

ECAT Disadvantaged Business Enterprise (DBE)

Objectives/Policy Statement Section 26.1, 26.23

Escambia County Area Transit has established a Disadvantaged Business Enterprise (DBE) program in accordance with regulations of the U.S. Department of Transportation (DOT), 49 CFR Part 26. Escambia County Area Transit has received Federal financial assistance from the Department of Transportation and as a condition of receiving this assistance Escambia County Area Transit has signed an assurance that it will comply with 49 CFR Part 26.

It is the policy of Escambia County Area Transit to ensure that DBEs as defined in part 26, have an equal opportunity to receive and participate in DOT–assisted contracts. It is also our policy:

1. To ensure nondiscrimination in the award and administration of DOT – assisted contracts;
2. To create a level playing field on which DBEs can compete fairly for DOT-assisted contracts;
3. To ensure that the DBE Program is narrowly tailored in accordance with applicable law;
4. To ensure that only firms that fully meet 49 CFR Part 26 eligibility standards are permitted to participate as DBEs;
5. To help remove barriers to the participation of DBEs in DOT assisted contracts;
6. To assist the development of firms that can compete successfully in the market place outside the DBE Program.

The Mass Transit Director is designated as the DBE Liaison Officer. In that capacity, he is responsible for implementing all aspects of the DBE program. Implementation of the DBE program is accorded the same priority as compliance with all other legal obligations incurred by Escambia County Area Transit in its financial assistance agreements with the Department of Transportation.

ECAT DBE Program Goal

For Fiscal Years 2025-2027, ECAT intends to expend at least 4% of its total DOT-assisted expenditures with qualified DBE firms.

State of Florida DBE Program Eligibility Requirements

Owner(s) must own 51 percent of the firm and be a member(s) of one of the following groups:

- Women (Regardless of race)
- Black Americans
- Hispanic Americans
- Native Americans
- Asian-Pacific Americans
- Subcontinent Asian Americans
- Any additional groups whose members are designated as socially and economically disadvantaged by the Small Business Administration (SBA) and has a personal net worth not to exceed \$1.32 million (minus the value of their principal residence and interest in the business).

What does Socially Disadvantaged mean?

Socially disadvantaged individuals are those who have been subjected to racial or ethnic prejudice or cultural bias within American society because of their identities as members of groups and without regard to their individual qualities. Social disadvantage must stem from circumstances beyond their control. Evidence of individual social disadvantage must include the following elements:

(A) At least one objective distinguishing feature that has contributed to social disadvantage, such as race, ethnic origin, gender, disability, long-term residence in an environment isolated from the mainstream of American society, or other similar causes not common to individuals who are not socially disadvantaged;

(B) Personal experiences of substantial and chronic social disadvantage in American society, not in other countries; and

(C) Negative impact on entry into or advancement in the business world because of the disadvantage.

What does Economic Disadvantage mean?

Economically disadvantaged individuals are socially disadvantaged individuals whose ability to compete in the free enterprise system has been impaired due to diminished capital and credit opportunities as compared to others in the same or similar line of business who are not socially disadvantaged. Each individual claiming economic disadvantage must describe the conditions which are the basis for the claim in a narrative statement, and must submit personal financial information.