



Small Business Assistance Center Frequently Asked Questions

www.cherokeebids.org

www.cherokeesbac.org

1. Who is eligible to use the resources and services of the Small Business Assistance Center (SBAC)?

Cherokee Nation Certified Indian Owned Businesses/Vendors or those Business/Vendors actively pursuing their Certification.

2. Do I go to the SBAC to become a Cherokee Nation Certified Indian Owned Business/Vendor?

No, you must apply and gain certification as a Cherokee Nation Certified Indian Owned Business/Vendor through the Cherokee Nation Tribal Employment Rights Office (TERO).

3. How do I become certified?

You must complete an application and submit it to the Tribal Employment Right Office (TERO). All documents required for your particular business must be present before the application will be considered complete. When the application is complete, a site visit may be conducted.

4. Where do I contact if I have questions while filling out the application?

Visit or contact the Tribal Employment Rights Office (TERO) in Tahlequah at (918) 453-5334 and request an application, or download the application from the website, www.cherokeebids.org, by following the 'Certification Process "How To" Guide' at the bottom of the first page. Also, the SBAC assists the TERO office by keeping some of their applications available to hand out or mail out.

5. Who do I contact if I have questions while filling out the application?

We recommend you ask the Tribal Employment Rights Office (TERO) specific application questions. Even if another department answers a quick question for you, please confirm the answer with the TERO Office. The Tribal Employment Rights Office and Cherokee Nation Certified Indian Owned Business/Vendors exist and operate under the Tribal Employment Rights Law, and must adhere to regulations and requirements under the law. The TERO Office is the expert on this law. If there is any part of the application process the SBAC can help with, the TERO Office may refer you back to us for assistance.

6. Once I submit my application, how long does it take to become officially certified?

Approximately 3 months, depending on how complete your submitted application and supporting documents were initially. You can shorten your time frame considerably just by ensuring you submit everything completely. The certification process will also shorten if the ownership and assets of your business are defined clearly in the supporting documentation.

7. How will I becoming certified help my business?

All things being equal, you will have preference for procurement awards. Once you are actively pursuing or have become certified, you are eligible to use all the resources of the SBAC. The SBAC will also continually be creating and announcing new advantages for certified vendors especially by partnering with the different purchasing departments and representatives of the Cherokee Nation and its various business enterprises. Becoming a Cherokee Nation Certified Indian Owned Business/ Vendor has also proved to be an excellent tool for networking and subcontracting with other Certified Businesses, and marketing to other tribes who wish to buy from Indian businesses but have no certification process of their own in place.

8. *Will I receive a pricing preference once I become certified?*

Under the newly revised law, there is no special automatic pricing preference for certified vendors. But, all things being equal, you will have preference for procurement awards. The SBAC was put in place to create advantages for Certified Businesses since the law no longer allows for the special pricing preference.

9. *How will I learn about procurement opportunities?*

The website, www.cherokeebids.org, was created for Certified Indian Owned Businesses/ Vendors to view bid announcements, request for proposals, and other procurement opportunities offered by the Cherokee Nation and its related entities. All procurement opportunities \$5,000 and above will be posted to this website and remain open for at least three working days. This site includes procurement opportunities from Cherokee Nation (CN), Cherokee Nation Enterprises (CNE), Cherokee Nation Industries (CNI), Housing Authority of the Cherokee Nation (HACN), and Cherokee Nation Home Health Services (CNHH). The site provides search tools to select specific procurement opportunities by defining search criteria and fields you choose. The site also provides a link to information about the Tribal Employment Rights Office. (TERO).

10. *What if I normally don't have access to the internet?*

The SBAC in Tahlequah and the Resource Center in Claremore provides computers and access to the internet for Certified Businesses.

11. *As a Certified Vendor, will I ever be contacted directly for any procurement opportunities?*

It is the initiative of the Cherokee Nation and its various business enterprises to buy from Certified Businesses as much as possible. The different Cherokee Nation entities' administration realize and are continuing to increase awareness within their own various organizations that this is another way to increase jobs within our own economy. The purchasing departments and representatives utilize the TERO listing of Certified Businesses and Vendors as much as possible when making their purchasing choices. It is very possible you will be contacted directly with a procurement opportunity, especially for those under \$5,000 not requiring them to be posted on the website.