



RHODE ISLAND AND PROVIDENCE PLANTATIONS
Executive Department
**GOVERNOR'S COMMISSION ON
DISABILITIES**

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RULES AND REGULATIONS PERTAINING TO

Chapter J. Disability Business Enterprises

Proposed on November 15, 1996
Public Hearing on December 16, 1996
Adopted on December 16, 1996 Effective on January 15, 1997
Technical Revisions on October 10, 1997
Advertised October 21, 1999
Public Hearing on November 22, 1999
Adopted December 13, 1999
Effective on March 6, 2000
Amendments proposed on April 23, 2001
Hearing June 11, 2001
Adopted July 18, 2001
Effective September 3, 2001
Technical Amendment Adopted September 13, 2003
Technical Amendment Adopted November 1, 2004
Amendments proposed on August 11, 2009
Public Hearing on September 14, 2009
Adopted on September 21, 2009
Effective on October 28, 2009

COMPILER'S NOTES:

Link to an endnote are ^{red super script} and web link are [blue](#) as below, move [⌨] to colored text and click to open. All forms references are available on line at www.disabilities.ri.gov

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I. STATUTORY AUTHORITY

RI GL 37-2.2 Disability Business Enterprises ¹

II. DEFINITIONS

A. “The Commission” shall mean the [Governor’s Commission on Disabilities](#) ².

B. The terms “A physical or mental impairment”; “Persons with disabilities” or “person with a disability”; “Rehabilitation facility”; “Small disadvantaged disability businesses owned and controlled by persons with disabilities”; “Vocational rehabilitation services”; and used in the context of “Products and Services” produced by persons with disabilities” are defined in RI GL 37-2.2-2 and “disadvantaged [disability] businesses” as used in the context of RI GL 37-2.2-1”.

C. The terms: “Construction”; “Contract”; “Contractor”; “Governmental entity”; “Procurement”; “Public agency”; “State agency”; “The State”, and as used in the context of “Procurement”, the term “services” are defined in RIGL 37-2-7 ³.

III. PURPOSE ⁴

The purpose of this regulation is to implement RIGL 37-2.2 and carry out the state’s policy ⁵ of supporting the fullest possible participation of small disadvantaged businesses owned and controlled by persons with disabilities or where sixty percent (60%) of the employees are persons with disabilities, or non-profit rehabilitation facilities in state funded and state directed public construction and projects and in state purchases of goods and services. This includes assisting disadvantaged disability businesses and non-profit rehabilitation facilities throughout the life of contracts in which they participate.

Whenever any products made, manufactured by, or services nonprofit rehabilitation facilities, or in profit making facilities where sixty percent (60%) of the work hours or direct labor is performed by employees who are disabled, meet the requirements of any department, institution, or agency supported, in whole or in part, by the state as to quantity, quality, and price, those products shall have preference over products or services from other providers.⁶

IV. CERTIFICATION OF DISADVANTAGED BUSINESS ENTERPRISES OR REHABILITATION FACILITIES⁷

- A. A disadvantaged disability business or rehabilitation facility shall apply to the disability business enterprise committee for certification as a “disadvantaged disability business or rehabilitation facility” by:
- B. Completing an on-line Rhode Island Vendor Information Program vendor registration process, including the selection of commodity codes indicating the products and services offered for sale to the State, and
- C. Submitting RI GCD Form J. “Disability Business Enterprise Application for Certification”.
- D. The Disability Business Enterprise Committee shall be entitled to request such additional documentation, as it deems necessary to adequately evaluate the application, and where appropriate, meet with the applicant to informally review the application, prior to issuing or rejecting its application for certification.
- E. The Disability Business Enterprise Committee shall, by majority vote of those members present and voting, certify or deny certification of each applicant at a scheduled meeting of the committee. The applicant shall be notified that the committee will be considering the application, at least 6 business days in advance of the meeting.
- F. Applicants shall receive written notification of the actions of the Disability Business Enterprise Committee concerning their application, within 6 business days of that action. The appeal procedures will be attached to the written notification of denial of certification.

V. ANNUAL RECERTIFICATION

- A. A disadvantaged disability business or rehabilitation facility shall annually apply for recertification, on the first day of December following the anniversary of the initial awarding of certification to the disability business enterprise committee as a “disadvantaged disability business or rehabilitation facility” by:
- B. Completing or updating on on-line Rhode Island Vendor Information Program vendor registration process, including the selection of commodity codes indicating the products and services offered for sale to the State, and
- C. Submitting RI GCD Form J “Disability Business Enterprise Application for Certification” and only supporting documentation that indicates changes since the last submission.

- D. The Disability Business Enterprise Committee shall be entitled to request such additional documentation, as it deems necessary to adequately evaluate the application, and where appropriate, meet with the applicant to informally review the application, prior to issuing or rejecting its application for recertification.
- E. The Disability Business Enterprise Committee shall, by majority vote of those members present and voting, certify or reject recertification of each applicant at a scheduled meeting of the committee. The applicant shall be notified that the committee will be considering the application, at least 6 business days in advance of the meeting.
- F. Applicants shall receive written notification of the actions of the Disability Business Enterprise Committee concerning their application, within 6 business days of that action. The appeal procedures will be attached to the written notification of rejection of certification.

VI. REVOCATION OF CERTIFICATION

- A. Grounds for revocation of DBE certification may include but are not limited to:
1. Failure to comply with disability business enterprise or purchasing statutes and/or regulations;
 2. Suspension or debarment by the State or Federal Government;
 3. Falsification of information on the application; and
 4. Failure to comply with federal and/or State wage requirements.
- B. The Disability Business Enterprise Committee shall, by majority vote of those members present and voting, revoke certification of a “disadvantaged disability business or rehabilitation facility” at a scheduled meeting of the committee. The “disadvantaged disability business or rehabilitation facility” shall be notified that the committee will be considering the application, at least 6 business days in advance of the meeting.
- C. The “disadvantaged disability business or rehabilitation facility” shall receive written notification of the actions of the Disability Business Enterprise Committee concerning their certification, within 6 business days of that action. The appeal procedures will be attached to the written notification of revocation of certification.

VII. PROCEDURE FOR APPEALING REJECTION OF CERTIFICATION / RECERTIFICATION OR REVOCATION OF CERTIFICATION

- A. In the event an applicant is not certified, recertified, or if certification is revoked, the applicant shall have the right to appeal said decision. The applicant shall submit, in writing, a request for a hearing within 20 business days of the receipt of the Disability Business Enterprise Committee’s denial of certification to the Commission.
- B. The Commission’s Executive Committee shall conduct the appeal hearing in accordance with the Administrative Appeals Act, RI GL § 42-35.

VIII. PREFERENCE FOR PRODUCTS AND SERVICES PRODUCED BY PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES⁸

- A. Whenever any products made or manufactured by, or services provided by a disadvantaged disability business or rehabilitation facility meet the requirements of any state agency as to quantity, quality, and price, those products or services shall have preference over products or services from other providers.
- B. All state agencies shall purchase such articles made or manufactured and services provided by persons with disabilities.
- C. Any political subdivision of the state may purchase those articles and services directly from those agencies.

IX. PROCUREMENT

- A. Implementation of the Disability Business Enterprise purchasing preference program shall be in accordance with purchasing rules and procedures established by the Chief Purchasing Officer for small disadvantaged businesses pursuant to section 37-2-9(b)(14)⁹ of the general laws.
- B. The Commission's Disability Business Enterprise Committee shall prepare a list (in cooperation with the state office of rehabilitation services) describing the styles, designs, sizes, and varieties of articles made by persons with disabilities and available services and subcontract work that those persons can provide.
 - 1. The list shall be created from information provided by participating disability business enterprises and rehabilitation facilities. The DBE Committee shall require such information as part of the application for certification or recertification.
 - 2. The Committee may evaluate the appropriateness of including items in the list by utilizing customer references provided by applicants.
 - 3. Such list shall be published as a catalog that includes commodity codes and shall be made available to all state entities, municipal entities, and the general public.
 - 4. The DBE Committee shall publish a catalog annually, but may, as it deems necessary, amend such catalog at any time to reflect changes in availability of commodities or services.
 - 5. The Chief Purchasing Officer shall utilize the list in implementing the program.
- C. Items in the catalog shall be subject to deletion based on a determination by the DBE Committee, that such items are not available for State purchase or that a certified "disadvantaged disability business or rehabilitation facility" has been unable to fulfill a contract for an item. Prior to the removal of any item for the catalog, the affected "disadvantaged disability business or rehabilitation facility" shall be given written notification of intent and provided an opportunity for a hearing at the next scheduled meeting of the DBE Committee. Petitioners shall be informed in writing of the DBE Committee's determination within six (6) business days after the meeting. The appeals procedures shall be contained in the notification.

X. OUTREACH

- A. State agencies and the Division of Purchasing shall periodically conduct meetings with disadvantaged disability businesses or rehabilitation facilities as appropriate, to inform them of procurement opportunities within the department or division.
- B. State agencies and the Division of Purchasing shall use DBE newspapers as part of their regular advertising.

XI. REPORTING

- A. The Division of Purchasing shall submit an annual report to the Disability Business Enterprise Committee of the following:
 - 1. listing of awarded contracts and value of procurements from small disadvantaged disability business or rehabilitation facilities for construction contracts;
 - 2. outreach efforts made by the Division during the previous quarter; and
 - 3. number of small disadvantaged disability businesses or rehabilitation facilities that submitted bids and were rejected.
- B. All entities awarded government contracts, through the Disability Business Enterprise Program, shall submit a report at the end of each quarter listing:
 - 1. the number persons with disabilities working employed on government contracts awarded, through the Disability Business Enterprise Program;
 - 2. the number of government contracts bid on, through the Disability Business Enterprise Program; and
 - 3. the number of government contracts awarded, through the Disability Business Enterprise Program.

XII. SEVERABILITY OF PROVISIONS

If any clause, sentence, paragraph or part of these rules or the application thereof to any person or circumstances shall, for any reason, be adjudged by a court of competent jurisdiction to be invalid, such judgment shall not affect, impair or invalidate the remainder of said sections or their application to other persons or circumstances.

XIII. FORMS

The Commission's staff shall prepare and revise the forms referenced above, as necessary.

XIV. ENDNOTES

These endnotes are the text of several general laws and are provided for clarification and are not part of the regulation. They are subject to revision, as amended by the General Assembly.

¹ RIGL Chapter 37-2.2 Disability Business Enterprises

RIGL 37-2.2-1. Short title and purpose.

This chapter shall be known as the "Disability Business Enterprises Act." The purpose of this chapter is to carry out the state's policy of supporting the fullest possible participation of small disadvantaged businesses owned and controlled by persons with disabilities or where sixty percent (60%) of the work hours or direct labor is performed by employees who are

persons with disabilities, or non-profit rehabilitation facilities in state funded and state directed public construction, public projects, and in state purchases of goods and services. This includes assisting disadvantaged disability businesses and non-profit rehabilitation facilities throughout the life of contracts in which they participate.

RIGL 37-2.2-2. Definitions.

As used in this chapter, the following words and phrases shall have the following meanings unless the context shall indicate another or different meaning or intent:

- (1) "Persons with disabilities" or "person with a disability" shall mean any individual who has a physical or mental impairment which constitutes a substantial barrier to employment as certified by the department of human services or the department of mental health, retardation, and hospitals.
- (2) "Products" shall mean any goods or merchandise provided by persons with disabilities if not less than sixty percent (60%) of the work hours or direct labor required for the products are performed by persons with disabilities.
- (3) "Rehabilitation facility" or "rehabilitation facilities" shall mean a facility which is operated for the primary purpose of providing vocational rehabilitation services to and gainful employment for persons with disabilities. The rehabilitation services, listed below, may be provided directly or by the facility's parent corporation. The facility must provide singly or in combination one or more of the following services for persons with disabilities:
 - (i) Comprehensive rehabilitation services which shall include under one management: medical, psychological, social, and vocational services;
 - (ii) Testing, fitting, or training in the use of prosthetic and orthotic services;
 - (iii) Pre-vocational evaluation or recreational therapy;
 - (iv) Physical and occupational therapy;
 - (v) Speech and hearing services;
 - (vi) Psychological and social services;
 - (vii) Evaluation;
 - (viii) Personal and work adjustment;
 - (ix) Vocational training in combination with other rehabilitation services;
 - (x) Evaluation or control of special disabilities; and
 - (xi) Transitional or long-term employment for persons who have severe disabilities and cannot be readily absorbed into the competitive labor market.
- (4) "Services" shall mean any services provided by persons with disabilities if not less than sixty percent (60%) of the work hours or direct labor required for the services are performed by persons with disabilities.
- (5) "Small disadvantaged businesses owned and controlled by persons with disabilities" shall mean small business concern, which is at least fifty-one percent (51%) owned by one or more person(s) with disabilities or, in the case of a publicly owned business, at least fifty-one percent (51%) of the stock of which is owned by one or more disabled person, whose management and daily business operations are controlled by one or more person(s) with disabilities, and have fifty or fewer employees.
- (6) "A physical or mental impairment" shall mean any physiological disorder or condition, cosmetic disfigurement, or anatomical loss affecting one or more of the following body systems: neurological; musculoskeletal; special sense organs; respiratory, including speech organs; cardiovascular; reproductive; digestive; genito-urinary; hemic and lymphatic; skin; and endocrine; or any mental psychological disorder, such as mental retardation, organic brain syndrome, emotional or mental illness, and specific learning disabilities.
- (7) "Vocational rehabilitation services" shall mean any goods and services including diagnostic and related services necessary to render a person with a disability fit to engage in a gainful occupation and services to the families of persons with disabilities when those services will contribute substantially to the rehabilitation of those individuals.

RIGL 37-2.2-3. Preference for products and services produced by persons with disabilities.

- (a) Whenever any products made, manufactured by, or services provided by nonprofit rehabilitation facilities, or in profit making facilities where sixty percent (60%) of the work hours or direct labor is performed by employees who are disabled, meet the requirements of any department, institution, or agency supported, in whole or in part, by the state as to quantity, quality, and price, those products shall have preference over products or services from other providers.
- (b) All departments, institutions, and agencies supported, in whole or in part, by the state shall purchase articles made or manufactured and services provided by persons with disabilities. Any political subdivision of the state may purchase those articles and services directly from those agencies.
- (c) A list describing the styles, designs, sizes, and varieties of articles made by persons with disabilities and describing all available services and subcontract work which can be provided by those persons shall be prepared by the governor's commission on disabilities, disability business enterprise committee in cooperation with the state office of rehabilitation services. The governor's commission on disabilities shall cooperate with various facilities for persons with disabilities by submitting necessary information concerning the products and services to the state purchasing agent.

RIGL 37-2.2-3.1. Policy and applicability.

It is the policy of the state of Rhode Island that small disadvantaged disability businesses shall have the maximum opportunity to participate in the performance of procurements and projects as outlined in this chapter. This chapter shall apply to any and all state purchasing, including, but not limited to, the procurement of goods and services, construction projects, or contracts funded in whole or in part by state funds, or funds which, in accordance with a federal grant or otherwise, the state expends or administers or in which the state is a signatory to the construction contract.

The director of administration, in consultation with the governor's commission on disabilities, is authorized and directed to establish rules and regulations for awarding contracts to small disadvantaged businesses owned and controlled by persons with disabilities in the procurement of goods, services, construction projects, or contracts funded in whole or in part by state funds, in accordance with [37-2-9\(b\)\(14\)](#).

RIGL 37-2.2-4. Disability business enterprise committee - Membership - Duties.

(a) There is hereby established within the governor's commission on disabilities a committee, consisting of nine (9) persons, to be known as the disability business enterprise committee.

(b) The committee, shall consist of the director of the department of human services or his or her designee; the director of the department of mental health, retardation, and hospitals or his or her designee; the director of the economic development corporation or his or her designee; the state purchasing agent or his or her designee; and two (2) persons with disabilities and three (3) representatives of rehabilitation facilities in the state of Rhode Island appointed by the chairperson of the governor's commission on disabilities. All members of the committee shall serve without compensation. Of the number appointed originally under this chapter, one-third (1/3) shall be appointed for a term of one year; one-third (1/3) shall be appointed for a term of two (2) years; and one-third (1/3) shall be appointed for a term of three (3) years. Thereafter, vacancies created by expiration of terms shall be filled with appointments for terms of three (3) years. Members whose terms expire may be reappointed to succeed themselves. The chairperson of the governor's commission on disabilities or his or her designee shall serve as chairperson of the committee. The members of the committee shall elect a vice chairperson and other officers as are necessary from amongst themselves annually.

(c) The governor's commission on disabilities shall promulgate such rules and regulations, in accordance with the Administrative Procedures Act, [chapter 35 of title 42](#), as are necessary and proper to ensure responsible management, operation, oversight of the committee, and ensure that all facilities, both nonprofit and profit-making, referred to in [37-2.2-3](#) and [37-2.2-3.1](#) meet all applicable government regulations and standards, including those of the United States department of labor, the state department of human services, and the chief purchasing officer with regard to developing a program which involves small disadvantaged businesses as contractors, [37-2-9\(b\)\(14\)](#).

(d) The committee shall establish a procedure to certify small disadvantaged disability businesses and rehabilitation facilities that qualify under their regulation for a preference under [37-2.2-3](#) or [37-2.2-3.1](#) and submit a list of the certified small disadvantaged disability businesses and rehabilitation facilities and the products and services provided by them to the chief purchasing officer at least once a year. The chief purchasing officer shall utilize that list in the program which involves small disadvantaged businesses as contractors established by [37-2-9\(b\)\(14\)](#).

RIGL 37-2.2-5. Nonapplicability to road and highway construction businesses.

Notwithstanding anything to the contrary, the provisions of this chapter shall not apply to any business whose primary business is road or highway construction.

² Governor's Commission on Disabilities

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³ **RIGL 37-2-7 State Purchases - Definitions.**

(4) "Construction" shall mean the process of building, altering, repairing, improving, or demolishing any public structures or building, or other public improvements of any kind to any public real property. It does not include the routine maintenance or repair of existing structures, buildings, or real property performed by salaried employees of the state of Rhode Island in the usual course of their job.

(5) "Contract" shall mean all types of agreements, including grants and orders, for the purchase or disposal of supplies, services, construction, or any other item. It shall include awards; contracts of a fixed-price, cost, cost-plus-a-fixed-fee, or incentive type; contracts providing for the issuance of job or task orders; leases; letter contracts; purchase orders; and

construction management contracts. It also includes supplemental agreements with respect to any of the foregoing.

“Contract” does not include labor contracts with employees of state agencies.

(7) “Contractor” shall mean any person having a contract with a governmental body.

(11) “State governmental entity” means any entity created as a legislative body or a public or state agency by the general assembly or constitution of this state, except for municipal, regional, or county governmental entities.

(15) Procurement shall mean the purchasing, buying, renting, leasing, or otherwise obtaining of any supplies, services, or construction. It shall also include all functions that pertain to the obtaining of any supply, service, or construction item, including a description of requirements, selection and solicitation of sources, preparation and award of contract, and all phases of contract administration.

(16) “Public agency” shall mean the Rhode Island industrial recreational building authority, the Rhode Island economic development corporation, the Rhode Island industrial facilities corporation, the Rhode Island refunding bond authority, the Rhode Island housing and mortgage finance corporation, the Rhode Island resource recovery corporation, the Rhode Island public transit authority, the Rhode Island student loan authority, the Howard development corporation, the water resources board corporate, the Rhode Island health and education building corporation, the Rhode Island higher education assistance authority, the Rhode Island turnpike and bridge authority, the Blackstone Valley district commission, the Narragansett Bay water quality management district commission, Rhode Island telecommunications authority, the convention center authority, Channel 36 foundation, the Rhode Island lottery commission, their successors and assigns, and any other body corporate and politic which has been or will be created or established within this state excepting cities and towns and the board of governors for higher education for all purchases which are funded by restricted, sponsored or auxiliary monies.

(20) “Services” as used in this definition shall mean the rendering, by a contractor, of its time and effort rather than the furnishing of a specific end product, other than reports which are merely incidental to the required performance of services. “Services” does not include labor contracts with employees of state agencies.

(22) “State” shall mean the state of Rhode Island and any of its departments or agencies and public agencies.

(28) “State agency” means any department, commission, council, board, bureau, committee, institution, or other governmental entity of the executive or judicial branch of this state not otherwise established as a body corporate and politic, and includes, without limitation, the board of governors for higher education except for purchases which are funded by restricted, sponsored, or auxiliary moneys and the board of regents for elementary and secondary education.

(29) “Governmental entity” means any department, commission, council, board, bureau, committee, institution, legislative body, agency, or government corporation of the executive, legislative, or judicial branches of state, federal, and/or local governments.

⁴ **RIGL 37-2.2-1 Short title and purpose.** -- This chapter shall be known as the “Disability Business Enterprises Act.” The purpose of this chapter is to carry out the state’s policy of supporting the fullest possible participation of small disadvantaged businesses owned and controlled by persons with disabilities or where sixty percent (60%) of the work hours or direct labor is performed by employees who are persons with disabilities, or non-profit rehabilitation facilities in state funded and state directed public construction, public projects, and in state purchases of goods and services. This includes assisting disadvantaged disability businesses and non-profit rehabilitation facilities throughout the life of contracts in which they participate.

⁵ **RIGL 37-2.2-3.1 Policy and applicability.** It is the policy of the state of Rhode Island that small disadvantaged disability businesses shall have the maximum opportunity to participate in the performance of procurements and products as outlined below. This chapter shall apply to any and all state purchasing, including, but not limited to the procurement of goods and services and construction projects or contracts funded in whole or in part by state funds, or funds which, in accordance with a federal grant or otherwise, the state expends or administers or in which the state is a signatory to the construction contract.

The director of administration, in consultation with the governor’s commission on disabilities, is authorized and directed to establish rules and regulations for awarding contracts to small disadvantaged businesses owned and controlled by persons with disabilities in the procurement of goods, services, construction projects, or contracts funded in whole or in part by state funds, in accordance with section 37-2-9(b)(14).

⁶ **RIGL 37-2.2-3 Preference for products and services produced by persons with disabilities.**

(a) Whenever any products made, manufactured by, or services provided by nonprofit rehabilitation facilities, or in profit making facilities where sixty percent (60%) of the work hours or direct labor is performed by employees who are disabled, meet the requirements of any department, institution, or agency supported, in whole or in part, by the state as to quantity, quality, and price, those products shall have preference over products or services from other providers.

(b) All departments, institutions, and agencies supported, in whole or in part, by the state shall purchase articles made or manufactured and services provided by persons with disabilities. Any political subdivision of the state may purchase those articles and services directly from those agencies. A list describing the styles, designs, sizes, and varieties of articles made

by persons with disabilities and describing all available services and subcontract work which can be provided by those persons shall be prepared by the governor's commission on disabilities, disability business enterprise committee in cooperation with the state office of rehabilitation services. The governor's commission on disabilities shall cooperate with various facilities for persons with disabilities by submitting necessary information concerning the products and services to the state purchasing agent.

⁷ **RIGL 37-2.2-4(d) Disability business enterprise committee -- Membership -- Duties.**

(a) There is hereby established within the governor's commission on disabilities a committee, consisting of nine (9) persons, to be known as the disability business enterprise committee.

(b) The committee, shall consist of the director of the department of human services or his or her designee; the director of the department of mental health, retardation, and hospitals or his or her designee; the director of the economic development corporation or his or her designee; the state purchasing agent or his or her designee; and two (2) persons with disabilities and three (3) representatives of rehabilitation facilities in the state of Rhode Island appointed by the chairperson of the governor's commission on disabilities. All members of the committee shall serve without compensation. Of the number appointed originally under this chapter, one-third (1/3) shall be appointed for a term of one year; one-third (1/3) shall be appointed for a term of two (2) years; and one-third (1/3) shall be appointed for a term of three (3) years. Thereafter, vacancies created by expiration of terms shall be filled with appointments for terms of three (3) years. Members whose terms expire may be reappointed to succeed themselves. The chairperson of the governor's commission on disabilities or his or her designee shall serve as chairperson of the committee. The members of the committee shall elect a vice chairperson and other officers as are necessary from amongst themselves annually.

(c) The governor's commission on disabilities shall promulgate such rules and regulations, in accordance with the Administrative Procedures Act, chapter 35 of title 42, as are necessary and proper to ensure responsible management, operation, oversight of the committee, and ensure that all facilities, both nonprofit and profit-making, referred to in sections 37-2.2-3 and 37-2.2-3.1 meet all applicable government regulations and standards, including those of the United States department of labor, the state department of human services, and the chief purchasing officer with regard to developing a program which involves small disadvantaged businesses as contractors, section 37-2-9(b)(14).

(d) The committee shall establish a procedure to certify small disadvantaged disability businesses and rehabilitation facilities that qualify under their regulation for a preference under section 37-2.2-3 or 37-2.2-3.1 and submit a list of the certified small disadvantaged disability businesses and rehabilitation facilities and the products and services provided by them to the chief purchasing officer at least once a year. The chief purchasing officer shall utilize that list in the program which involves small disadvantaged businesses as contractors established by section 37-2-9(b)(14).

⁸ RIGL 37-2.2-3 see above

⁹ RIGL 37-2.2-4 (d) see above

RIGL 37-2.2-5. Nonapplicability to road and highway construction businesses.

Notwithstanding anything to the contrary, the provisions of this chapter shall not apply to any business whose primary business is road or highway construction.