



Extended Term Program: Overview & Guidelines

Extended Term Program Overview

The Extended Term Program extends the certification period for a recently graduated business that was previously CERT certified as a small (SBE), small woman-owned (WBE), and/or small minority-owned (MBE) business enterprise. The Extended Term Program is only available to Sector 23 “Construction” businesses.¹

Definitions

CERT JPA Executive Board (“CERT Executive Board”): The governing body of the Central (CERT) Certification Program.

CERT Certified Business: A business that is actively certified in the CERT Program. To be actively certified, such a business has been approved for certification and has not let its certification lapse.

Conciliation: Meeting held between an Extended Term Mentor-Mentee team and a CERT Program designee in the event that the Extended Term Mentor-Mentee team is failing to meet established goals and terms of their Mentor-Mentee agreement. Such meetings will be scheduled at least twenty (20) business days in advance.

Mentor: A firm that was previously CERT certified and has been accepted and authorized by the CERT Executive Board to take part in the Extended Term Program. Such a firm is willing to invest time and resources to teach critical business strategies to a mentee from the CERT certified community.

Formal Mentoring: A formal mentor-mentee program may consist of, and/or possess, the following characteristics:

1. A professional, institutionalized program such as the one belonging to the US Small Business Administration’s 8(a) Business Development program, the Construction Partnership Program, or any program developed by a prime contractor.
2. A careful recruitment process, such as choosing a knowledgeable mentor.
3. A governing organization, authority, or overseer which holds the mentor and mentee accountable.
4. Defined roles and performance standards for the mentor and mentee.
5. Guidelines, for both the mentor and mentee that must be adhered to.
6. Established mentor and mentee goals that were jointly developed with attached outcomes.
7. Scheduled mandatory sessions between mentor and mentee that may include formal training or independent work.
8. Formal evaluations, success metrics, succession strategies for both the mentor and the mentee.
9. Strong motivational and leadership ability on the part of the mentor.
10. Leadership and opportunities provided by the mentor to grow the mentee’s business, where the mentor introduces, arranges, and plans strategic meetings with key people and attends those meetings with the mentee.
11. Structured feedback provided by the mentor to the mentee for areas of improvement.
12. A relationship between the mentor and mentee that may develop beyond the completion of the program and can include teaming and joint ventures.

¹ For explanation as to the rationale, please see the materials on our website explaining the creation of the Extended Term Program following the Size Standard Review.

Informal Mentoring: An informal mentor-mentee program may consist of, and/or possess, the following characteristics:

1. Any program that is not managed, structured, or not formally recognized.
2. Structured or casual meetings conducted to address business strategies, concerns, or business development.
3. The mentee benefits from the knowledge, influence and advice of the mentor.
4. Frequent face to face meetings.
5. Shared information that is trusted and proven.
6. Parties that commit to learn and grow together.
7. There is a friendly and symbiotic relationship.
8. The outcomes for success are not measurable.
9. Intangible goals.
10. A relationship that may lead to a teaming or joint venture, however, nothing is concrete.

Mentor-Mentee Liaison: A CERT Program staff person assigned by the CERT Executive Board to monitor and report the progress of the Extended Term Mentor-Mentee teams. The liaison will also serve as a resource for Mentors and Mentees to which he/she is assigned.

Mentee: A CERT certified company seeking the opportunity to learn from an Extended Term Business.

Program Terms

Duration: The duration of the Extended Term for an approved Extended Term Business is two (2) years. An additional twelve (12) months may be available upon completion of the first (2) years, provided a request is submitted and the supporting documentation for such an extension is reviewed and approved by the CERT Executive Board.

CERT Program Database Status: Extended Term Businesses will hold all rights and privileges of any CERT certified business.

Misstatement of Fact: If the CERT Executive Board determines that an Extended Term Business made any misstatement of fact in its application for certification or in any information submitted in support of the application, whether intentional or by mistake, the CERT Executive Board may determine to either:

- a) Not certify the business for participation in the Extended Term Program; or
- b) Terminate the certification of the business, if already granted.

Termination: The CERT Program may deny a pending application, terminate an existing certification, or investigate an application and/or certification at any time, whichever the case may be, in the event that:

- a) A change in circumstances affecting a business' standing as a CERT certified business in such a way that the business no longer meets the certification requirements;
- b) A material misstatement of fact is made in a business' application or any new information is discovered or submitted in regards to its application; or
- c) The CERT Program finds that an Extended Term Business has failed to meet its obligations set forth in its application.

Appeal— In the event an applicant is denied for certification, a letter of denial will be sent to the applicant detailing the reason(s) for denial. The letter of denial will include a paragraph describing the applicant’s right to appeal the certification decision within fourteen (14) business days of the letter’s date. An applicant’s appeal shall be submitted in writing and sent to the address below.

**CERT Program Certification Review Committee
City Hall 280
15 West Kellogg Boulevard
Saint Paul, Minnesota 55102**

An applicant’s appeal must successfully address the issue(s) that caused its application to be denied. The appeal shall provide further supporting and demonstrative documentation in order to satisfy the requirements of being a CERT certified business. In the event an applicant elects to appeal the denial of her/his application, a separate review of the appeal will be conducted.

If an appeal is denied, the applicant must wait twelve (12) months from the date of the letter of denial to reapply for certification.

Flexibility of Program Terms: The Board reserves the right to issue rules, regulations, or informal guidelines as may be necessary to effectuate the purposes of this program on a continual basis.

Requests for Additional Information: The CERT Program reserves the right to request for additional information from a business throughout the duration of its Extended Term status.

Qualification and Application Requirements

To qualify as an Extended Term Business, a business must:

1. Have been previously CERT certified as a SBE, WBE, and/or MBE;
2. Have graduated out of the CERT Program;
3. Have its primary NAICS code within Sector 23 “Construction”;
4. Apply for Extended Term status within the timeframe noted in the graduation letter received from the CERT Program; and
5. Be approved by the CERT Executive Board for Extended Term status.

All graduated CERT businesses seeking Extended Term status must submit a completed Extended Term Program Application. The application process consists of two key components:

1. Extended Term Program Application
2. Extended Term Program Mentor-Mentee Application

Extended Term Program Application Requirements

The Extended Term Program Application must be submitted within twenty-one (21) business days after receiving notification of graduation from the CERT Program. This application must include the following:

- A. All Extended Term applicants must submit documentation:

1. Demonstrating current spends to other CERT businesses for the previous twelve (12) months.
 2. Demonstrating its workforce inclusion efforts for the previous twelve (12) months.
 3. Disclose any present formal or informal mentor-mentee relationships.
- B. A brief narrative to the CERT Executive Board as part of its application, explaining its current policies and practices pertaining to:
1. Working with other local small, small minority-owned, and small woman-owned businesses; and
 2. Diversifying its workforce on projects.
- C. A brief proposal providing measureable deliverables that will be periodically evaluated in reports and check-ins submitted by the Extended Term Business to the Program. These deliverables will pertain to how the Extended Term Business seeks to engage other local small, small minority-owned and small woman-owned businesses. In addition, it will address any plans related to providing opportunities for females and minorities in terms of workforce inclusion on projects. During the first year of the Extended Term status, such reports will be quarterly. During the second year, such reports will be bi-annually.
- D. All businesses participating in the Extended Term Program must engage in a formal Mentor-Mentee relationship with a smaller CERT certified business pursuant to the Extended Term Program Mentor-Mentee requirements. A signed commitment to select a mentee by the end of the 1st Quarter of the business' extended term status must be submitted.

See Appendix A for Extended Term Application Form.

Extended Term Mentor-Mentee Requirements

The Extended Term Mentor-Mentee Application must be submitted jointly by the Extended Term Mentor-Mentee team (described below) within five (5) business days of the beginning of the 2nd Quarter of the Extended Term Business' Extended Term status. Please see Appendix C for complete application forms.

Mentor-Mentee Team Term

The term of the Extended Term Mentor-Mentee relationship is two (2) years, with the possibility of a third year. During this time, both the Mentor and Mentee will participate in the program as outlined below. Upon completion of the program, while we hope the relationship will continue, the program and incentives with the CERT Program will end.

Criteria

Both the Mentor and Mentee must be in good standing with the CERT Program and its CERT Executive Board member jurisdictions, meaning that:

1. It must not be debarred or suspended from working with any jurisdiction;
2. Owners should not be on probation or parole for felonies;
3. Taxes should be paid in a timely fashion;
4. The business and its representatives should not make false or misleading statements, especially in regards to financials;
5. Applicant firms should not have civil judgments for matters involving issues of integrity, including matters pertaining to fraud.

Mentor Criteria

To be eligible to participate as a Mentor, at time of application, firms must:

1. Be approved for participation in the Extended Term Program.
2. Have completed the Mentor Application portion of the Extended Term Mentor-Mentee Application.

Mentee Criteria

To be eligible for application to participate as a Mentee, at time of application, firms must:

1. Be a currently CERT certified business.
2. Be classified in the CERT Program as having a Sector 23 "Construction" NAICS code as its primary code.
3. Not have participated as Mentee previously with the CERT Program Extended Term Mentor-Mentee Program.

Sample Mentor and Mentee Responsibilities

Below is a non-comprehensive list describing various responsibilities that parties may agree to.

Sample Mentor Responsibilities

A Mentor may pledge to:

1. Provide guidance based on past business experiences.
2. Create a positive coaching relationship and climate of open communication.
3. Help Mentee identify problems and solutions.
4. Lead Mentee through problem solving processes.
5. Offer constructive criticism in a supportive way.
6. Share tools for success and lessons learned.
7. Assign "homework", if applicable.
8. Refer Mentee to other business associates.
9. Be honest about business expertise of the Mentor.
10. Solicit feedback from Mentee.
11. Co-create meeting agendas.
12. Come prepared to each meeting to discuss issues.

Sample Mentee Responsibilities:

A Mentee may pledge to:

1. Shape the overall agenda for the relationship.
2. Establish realistic and attainable expectations.
3. Be open in communicating with your Mentor.
4. Establish priority issues for action or support.
5. Do not expect your Mentor to be an expert in every facet of business.
6. Solicit feedback from your Mentor.
7. Identify issues for discussion and co-create meeting agendas.
8. Come prepared to each meeting to discuss issues.

Mentor and Mentee Team Responsibilities:

The Mentor-Mentee team may pledge to:

1. Identify roles the Mentor can play to help the Mentee achieve goals.
2. Create a Development Plan that includes a curriculum to achieve agreed upon goals, as well as, sets milestones to monitor success of reaching goals.
3. Determine level of structure in the relationship.
4. Communicate on a regular basis.
5. Set the agenda for each meeting.
6. Commit the appropriate staff for the activity and level of complexity to program.
7. Hold regular meetings.
8. Teaming and joint ventures.
9. Report to the Extended Term Program monthly (required).

Consequences: Mentor or Mentee Failing to Comply

If the Program finds that a participating business Mentor or a Mentee has failed to meet its obligations set forth in its Mentor-Mentee agreement, the Mentor or the Mentee shall be notified of the failure and given thirty (30) days to cure the failure. If the Program finds that the efforts made to cure the failure are insufficient then,

- a) If the failing party is the Mentor: the business' participation in Extended Term will go under investigative review by the Executive Board as to whether the Mentor business' participation in the Mentor-Mentee program should be terminated. During the time of the investigation, the Mentor business' Extended Term status will be suspended.
- b) If the failing party is a Mentee: the business' Mentee privileges shall be revoked for a period of two (2) years following the date of revocation, and the Mentor party to the agreement will be given thirty (30) days to select a replacement Mentee.

Additional Information

A CERT Program staff person will be assigned as a Mentor-Mentee Liaison. As such, this staff person will be the primary point of contact for the Mentor-Mentee team if any issues arise with the team. In addition, if the Extended Term Mentor-Mentee team is failing to meet established goals and terms of their Mentor-Mentee Agreement, conciliation may be held, as defined above.