

USDOT Issues a Welcome Update to Its DBE Database – But Errors Abound

Article By:

The United States Department of Transportation (USDOT) recently updated its search page to verify Disadvantaged Business Enterprise (“DBE”) denials and decertifications as well as publishing decisions that the USDOT makes on certification appeals.

While this new functionality is welcome, it is also filled with bugs – including incorrectly listing some DBE businesses as having been *decertified*. This blog will give an overview of each of the new sections of the revamped USDOT DBE status website.

[Denied Firms](#)

This tab allows you to search firms that applied for DBE certification but were denied. It allow you to search via company name, owner name, state, application type and date range. The list of companies under this tab is incomplete- it lists only ten denied firms for 2023 throughout the entire country. That is clearly not complete. When you click on a denied company’s name, you will see the date of the denial, what agency issued the denial, and a general reason for the denial.

Because the information contained in this database is clearly incomplete, as this time it should not be considered a conclusive and exhaustive search of whether a company has been denied certification.

[Decertified Firms](#)

This tab allows you to search decertified firms by company name, owner name, decision type, state, application type and date range. This database is filled with errors- including incorrectly listing companies as decertified. It also provides decision dates that are for a date in the future – such as December 2023 when it is currently September 2023.

The errors in this database can and will cause harm to legitimately certified DBEs. Any DBE company that has faced a Proposal to Remove its certification should check this page to see if they are showing up as decertified – even if they defeated the Proposal to Remove or the Proposal to Remove was revoked. A client of mine was recently having trouble with the renewal of DBE certification in one state (we will call it State A). The company was getting questions about its decertification in another state (State B). Client has never been decertified in State B. State B had issued a Proposal to

Remove the certification, but quickly rescinded it when it realized it was based on an error. Client is listed in State B's DBE database as currently certified, but this USDOT database lists the company as decertified.

This is a significant issue that could trouble for many businesses, particularly those that maintain certifications in multiple states.

Searching All DBE Decisions

There are two tabs allowing you to search DBE decisions – one that allows searching by company name, owner name, docket number, appeal result, state, application type, issue, and date range, and another tab that allows you to text search the documents.

Please note that despite what the search tab says, the results will not search all DBE decisions that the USDOT has issued. For instance, the author of this blog has appealed a number of DBE matters to the USDOT, and only a portion of the appeal decisions issued on those cases appear in the search results. Further, the author of this blog has also requested copies of DBE appeal decisions via Freedom of Information ACT (FOIA) requests. A number of those appeal decisions also do not appear in this website database.

All in all, updates and greater information are a welcome change, but the errors found so quickly on this government website show that it is not a reliable source of information. We hope that the USDOT will resolve these issues, as a well-functioning website will allow for much greater transparency in the DBE process.

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