

North Dakota Department of Transportation

DBE NEWSLETTER

— November 14, 2025 —

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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.

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 November 10 DBE Industry Update Meeting.



Announcement...

Reevaluation letters went out to all ND certified DBE firms on November 5, 2025, through the Certification & Compliance System (CCS) Q&A. You can access the letter in the Q&A section for your firm.

To complete your Q&A, you can follow these steps:

1. Login (<https://dotnd.diversitycompliance.com>)
2. On the left menu, click 'View' >> My Certifications
3. Click the 'Respond' Link to the right of your application (the bottom of the Applications section of Cert List)
4. Click on the Q&A tab (located at the top of the screen), then the 'Answer' link
5. Enter an answer in the "Answer" text box
6. Click on the 'Attach File' button
7. Click Browse >> double click on your document >> click Attach File button >> and Close Window
8. Select a document format
9. Click on Next/Review and Submit

Turning Uncertainty into Opportunity: How DBEs CAN THRIVE DURING THE INTERIM FINAL RULE RE-EVALUATION PERIOD

The re-evaluation period of the Interim Final Rule (IFR) has introduced a wave of uncertainty for Disadvantaged Business Enterprises (DBEs). But within this uncertainty lies a powerful opportunity: a chance to reassess, refine, and reimagine the future of your business. As one presenter wisely said during a recent industry meeting, "Choose peace over panic, and calm over chaos—and do what needs to be done."

Here's how DBEs can use this time to make meaningful strides forward:



STRENGTHEN RELATIONSHIPS

Relationships remain the foundation of sustainable business growth, and this is an ideal time to strengthen them. Reconnect with agency contacts and prime contractors by:

- Sending a brief note of appreciation
- Scheduling a check-in call
- Attending industry events where they'll be present

Small, genuine gestures help keep your business visible and reinforce your reliability. Show gratitude to the partners who have supported you and highlight successful collaborations to remind others of your value.

At the same time, explore new partnerships with other DBEs or complementary firms to expand your capabilities. When agencies and primes see that you are dependable, proactive, and collaborative, they'll remember you for your performance—not just your certification.

REASSESS AND REALIGN YOUR BUSINESS

Reassessing your business is essential as a business owner. The IFR re-evaluation period is the perfect opportunity to begin. Start by asking yourself three key questions:

- What are we doing well?
- Where can we improve?
- What do our clients value most?

These questions help you take a clear-eyed look at your operations and performance.

To go deeper, conduct a SWOT Analysis—a structured review of your Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats. This can reveal hidden potential, such as untapped markets or underutilized skills, and help you identify external risks like shifting regulations or increased competition. By using these insights to sharpen your focus, you can align your efforts with what you do best and position your business for long-term success—regardless of regulatory changes.



REFRESH YOUR APPROACH

Innovation doesn't always require a complete overhaul—it often starts with small, strategic changes that make a big impact. Refresh your branding and messaging so they capture your current capabilities, particularly if you've expanded into new services or adopted sustainable practices. Look for ways to streamline operations; this could involve adopting project management software to improve workflow or automating routine tasks to free up time for strategic planning. Additionally, exploring new technologies or service offerings can open doors to new markets and diversify your revenue streams. A construction DBE might begin offering drone-based site inspections, while a consulting DBE could add data analytics to their portfolio. A refreshed approach signals growth, adaptability, and resilience—qualities that primes and agencies look for in strong partners.

DEMONSTRATE OPERATIONAL EXCELLENCE

This is the time to double down on performance and precision. Strengthen internal systems like project tracking, invoicing, and compliance documentation to ensure your processes are efficient and error-free. Conduct internal audits to confirm alignment with agency requirements and address any gaps early. Most importantly, continue delivering outstanding results on your current contracts:

- Meet deadlines
- Uphold safety standards
- Communicate proactively with clients

Demonstrating reliability, professionalism, and excellence now will position your business as a trusted professional partner for future opportunities.

BE STRATEGIC AND COLLABORATIVE

Being strategic and collaborative is essential for DBEs navigating the current climate. Right now, businesses have the opportunity to think creatively not just about what they offer, but how they engage with others. In uncertain times, strategic collaboration can open doors that competition alone cannot. Consider partnering with complementary firms to offer bundled or integrated services that appeal to primes and agencies. Seek out opportunities to join industry organizations or minority contractor associations, where you can gain access to insider updates, training, and networking opportunities. Approaching this period with composure and creativity—rather than panic—will help you form meaningful alliances and uncover new opportunities for growth. Panic leads to reactive decisions, while calm allows for strategic thinking. By remaining composed and focused, DBEs can position themselves as reliable, forward-thinking partners—qualities that are highly valued in uncertain times.

SHARE ACCURATE INFORMATION AND ADVOCATE

In times of change, misinformation can spread quickly making it more important than ever for DBEs to be a source of truth and clarity. One of the most impactful things you can do is share official updates from trusted sources, such as government agencies, industry organizations, and reputable news outlets.

If there are changes to certification requirements or contract opportunities, make sure your team and partners are informed with accurate, timely information.

Educating your internal team is equally critical, hold briefings, send out summaries, or host Q&A sessions to ensure everyone understands what's happening and how it affects your business.

Beyond your own organization, advocate for your business and your DBE community by participating in public forums, joining advisory boards, or contributing to industry discussions. This positions you not only as a reliable partner but also as a leader who is actively shaping the future. In a landscape where confusion can lead to missed opportunities, being a beacon of truth helps build trust, credibility, and influence.



BUILD AND PROTECT YOUR REPUTATION

Your reputation is one of your most valuable business assets and protecting it should be a top priority, especially during times of uncertainty. Strengthening your reputation starts with consistently delivering on your promises. Whether it's meeting project deadlines, staying within budget, or maintaining high-quality standards, reliability builds trust with clients and partners.

- Clear communication is equally important:
- Keep stakeholders informed
- Respond promptly to inquiries
- Be transparent about challenges and solutions

Staying visible in your industry also reinforces your credibility—attend conferences, participate in panels, contribute to trade publications, or share updates on social media platforms like LinkedIn. These actions remind others of your expertise and commitment.

You've already faced and overcome challenges to get where you are today—and this moment is no different. With resilience, consistency, and strategic focus, you can navigate this period of change and emerge even stronger.

The Interim Final Rule may bring uncertainty, but it also brings possibility. DBEs can rise above the noise, refine their operations, and position themselves as trusted, indispensable partners, not just certified businesses. Take a moment to breathe, reflect, and rebuild with confidence. You've done hard things before, and you've got this.

Upcoming Events/Training

**Nov.
18**

Expert Website Reviews - Submit Your Site for a Chance to be Reviewed Live

Webinar

Tuesday, November 18, 2025 | 12:00 P.M. CT | Cost: \$15

[Learn More >](#)

**Dec.
10**

Managing the OSHA 300 Log: Correctly describing and recording incidents

Webinar

Wednesday, December 10, 2025 | 1:00 P.M. CT | Cost: Free

[Learn More >](#)

Dec. 11

Safety by the Numbers-Tracking KPIs That Power Performance and Profit

Webinar

Thursday, December 11, 2025 | 1:00 P.M. CT | Cost: Free

[Learn More >](#)

Effective Leadership Skills for Business Owners



Leadership is more than just a title, it's a skill. For business owners, effective leadership is the cornerstone of building resilient teams, fostering innovation, and navigating the complexities of the modern market. Whether you're managing a startup or steering a well-established company, the ability to lead well is essential for long term growth. In this article we will explore some key leadership skills every business owner should cultivate to inspire their team, drive performance, and create lasting success for their company.

Vision

As the head of your business, it's your responsibility to define its trajectory. This means that you need to know where you want the company to go, whether it be expanding into new markets, increasing revenue, or reaching a broader customer base, but the vision you need to develop should be more in depth than an end point. You also need to define the path your company needs to take to reach that goal, and how the team you're building supports that journey. If you want to enter new markets, your vision for your company should include the markets you want to access, what you have to offer new customers in those markets, and what the process for breaking into those markets will look like. This isn't easy, though, and you shouldn't expect to have that level of granularity already planned out when you begin your business. Rather, this is a skill that you will develop over time alongside your understanding

of the market landscape, your business capabilities, and your own desires. As your knowledge and experience grow, so will your ability to forecast your trajectory and make accurate, attainable predictions that can guide your company's operations. It's important to make sure that this vision is being regularly examined and refined to make sure that it remains in line with what you want and what you can realistically achieve.

Communication

If you want your company to progress towards the vision you're developing, you need to be able to convince other people of the value of that vision and their role in it. That's where communication comes in. As a business owner, your ability to communicate is vital to leading a healthy team. You need to be able to give orders, provide direction, and deliver feedback to employees within your business as well as partners outside of it, and that requires an ability to deliver that information in a manner that is clear and positive so that it feels actionable. However, communication does not flow purely from you to others, and being able to listen is just as important as being able to speak. Encouraging a culture of feedback and conversation and listening to what others have to say gives you access to new perspectives and can dramatically improve your business's capabilities.

Delegation

An often-undervalued skill in leaders is the ability to delegate work. Whether it be out of a sense of obligation to be doing the most work, the urge to micromanage every aspect of the business you've worked so hard developing, or something else entirely, it's easy to fall into a habit of taking on more than you can handle for the sake of your company, but that habit can hold your company back from reaching its highest value, and it can burn you out and make it harder for you to do the work you do need to do. As your business grows and you hire more people to help you run it, developing an understanding of which tasks you need to do and which are better handed off to someone

else is a vital part of being an effective leader. Remember to account for not only your own workload and skill set, but those of your employees as well, so that you can identify who is best suited to each task while making sure that you aren't overloading individuals with too much work. When everyone is working at a sustainable level and doing the jobs that are best suited to their capabilities, your company will flow more smoothly and improve its profitability over time.



Conflict Management

No matter how smoothly your business runs, there will be moments of conflict. This is natural, normal, and can even be helpful to your company if it's handled properly. When conflict arises, it's important to minimize its effects on overall team cohesion by focusing on productive methods of resolution. To do this, remain impartial and try to discover the underlying causes of conflict so that you can address the problem at the root. Once you understand

what's wrong, frame the conflict as an opportunity to grow and improve as a team whenever possible, and emphasize the importance of empathy and communication in resolution. If you find it difficult to lower tensions enough to reach the point of being able to employ these ideas, studying conflict mitigation techniques can be an important starting point.

Decisiveness

As a business owner, you are the ultimate decision maker for your company. Your business relies on your decision making for its success. For this reason, the ability to commit to a course of action is key. You must be able to, as the person with the clearest idea of the company vision, think strategically and make decisions to guide it towards that vision. This often means making decisions quickly amidst uncertainty, so part of learning to be decisive is learning to think quickly without rushing, to understand how much time you can afford to spend gathering information to inform your decision.



An important aspect of decisiveness is being able to handle the results of those decisions in a positive way. Whether your choices result in positive or negative effects, you must be ready to review the choices, learn from the process you used to make them, and incorporate those lessons into the next decision you need to make.

This is far from an exhaustive list of skills business owners need, but it's a valuable set of basics that, when incorporated into your leadership, can create a solid foundation for future growth.

Did You Know...

DBE Reimbursement Program Update

As you may know, the North Dakota Department of Transportation (NDDOT) Disadvantaged Business Enterprise (DBE) Supportive Services program is funded through the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA). At this time funding for the DBE Supportive Services program has not been allocated for the upcoming year.

As a result, funding for the DBE Training Reimbursement program has been discontinued for this fiscal year. NDDOT looks forward to resuming the DBE Training Reimbursement program if and when funding allocations are received. If you have any questions, please feel free to reach out to the NDDOT Civil Rights team or the Supportive Services Team at dbe@projectsolutionsinc.com