

Certification Timeline Expectations

What Takes Weeks vs. Months (and Why)

Certification timelines vary based on application quality, business complexity, agency workload, and responsiveness to requests for information. QZC helps clients plan realistically and avoid delays caused by incomplete or inconsistent submissions.

Certification Timeline Comparison Table

Certification	Typical Timeline	Fastest Possible	Common Delay Factors	Planning Notes
MBE/WBE (State or Local)	60–120 days	~45–60 days	Incomplete ownership docs, operating agreement issues, unclear control	Good entry point for local & state work; varies by certifying body
DBE	90–180 days	~75–90 days	Financial documentation, personal net worth reviews, site visits	Required for DOT-funded projects; higher scrutiny
8(a) Business Development	90–180 days	~60–90 days (rare)	Ownership/control narratives, tax inconsistencies, business history gaps	Strategic long-term program; front-loaded effort pays off
HUBZone	90–150 days	~60–75 days	Address verification, employee residency validation	Highly valuable but eligibility is location-sensitive
WOSB/EDWOSB	30–90 days	~30–45 days	Ownership/control documentation, portal errors	Faster than 8(a); useful for federal set-asides
SDVOSB/VOSB	60–120 days	~45–60 days	Veteran status verification, ownership/control proof	VA-focused opportunities; strong value in healthcare & construction
SAM.gov Registration	7–14 days	~5–7 days	UEI issues, banking verification, entity mismatches	Required for all federal contracting
GSA Schedule	6–12 months	~4–6 months (rare)	Pricing justification, past performance, negotiations	Not a certification; requires mature business systems Not recommended for early-stage businesses

Timeline Buckets

(Actual timelines vary based on application quality, agency workload, and responsiveness to follow-up requests.)

Short-Term (Under 60 Days)

- SAM.gov registration
- WOSB / EDWOSB (clean submissions)
- Some local MBE/WBE programs

Mid-Term (2–4 Months)

- State/local MBE or WBE
- SDVOSB / VOSB
- HUBZone (if eligibility is clear)

Long-Term (4–12+ Months)

- DBE
- SBA 8(a)
- GSA Schedule