

## Utility Supplier Diversity Program Background

Under the authority of General Order 156, the California Public Utilities Commission (CPUC) created The Supplier Clearinghouse (**formerly known as the WMBE Clearinghouse**) to implement guidelines designed to encourage, recruit, and utilize Women- and Minority-owned Business Enterprises (WMBEs). All electric, gas, telecommunication, and water utility companies with gross annual revenues in excess of \$25,000,000 (and their regulated subsidiaries and affiliates) are required to participate in the supplier diversity program, and to develop and implement procedures to increase the utilization of WMBEs in their procurement activities. Procurement goals of 5% for Women and 15% for Minorities were initially established, and later augmented to include a 1.5% goal for Disabled Veterans. Information is on the CPUC's website under Utility Supplier Diversity Program.

### The Supplier Clearinghouse Cannot

- Make any representation of a WMBE's technical capability to perform with participating utility companies.
- Place verified WMBEs on utility company bid lists.
- Guarantee contract awards or business from participating utility companies.
- Involve itself in procurement-related decisions. Those are made by the utilities.

### Service-Disabled Veterans Business Enterprises

This applies only to California based companies. These businesses are verified through the State of California Office of Small Business Certification and Resources and not by the Clearinghouse. Their telephone number is: 916-375-4940

### Participating Utilities

AT&T  
California Water Service Co.  
California American Water  
Citizens Communications/ Frontier  
Comcast  
Golden State Water (A subsidiary of AWR)  
Pacific Gas & Electric (PG&E)  
PacifiCorp  
Pac-West Telecomm  
Park Water Co.  
Qwest Communications  
San Gabriel Water Co.  
San Jose Water Co.  
Sempra Energy/ San Diego Gas/ So. Calif. Gas  
Sierra Pacific Power Co.  
Southern California Edison Co.  
Southwest Gas Corp.  
Sprint Communications  
Suburban Water Systems (Southwest Water Co.)  
Surewest Company  
Verizon/ Verizon Wireless (MCI)  
Wild Goose Storage

### The Clearinghouse recognizes and accepts certificates from these Comparable Certifying Agencies (may be used one time only):

National Minority Supplier Development Council (NMSDC) and affiliates  
Women's Business Enterprise National Council (WBENC) and affiliates  
U.S. Small Business Administration (SBA) (8a or SDB Programs Only)



## CPUC Supplier Clearinghouse

Administered by ASIAN, Inc.

### San Francisco Main Office:

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San Francisco, CA 94103

Telephone 800-359-7998

415-928-6892

Facsimile 415-921-0182

### To Request An Application Package

Application packages are available through our regional offices or you may download the application from our website.

San Francisco: 415-928-6892

Toll Free: 800-359-7998

Website: [www.asianinc.org](http://www.asianinc.org)

## ***Contracting Opportunities for Women and Minority Entrepreneurs***

Women and Minority Business Enterprise (WMBE) verification allows qualified vendors to partake in and market themselves with those participating Public Utility Companies' Supplier Diversity Programs. A WMBE certificate may increase contracting opportunities for eligible prime- and sub-contractors.

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### **The Supplier Clearinghouse:**

ASIAN, Inc. is contracted by the CPUC to manage and operate the Supplier Clearinghouse. The office is located in San Francisco near the CPUC. The Clearinghouse accepts applications from businesses nation-wide. Our staff can answer questions concerning the program or about the application process.

### **Program Eligibility:**

The applicant concern must at least be 51% owned by a woman/ women (WBE) and / or ethnic minority persons (MBE) and those same people must manage and control the firm's primary day-to-day business operations. Ethnic minorities include African Americans, Asian-Pacific Americans, Native Americans, and Hispanics. Firms must be located in the United States or its territories; and the owners must be U.S. citizens or legal permanent residents. Ethnicity, citizenship, and control of the business must be adequately documented. The business must be operating but does not need to be currently doing business with the utilities. The Clearinghouse does not have size standards.

### **The Verification Process:**

The verification process adheres to the guidelines established by the CPUC's General Order 156. Other certification regulations are used as references to assist with the review as well. Majority ownership and management and control must be clearly established and evident. The verification process involves a thorough review of the completed application along with the required documents. In addition, supplemental documents, site visits, and other review techniques may be required in order to complete the review process. Only after a company is successfully verified will the Clearinghouse issue a certificate. Certification is not guaranteed. After a firm has been successfully verified the Clearinghouse provides the utilities with a current database of all verified WMBEs and Calif. based DVBEs. An edited version of the database is also available through the CPUC's public website at [www.cpuc.ca.gov](http://www.cpuc.ca.gov).

### **Review Time**

The average time to complete verification is approximately 45-90 days. It can vary widely, depending upon various factors at the time the application is received as well as the completeness of the application, the complexity of the applicant firm and the need for additional documents and/or site visit.

### **Verification Options:**

#### **Complete Clearinghouse Verification (CHS)**

All applicants must initially complete a Verification Application (VAP). Required documents must be submitted with the application for a CHS verification. Additional documentation and information may be required. A successful CHS certification will be valid for 3 years.

#### **Renewal Verification (RAP)**

After the Clearinghouse (CHS) has initially verified a firm, it must complete a renewal verification application (RAP) every three years

thereafter. Required documentation along with the application must be submitted and renewal is not guaranteed. A RAP must be submitted every 3 years in order to secure a renewal certificate. Failure to renew will lead to de-certification.

### **Comparable Agency Verification (CAV)**

If a company is currently verified by a comparable agency (see list), it may submit a copy of the other agency's certification in place of the required documents, along with the completed VAP. The Clearinghouse will verify the firm and mirror the other agency's expiration date as our expiration date. A copy of another agency's verification may also be used for re-verification. However, in either case a CAV certificate may be used only once. Thereafter, full Clearinghouse certification is required.

In addition, the CPUC has instructed the Clearinghouse to refrain from automatic acceptance of a CAV if there is reason to believe that it may not meet Clearinghouse standards. In that case, the company will be notified of the refrain and can apply for certification by submitting the required documents. When the complete application is received, a Clearinghouse WMBE eligibility review will be performed.

### **The Supplier Clearinghouse Verification:**

#### **Charges No Fees**

The Clearinghouse does not charge a fee

#### **Is A State Verification**

Our verification process is similar to that of federal regulating agencies and is mandated by the California Public Utility Commission, a state agency. All certified firms verified by the Clearinghouse are listed in a database that is accessible on the CPUC website.