ALABAMA UNIFIED CERTIFICATION PROGRAM

Alabama Department of Transportation
Alabama State Port Authority
City of Mobile

To: Prospective New DBE/ACDBE Certification Applicants
From: ALUCP
Date: September 29, 2026
Subject: Personal Narrative Requirement for New DBE/ACDBE Certification Applications

All businesses seeking initial certification as a Disadvantaged Business Enterprise (DBE) or Airport Concession Disadvantaged Business Enterprise (ACDBE) through the Alabama Unified Certification Program (ALUCP) must submit a completed Personal Narrative (PN) as part of the initial DBE certification application package.

The PN is required in addition to the Uniform DBE Certification Application, Personal Net Worth Statement, and all other supporting information and documents required for DBE/ACDBE certification. Submission of a PN does not replace any other eligibility requirement. Applicants must still demonstrate that the firm meets all applicable certification requirements under 49 CFR Part 26, Subpart D, and, for ACDBE applicants, 49 CFR Part 23, including the requirements concerning business size, ownership, management, and control.

A new DBE/ACDBE certification application must include, as applicable:

- A completed and signed USDOT Uniform DBE Certification Application.
- A completed Personal Narrative for each owner whose social and economic disadvantage is relied upon for DBE/ACDBE certification.
- A completed and current Personal Net Worth Statement for each disadvantaged owner.
- Financial information relevant to the owner's claimed economic disadvantage.
- All supporting documentation required by the Uniform Application Form and requested by the Alabama Unified Certification Program.
- Documents necessary to evaluate the firm's ownership, management, and control.
- Any additional information requested during the ALUCPs review of the application.

Sincerely,

Jeremiah Baileynemard
ALDOT DBE Liaison Officer

Jeremiah Baileynemard

cc: Alabama Department of Transportation (ALDOT)
Alabama State Port Authority
City of Mobile

Purpose of the Personal Narrative

The purpose of the Personal Narrative (PN) is to demonstrate individualized Social and Economic Disadvantage (SED) in accordance with the USDOT Final Rule that became effective on September 25, 2026.

Under the FR, all previously certified Disadvantaged Business Enterprises (DBE) and Airport Concessions Disadvantaged Business Enterprises (ACDBE) are required to submit a Personal Narrative. This PN must provide clear and factual information describing personal experiences of disadvantage.

The Personal Narrative replaces the prior reliance on presumed disadvantage based on membership in certain protected groups.

Guidelines

When preparing your Personal Narrative, please adhere to the following guidelines:

1. Write in your own words.
   The narrative must be written by the majority owner(s) whose disadvantage is being claimed.
2. Be honest, factual, and specific.
   Describe real events, including dates or time frames, locations, and individuals or organizations involved. It can be from any point in the owner's life within American society.
3. Race and gender are characteristics that shall not be used as a rebuttable presumption for disadvantage under the final rule. However, we will consider the individual experiences and circumstances, including discrimination, social barriers, and economic disadvantage, that is written in the Personal Narrative.
4. Focus on personal experiences.
   Describe barriers to access, opportunity, or advancement in:
   - Education
   - Employment
   - Business formation or growth
5. Remain organized and concise.
   The narrative should be detailed enough to clearly explain each experience without unnecessary repetition.

Required Narrative Content

Your Personal Narrative should describe one or more significant SED experiences. Each experience must clearly demonstrate disadvantage and its impact on your education, employment, or business history (including current or previously owned firms).

Areas of Consideration

1. Education

- Limited access to quality schools, guidance, or mentorship
- Denial of equal access to institutions of higher education
- Exclusion from social or professional associations with students or educators
- Denial of educational honors rightfully earned
- Social patterns or pressures that discouraged pursuit of professional or business education, including but not limited to:
    - Unsheltered or low-income status
    - Limited English proficiency
    - Rural geography
    - Grooming or dress requirements

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2. Employment

- Limited advancement opportunities
- Unequal treatment in hiring, promotions, pay, fringe benefits, or working conditions
- Retaliation by an employer
- Social patterns or pressures that channeled the individual into non-professional or non-business fields

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3. Business History

- Economic hardship or unequal access to credit or capital
- Obtaining credit or capital under commercially unfavorable conditions
- Exclusion from business or professional organizations
- Limited opportunities to scale due to lack of exposure, mentorship, or resources
- Difficulty establishing credibility with lenders, suppliers, or prime contractors

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Required Incident Format

For each incident described in your narrative, clearly explain who, what, where, when, why, and how the disadvantage occurred. Incidents are most easily evaluated when presented in the following order:

1. Who
   Identify who committed the action that caused the disadvantage (e.g., an individual, organization, or institution). Specific names are preferred but not required.
2. What
   Describe the specific conduct or action that resulted in disadvantage.
3. Where
   Identify where the disadvantage occurred. The incident must have taken place within American society.
4. When
   Identify when the disadvantage occurred. Exact dates are preferred but not required if a clear time frame is provided. Disadvantage may have occurred at any point in your life.
5. Why
   Explain why the conduct was more likely the result of a social barrier or disadvantage, rather than unrelated or neutral circumstances. A general assertion alone is not sufficient.
6. How
   Explain how the disadvantage affected your ability to enter into or advance in the business world.

   Note: Offensive or inappropriate conduct alone is insufficient unless it resulted in a tangible negative impact.

Certification Statement

Conclude your Personal Narrative with the following certification:

"I certify that the information provided in this narrative is true and correct to the best of my knowledge."

Include:

Business name Owner's printed name

Signature Date