Zero excuses.

Announcement...

URGENT FOR ACTIVE NDDOT HIGHWAY CONSTRUCTION FIRMS

Prior to the recent IFR, DBE firms were not required to register as subcontractors with NDDOT due to the extensive certification process. Some DBE firms still registered as subcontractors. With the DBE Program currently being in a suspended state, DBE subcontracting firms currently working on or intending to continue working on NDDOT highway construction projects need to register as subcontractors if not already previously registered. The registration link is found on the Certification and Compliance System login page at [Civil Rights Certification and Compliance System - North Dakota Department of Transportation](#). It is the same system you were DBE certified through. Registrations expire December 31st of each year, so please note that you will also need to register again January 1, 2026 or later. If you have questions about this process, please contact Construction Services at constructionservices@nd.gov

North Dakota
Department of Transportation

[OUR MAIN SITE](#) [CONTACT SUPPORT](#)

Certification and Compliance System

[Log In](#)

Business Links

[NDDOT Civil Rights Web Page](#)
[NDDOT Construction Web Page](#)

DBE/ACDBE Certification

CERTIFICATION for eligible minority, female, and other socially and economically disadvantaged owned businesses under the rules and regulations of the federal DBE/ACDBE guidelines.

[DBE/ACDBE Certification Application](#)
[DBE/ACDBE Certified Directory](#)

Subcontractor Registration

SUBCONTRACTOR REGISTRATION is required annually (expiring December 31) for contractors who wish to be approved as a subcontractor and are not currently pre-qualified to bid as a prime contractor or certified as a Disadvantaged Business Enterprise (DBE).

[SUBCONTRACTOR REGISTRATION Application](#)
[Search Registered Vendors](#)

CONSULTANT Prequalification

CONSULTANT PREQUALIFICATION is required to be updated every three years from date of approval of SF330 form

[CONSULTANT PREQUALIFICATION Application](#)
[Search Prequalified Vendors](#)

System Training

Learn how to fully utilize our system with a live trainer

[Training and Events](#)

About the System

Learn more about this system and how it works today

[Information for Vendors](#)

Account Access

Lookup Vendor accounts or reset user passwords

[Account Lookup](#)

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Advertisements

Advertisements are not required. The Bid Opening Sign-In System and Advertisement System have been disabled until further notice.

The North Dakota Department of Transportation (NDDOT) will consider every request for reasonable accommodation to provide:

- An accessible meeting facility or other accommodation for people with disabilities.
- Language interpretation for people with limited English proficiency (LEP)
- Translations of written material necessary to access NDDOT programs and information.

To request accommodations, contact Heather Christianson, Civil Rights Division, NDDOT at 701-328-2978 or civilrights@nd.gov TTY users may use Relay North Dakota at 711 or 1-800-366-6888.

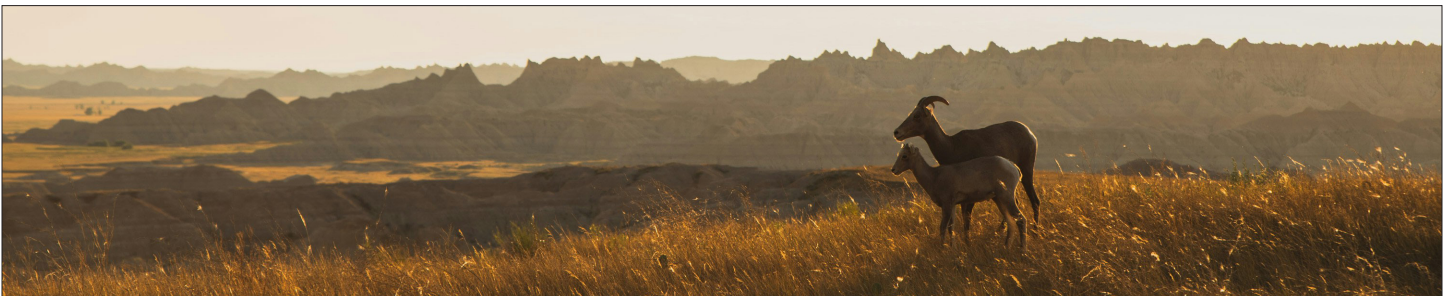
Announcement...

The North Dakota Unified Certification Program (UCP) will provide additional guidance to DBE firms regarding the IFR reevaluation process once the public comment period has concluded. Please refrain from submitting any documentation until you receive specific instructions from the NDDOT UCP.

Upcoming Bid Letting Meeting

[Click Here](#) to access the NDDOT website where you will find the link to join the meeting.

[Click Here](#) to view the slides from the October 10 DBE Industry Update Meeting.



STRESS MANAGEMENT FOR BUSINESS OWNERS



Running a small business can be incredibly rewarding, but it also comes with its fair share of challenges. From managing finances to overseeing operations, to hiring employees, to ensuring customer satisfaction, small business owners often find themselves juggling more responsibilities than they expected to when they started their management journey. Without proper care and preparation, that pressure can lead to stress that lowers both your quality of life and your business performance. With that in mind, this article will look at some common causes of stress, some reasons to care about alleviating it, and some habits you can develop to alleviate stress long term.

Naming the Cause

Reducing stress starts with understanding stress, and while the specific causes of your stress will be unique to your situation, it helps to give yourself time to think about those causes and categorize them. Whether your stress comes from isolation and overwork caused by working long hours at unusual times, financial uncertainty when your business isn't doing as well as you hoped, burnout from years of dealing with hard work and compounding stressors, or something else entirely, labeling the root cause of your stress can help it feel less overwhelming and more beatable. It also serves as an important reminder that stress is a common experience. Many people encounter stress, and the challenges you are facing have been addressed and managed by others.

Developing Long Term Stress Management Habits

Responding to stress by trying to endure it and continue working may lead to additional issues over time. Developing habits to reduce your stress and improve your ability to handle stressful situations can lead to improvements in your

mental and physical health, as well as better performance in your business activities. With that in mind, let's look at a few strategies you can implement in your life to manage stress actively.

Plan Ahead: Creating a schedule is a great way to ease the anxiety of surprises in your workday. A schedule helps you know what you can expect from any given day, week, or month, and how much time you should spend on each task. This can help focus your mind and make your responsibilities feel less overwhelming. This won't eliminate surprises, though, so remember to build buffers into your schedules so that you have space to adapt when unexpected challenges appear.

Take Time Off Work: The best thing you can do to combat stress caused by overwork is to give yourself time away from your job. Don't let your vacation days go to waste. Taking days off and letting yourself unwind will improve your productivity, letting you get more done when you return to work. On a smaller scale, taking scheduled breaks during your workday and limiting the number of hours you work overall can significantly improve your health and your ability to handle stress. It's easy to fall into the trap of thinking you need to work constantly to keep your business growing, but in the long run, having periods of rest will result in greater productivity and reduced burnout.

Delegate: Many business owners struggle because they take too heavy of a workload and force themselves to be responsible for all aspects of their company on too granular of a level. This can quickly become overwhelming, creating stress and making it difficult to focus on any specific task, reducing your productivity overall. If you're not the only employee of your company, remember to delegate tasks that don't require your involvement. Spreading the work your business requires more evenly between its employees will result in more even workloads that put less pressure on individuals and increase overall productivity. Additionally, since no one person is the best at every task needed to keep a business running, delegating responsibilities allows you to move tasks that aren't suited to your skill set to people who are better suited to doing them, which will help your company grow.

Develop Financial Buffers: Financial instability can significantly contribute to anxiety and stress for business owners. Even during periods of success, it is easy to become concerned about potential market fluctuations or legislative changes that could disrupt the supply chain. Developing a cash reserve is a fantastic way to reduce that anxiety by giving you the security of knowing that your company can survive periods of reduced income – it's also just good business. If you don't currently have a cash reserve, develop a strategy for building one and decide how much time you need that cash reserve to be able to carry your business for you to be able to breathe easily.



Build Relationships: It's easy for business owners to fall into isolating patterns that lead to anxiety and loneliness. Making an effort to combat this by forming friendships and finding a supportive community can go a long way towards mitigating this by giving you a social safety net that will give you a break from work and support you during times of stress.

Create Healthy Habits: Mental and physical health are inextricably linked, and improving your

body can improve your ability to handle stress. Work on developing a diet that supports your physical health, and add exercise into your routine, whether that be a social activity like joining your local pickleball league, something meditative like yoga, or going to the gym to lift weights and work towards strength goals. These activities will help your body be healthier and feel more resilient. They will also improve your mental health and give you time to focus on your own well-being. Simultaneously, make sure you get enough rest, both in relaxing downtime and actual sleep. A well-rested mind is both calmer and more alert and will benefit you when stressors enter your life.



Develop Hobbies: Many business owners tie much of their self-worth to the success of their business, which leads to their work remaining their focus even when they're not on the clock. If you find yourself falling into this habit, try to find hobbies that you enjoy and give yourself permission to get invested in something other than your business. Doing this offers your brain time to separate itself from your job and gives you something to be excited about and proud of aside from your company. If you feel overwhelmed by the pressure of your job, finding a hobby that lacks firm deadlines and doesn't make money can help make that journey calmer and more restorative for you.

These habits won't all be beneficial for everyone, and they won't solve all your problems right away, so don't be discouraged if the first idea you try doesn't help as much as you would like. No one is expecting you to fix your mental health overnight. Remember that improvement is a process that takes time, and each step forward is a cause for celebration.

Upcoming Events/Training

**Oct.
21**

Facility Safety Summit

Webinar

Tuesday, October 21, 2025 | 10:00 A.M. CT | Cost: Free

[Learn More >](#)

**Oct.
23**

Sales Skills That Grow Your Business

Webinar

Thursday, October 23, 2025 | 12:00 P.M. CT | Cost: \$10

[Learn More >](#)

**Oct.
28**

Save Thousands with Smart Bookkeeping – Profit & Loss Statements, Balance Sheets, and More Explained

Webinar

Tuesday, October 28, 2025 | 12:00 P.M. CT | Cost: \$15

[Learn More >](#)

**Oct.
30**

AI Driven Personalized Safety Training in Construction

Webinar

Thursday, October 30, 2025 | 1:00 P.M. CT | Cost: Free

[Learn More >](#)

**Nov.
4**

Business Builders Workshop: Email Marketing That Works

Webinar

Tuesday, November 4, 2025 | 3:30 P.M. CT | Cost: Free

[Learn More >](#)

**Nov.
12**

Effectively Managing Subcontractors in an Evolving Landscape

Webinar

Wednesday, November 12, 2025 | 2:00 P.M. CT | Cost: Free

[Learn More >](#)



Attending Trade Shows: Maximizing ROI



Attending trade shows can be a game-changer for small businesses, offering unparalleled opportunities to network, showcase products, and gain valuable insights into industry trends. However, they require strategic planning to see beneficial returns. This article will explore practical steps you can employ to ensure your small business gets the most out of trade shows. This article assumes you are setting up a physical booth, but that's not required for results.

Have a Goal

Having a presence at a trade show can be a costly and time-consuming endeavor, so before you begin, make sure you have a specific goal that attending a trade show will help you achieve. It might be expanding awareness of your brand within your industry, advertising the launch of a new project, gaining new customers, or something else entirely, but it should be specific and valuable. It should also be measurable, so try to frame your goal in a way that allows you to quantify the results of your trade show attendance.

Pick the Right Shows

Not all trade shows are equally valuable for all businesses. Do research before you commit to attending a specific show to make sure it is worth your time. A good trade show should focus on your industry, suit your business size,

be nearby, and attract your target customers. Monitoring the trade shows that your competitors attend can provide valuable insights and pose certain challenges that should be considered in your decision-making process. Many trade shows make information on attendees public, so review the material they provide about past and upcoming events. If there are gaps in information you want answered, don't be afraid to reach out and ask the organizers questions. Doing so can give you information as well as potential opportunities to collaborate with the organizers themselves.

Determine Your Budget

Many business owners are surprised by the cost of attending a trade show and end up spending too much or being disappointed by their offerings. To avoid this, you should decide on your budget before you begin making specific plans, so you can always operate with your funding limits in mind. As a baseline, you will need to account for the price of attending, the cost of your display as well as the cost of getting your display to the venue, the salaries and travel expenses of personnel, and the cost of extra goodies like freebies and bespoke marketing material.

Develop an Engaging Booth

Your booth will likely be the first impression other attendees will have of your business, so it needs to be good. However, it does not need to break the bank. What's important is that it's easily identifiable and memorable, so do your best to implement your branding into every aspect of your booth. It's also worth making sure that that branding includes interesting shapes and colors rather than just words. People find shapes easier to remember than words, so having a logo that pops can generate a lot of interest, even if the display is just a small table with a tablecloth and a banner. Whatever design you come up with, make sure that it supports your goal. If you want to create connections, adding a lounge area can help by encouraging people who are tired from walking around the trade show to sit down at your display, giving your staff a chance to strike up a conversation. If you want to advertise a new product, including installations that allow customers to interact with that product can make a big impact.



Choose your Staff Carefully and Train them Specifically

Sending your entire company to trade shows is unrealistic, so choosing who goes to shows and who stays behind is a crucial decision. Ideally, the people who are manning your booth should be upbeat, outgoing, and knowledgeable about your business. If possible, you will want at least two or three attendees. This allows your business to cover more ground at the show by letting some of your staff take breaks to recover their energy or walk around and engage with the rest of the trade show without leaving your display unattended. It also increases the feeling of activity around

your booth and makes it more likely that your personnel can engage a variety of customers. You can further increase your staff's ability to speak to varied needs by sending personnel from different departments of your business. For example, instead of sending two salespeople, it might be worth sending one salesperson with a developer who is an expert on the technical aspects of a product you want to advertise.

Once you have chosen your team, train them for the specific needs of the trade show. Have them rehearse product demonstrations, or roleplay interactions with potential customers. It can also be useful to have them practice setting up your booth, so that they know how early they need to arrive to get set up before trade show to begins.

Advertise your Attendance

Simply attending a trade show relies entirely on people happening upon your booth and being interested. You can significantly increase awareness of your presence by advertising your booth ahead of time. Post your plans to attend on social media and send personal messages to priority customers. Include information on the location of your booth, as well as any times at which your business will be speaking or giving presentations so that customers know when and where to find you.



Be Proactive

Once the event begins, make sure that you aren't just waiting for people to come to you. Move around the event and strike up conversations. Invite people nearby to check out your space. Be liberal about giving out your business cards and freebies to potential customers who pass by. You never know who might become interested in your offerings once they've established a personal connection. When people do approach you, you can be proactive by asking questions and gauging their needs so that you can tailor your pitch to each customer and improve your chances to create a connection.

Follow Up

The people attending trade shows interact with a lot of people over a very small period, so they might be really interested in doing business with you in the moment but forget over the course of the event. If you have been proactive about getting the contact information of people you interact with, taking the time to send a personal message in the form of an email, a phone call, or something else that feels appropriate can go a long way to making you stand out when they return to work and take stock of their new opportunities.

Trade shows can be a powerful investment for small businesses, but success depends on more than simply showing up. By setting clear goals, carefully selecting the right events, managing your budget, creating an engaging booth, training the right staff, promoting your attendance, actively engaging during the event, and following up afterward, you can turn a trade show into a high-return opportunity for growth. With thoughtful preparation and consistent action, your presence at a trade show can strengthen your brand, expand your network, and open doors to lasting business relationships.