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Working With Government From the Outside

Capability statements and New Jersey veteran business certification

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A resource guide from the Public Service Transition Program. Information is current as of November 2026.

What this guide covers

Public buyers purchase through set rules and set registrations. This guide explains the one-page document and the certifications that let a small business be found, checked, and considered by government buyers.

01 **Capability statements.** What buyers expect to see on one page, how to write each section, and a short exercise to draft your own.

02 **New Jersey VOB and DVOB certification.** Who qualifies, which documents to gather, and how to apply through the State's Uniform Certification Service.

03 **Federal registration and free help.** SAM.gov, the SBA's veteran certification program, and New Jersey offices that assist at no cost.

This guide is general information, not legal advice. Rules and portals change, so confirm details with the agency before you apply. Each slide lists its references, and the full list appears at the end.

A capability statement is your one-page introduction

Recommended length

One page

Use the back only if needed, and keep the critical information on the front. Supporting case studies can go on the back.[1]

1. Title it "Capability Statement." Buyers recognize the term and know what to look for.

2. Write for one reader. Tailor it to a specific agency or prime contractor, not to everyone at once.

3. Make it scannable. Use short sentences and bullet points instead of long paragraphs.

4. Send a PDF. Many agencies block Word and Publisher files. Put your company name in the file name.

5. Use your brand. Include your logo and colors so the page looks like the rest of your business.

Reference for every point on this slide: HUD Office of Small and Disadvantaged Business Utilization.

References 1. HUD OSDBU, Creating an Effective Capability Statement (archived)

The five sections buyers look for

01 **Core competencies.** Open with a short line that ties your expertise to the agency's needs, then list keyword-rich bullets. Include only what is relevant to that agency.[1]

02 **Differentiators.** Say why a buyer should choose you over a competitor: your people, methods, facilities, equipment, or product advantages.[1]

03 **Past performance.** Describe similar work for past customers, most relevant first: the same agency, then other federal, other government, and commercial work.[1]

04 **Company data.** Give a brief history, size, and your codes: UEI (which replaced the DUNS number in April 2022), CAGE, NAICS, certifications, and contract vehicles.[1,2]

05 **Contact information.** Name a specific person with a direct email and phone number, and list your website. Repeat it on each side of the page.[1]

Label the sections "Core Competencies," "Differentiators," and "Past Performance" so buyers find them first.[1]

References 1. HUD OSDBU, Creating an Effective Capability Statement (archived) 2. GSA bulletin, The Unique Entity ID is here

Writing each section well

Do

- Match your competencies and examples to the agency’s mission and the opportunity in front of you.[1]
- Describe each past project by customer, the work performed, and the result.[1]
- Use the same NAICS and commodity codes that appear in your registrations.[4,5]
- Update the page whenever you add a certification, contract, or project.

Avoid

- Listing every service you have ever offered.[1]
- Projects that do not relate to the agency you are approaching.[1]
- Generic addresses such as info@. Use a named person’s email.[1]
- Full reference contact details on PDFs sent for first outreach or handed out at conferences. Share them when you meet decision-makers.[1]

New to government work? Federal rules say an offeror without a record of relevant past performance may not be evaluated favorably or unfavorably on that factor. Commercial and subcontract work still belong on your page.[3,1]

References 1. HUD OSDBU, Creating an Effective Capability Statement (archived) 3. FAR 15.305, Proposal evaluation 4. U.S. Census Bureau, NAICS 5. NJ Purchase and Property, NIGP Commodity Code Finder

The codes in your company data block

01 **UEI.** The Unique Entity ID is a 12-character identifier that SAM.gov assigns. It has been the federal government's authoritative entity identifier since April 4, 2022.[2]

02 **CAGE code.** A five-character identifier that the Defense Logistics Agency assigns to entities in the United States and its territories.[6]

03 **NAICS codes.** Industry codes from the North American Industry Classification System. The SBA assigns a size standard to each NAICS code, so your codes also decide whether you count as small.[4,7]

04 **NIGP commodity codes.** New Jersey uses five-digit NIGP class-item codes in NJSTART for vendor registration and bid notices.[8]

05 **Certifications.** List only the designations you actually hold, such as New Jersey VOB or DVOB, or SBA VOSB or SDVOSB.[1]

References 2. GSA bulletin, The Unique Entity ID is here 6. DLA, CAGE code information 4. U.S. Census Bureau, NAICS 7. SBA, Size standards 8. NJ Purchase and Property, Commodity Code FAQ 1. HUD OSDBU, Creating an Effective Capability Statement (archived)

Clinic exercise: draft, swap, and score

01 **Choose one reader.** Pick an agency or prime contractor you want to reach and read its mission statement or recent solicitations.

02 **Draft five competencies or fewer.** Use the reader’s own words where they fit your work.[1]

03 **Write two past performance entries.** Name the customer, the work, and the result. Commercial work counts.[1]

04 **Fill in the data block.** Where you do not have a code yet, write down the registration you still need to complete.

05 **Swap and score.** Trade pages with a partner and use the checklist below.

Checklist Is it one page? Are the three section labels present? Is a named person listed with a direct email and phone? Is it a PDF with the company name in the file name? Could a buyer tell what you sell within ten seconds?[1]

References 1. HUD OSDBU, Creating an Effective Capability Statement (archived)

Where your capability statement goes

01 **SBA Small Business Search.** Contracting officers use this directory for market research. Complete your capabilities narrative and keywords so your profile matches your one-page statement.[9,10]

02 **Agency small business offices.** Federal agencies have Offices of Small and Disadvantaged Business Utilization that advocate for small firms and can direct you to the right buyers.[11]

03 **Your NJSTART vendor profile.** Registered vendor profiles, including commodity and service codes, are visible to State procurement staff.[12]

04 **Matchmaking events.** APEX Accelerators run training, networking, and matchmaking events with buyers and prime contractors. Bring printed copies.[13]

05 **Your website.** Buyers will look you up, so keep a current page about your government work.[1]

References 9. Nebraska APEX Accelerator, Capability statement briefing (2026) 10. SBA, Small Business Search 11. CRS R47851, Offices of Small and Disadvantaged Business Utilization 12. NJSTART Vendor Registration guide 13. NJIT APEX Accelerator 1. HUD OSDBU, Creating an Effective Capability Statement (archived)

New Jersey’s two veteran business designations

VOB

Veteran-owned

State law sets a goal that contracting agencies give due consideration to veteran-owned businesses. No percentage is attached.[14]

3%

DVOB set-aside goal

Agencies aim to award at least 3 percent of contracts to disabled veterans’ businesses and may set contracts aside for them.[15,16]

$0

Application fee

The $100 certification fee has been waived indefinitely since June 1, 2021.[17,16]

Recent change. Since January 2024, an agency may set aside a contract when at least two qualified disabled veterans’ businesses are likely to bid. The earlier threshold was three.[18]

References 14. N.J.S.A. 52:32-52, Goal for veteran-owned businesses 15. N.J.S.A. 52:32-31.5, Set-aside goal (DVOB) 16. NJ Treasury, Business Certification Program 17. Business.NJ.gov, MWBE, SBE, VOB and Other Certifications 18. Office of the Governor, Bill action of January 16, 2024

Who qualifies

	Veteran-owned (VOB)	Disabled veteran-owned (DVOB)
Owner	A New Jersey resident who served in the U.S. Armed Forces, a Reserve component, or the National Guard and was discharged honorably or under general honorable conditions.[19]	A New Jersey resident certified by the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs as having any degree of service-connected disability.[20]
Ownership and control	At least 51 percent owned and controlled by veterans.[19]	At least 51 percent owned and controlled by disabled veterans, or verified by the VA as a service-disabled veteran-owned business.[20]
Business	Principal place of business in New Jersey, and independently owned and operated.[19]	Principal place of business in New Jersey, and independently owned and operated.[20]
Upkeep	Reverify the certification every year.[21]	Reverify the certification every year.[21]

Business.NJ.gov still describes a 90-day service minimum for veterans, which the amended statute text does not contain. If your service was shorter, ask the Certification Unit at 609-292-2146 before you apply.[21,19,16]

References 19. N.J.S.A. 52:32-50, Definitions (VOB) 20. N.J.S.A. 52:32-31.2, Definitions (DVOB) 21. Business.NJ.gov, Veteran and Disabled Veteran-Owned Business 16. NJ Treasury, Business Certification Program

Gather these documents before you start

Both certifications

- A copy of your proof of business registration with the State of New Jersey.[21]
- A notarized statement attesting that everything submitted is true, signed by the owner or corporate president, a general partner, or an LLC's managing member. A limited partner may not sign.[22]
- Proof of New Jersey residency for the majority owner or owners.[22]

VOB adds

- Form DD-214 showing honorable discharge or release, for the majority owner or owners.[22,21]

DVOB adds

- Federal service-disabled veteran documentation for the majority owner or owners, such as a VA disability award letter or a federal service-disabled veteran-owned business determination letter.[22]

The online application cannot be completed until every required document is ready, so gather them first.[22]

References 21. Business.NJ.gov, Veteran and Disabled Veteran-Owned Business 22. NJ Treasury, What You Will Need to Apply

Walkthrough: from registration to reverification

01 **Register the business.** File Form NJ-REG with the Division of Revenue and Enterprise Services. You can then obtain the Business Registration Certificate used for public contracting.[23]

02 **Gather documents.** Use the checklist on the previous slide, and have the notarized statement signed by the right person.[22]

03 **Apply online.** Start the Uniform Certification Service application on the NJ Portal. One application can cover more than one category.[24,16]

04 **Confirm your listing.** Certified businesses appear in the State's SAVI database, which buyers can search.[16,25]

05 **Register on NJSTART.** Create a vendor profile and select the NIGP codes that match your work so bid notices reach you.[12,8]

06 **Reverify every year.** Both VOB and DVOB certifications must be reverified annually.[21]

Certification questions: Division of Revenue and Enterprise Services, 609-292-2146, weekdays from 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.[16]

References 23. NJ Treasury, Getting Registered 22. NJ Treasury, What You Will Need to Apply 24. NJ Portal, Uniform Certification Service 16. NJ Treasury, Business Certification Program 25. NJ SAVI vendor search 12. NJSTART Vendor Registration guide 8. NJ Purchase and Property, Commodity Code FAQ 21. Business.NJ.gov, Veteran and Disabled Veteran-Owned Business

What a State certification does and does not do

01 **It makes you findable.** Certified firms are listed in SAVI, and NJSTART profiles show buyers your codes and certifications.[16,25,12]

02 **It opens set-asides only where they exist.** DVOBs can compete for contracts an agency has set aside for them. A VOB receives due consideration, not a reserved share.[15,14]

03 **It does not replace the paperwork.** Every vendor still needs a valid Business Registration Certificate before a State contract is awarded.[28]

04 **It reaches beyond State agencies.** Counties, municipalities, school districts, and public colleges can buy through the State's cooperative purchasing program.[26]

05 **It is not a federal certification.** Federal VOSB and SDVOSB status comes only from the SBA's VetCert program, covered next.[27]

References 16. NJ Treasury, Business Certification Program 25. NJ SAVI vendor search 12. NJSTART Vendor Registration guide 15. N.J.S.A. 52:32-31.5, Set-aside goal (DVOB) 26. NJ Purchase and Property, Cooperative Purchasing briefing 27. SBA, Veteran contracting assistance programs 28. NJ Purchase and Property, Doing Business with the State

Federal work starts with SAM.gov

01 **Register before you bid.** Federal rules require offerors and quoters to be registered in SAM at the time an offer or quotation is submitted, with limited exceptions.[29]

02 **Pay no one to register.** Registration in SAM.gov costs nothing. Third-party firms that charge a fee are not required.[30]

03 **Renew every 365 days.** A registration must be renewed every 365 days to stay active, so set a reminder well ahead of the date.[31]

04 **Collect your identifiers.** Registration produces your UEI, and the Defense Logistics Agency assigns a CAGE code to U.S. entities.[2,6]

05 **Get help with it.** APEX Accelerators help with registrations at no charge, including SAM.gov.[13,30]

References 29. FAR 4.1102, Policy (SAM registration) 30. APTAC, SAM registration is free of charge 31. SAM.gov, Entity registration 2. GSA bulletin, The Unique Entity ID is here 6. DLA, CAGE code information 13. NJIT APEX Accelerator

SBA VetCert: federal veteran certification

5%

Government-wide goal

The federal goal for prime contract dollars to SDVOSBs. The FY2024 defense authorization act raised it from 3 percent.[27,34]

Jan 2024

End of self-certification

Since January 1, 2024, SDVOSB set-aside and sole-source awards require SBA certification.[32]

3 years

Certification term

A VetCert certification is valid for three years from the approval date.[33]

VOSB

- Can compete for set-aside and sole-source contracts at the Department of Veterans Affairs.[27]

SDVOSB

- Can compete for set-aside and sole-source contracts government-wide.[27]

Eligibility: veterans own and control at least 51 percent (service-disabled veterans, for SDVOSB status), the VA confirms veteran status, and the firm is small for at least one NAICS code in its SAM profile. Apply at certifications.sba.gov.[27,35]

References 27. SBA, Veteran contracting assistance programs 32. Federal Register, FAC 2024-03 (SDVOSB certification) 33. SBA VetCert Help, When to recertify 34. CRS IF13309, SDVOSB Contracting Program (2026) 35. SBA Certifications portal

Free help in New Jersey

01 **NJIT APEX Accelerator.** Free counseling, bid matching, registrations, certifications, and capability statement help for New Jersey businesses outside Union County.[13,36]

02 **UCEDC APEX Accelerator.** Government contracting counseling, training, and registration help for businesses in Union County.[37,38]

03 **America’s SBDC New Jersey.** A statewide network of Small Business Development Centers that offers no-cost consulting and training.[39]

04 **McNulty Veteran Business Center.** The SBA Veterans Business Outreach Center that covers New Jersey and New York.[40]

05 **Division of Revenue and Enterprise Services.** State certification questions: 609-292-2146.[16]

NJIT lists eligibility requirements, including at least two years in business. Find any APEX Accelerator by ZIP code with the federal service area locator.[36,41]

References 13. NJIT APEX Accelerator 36. NJIT APEX Accelerator, Client criteria 37. UCEDC, APEX Accelerator 38. UCEDC, Frequently Asked Questions 39. America’s SBDC New Jersey 40. SBA, Veterans Business Outreach Centers 16. NJ Treasury, Business Certification Program 41. APEX Accelerators, Service area locator

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2. U.S. General Services Administration. The Unique Entity ID is here! Here is What You Need to Know. Bulletin, April 5, 2022. https://content.govdelivery.com/accounts/USGSA/bulletins/3121d93

3. Federal Acquisition Regulation 15.305, Proposal evaluation (paragraph (a)(2)(iv)). https://www.acquisition.gov/far/15.305

4. U.S. Census Bureau. North American Industry Classification System (NAICS). https://www.census.gov/naics/

5. New Jersey Department of the Treasury, Division of Purchase and Property. NIGP Commodity Code Finder. https://nj.gov/treasury/purchase/dpp_commodity_codes.shtml

6. Defense Logistics Agency. Vendor Information Hub: CAGE code. https://www.dla.mil/Aviation/Business/Vendor-Information-Hub/Table-of-Contents/Details/Article/3606127

7. U.S. Small Business Administration. Size standards (federal contracting guide). https://www.sba.gov/federal-contracting/contracting-guide/size-standards

8. New Jersey Department of the Treasury, Division of Purchase and Property. NIGP Commodity Code Finder: Help and FAQ. https://nj.gov/treasury/purchase/nigp-commcode-faq.shtml

9. Doga, Veronica. Nebraska APEX Accelerator briefing to SAME Missouri River JETS, 2026 (capability statements and Small Business Search). https://www.same.org/wp-content/uploads/2026/06/2026-SAME-Missouri-River-JETS-APEX-Accelerator-Presented-by-Veronica-Doga.pdf

10. U.S. Small Business Administration. Small Business Search (SBS). https://search.certifications.sba.gov/

11. Congressional Research Service. Offices of Small and Disadvantaged Business Utilization (R47851). https://crsreports.congress.gov/product/pdf/R/R47851

12. New Jersey Division of Purchase and Property. NJSTART Vendor User Guide: Vendor Registration. https://nj.gov/treasury/purchase/njstart/pdf/Vendor-Registration.pdf

13. New Jersey Institute of Technology. NJIT APEX Accelerator (formerly PTAC). https://www.njit.edu/apex/

14. N.J.S.A. 52:32-52, Goal for contracts awarded to businesses owned, operated by veterans (L.2011, c.147, s.4). Text via Justia. https://law.justia.com/codes/new-jersey/title-52/section-52-32-52/

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15. N.J.S.A. 52:32-31.5, Goals for contracts awarded to disabled veterans' businesses (L.2015, c.116, s.5). Text via Justia. https://law.justia.com/codes/new-jersey/2022/title-52/section-52-32-31-5/

16. New Jersey Department of the Treasury, Division of Revenue and Enterprise Services. Business Certification Program. https://www.nj.gov/treasury/revenue/business-cert-program.shtml

17. State of New Jersey, Business.NJ.gov. MWBE, SBE, VOB and Other Certifications. https://business.nj.gov/pages/certifications

18. State of New Jersey, Office of the Governor. Bill action, January 16, 2024 (S2249/A4211, P.L.2023, c.273). https://nj.gov/governor/news/news/562024/approved/20240116j.shtml

19. N.J.S.A. 52:32-50, Definitions relative to businesses owned, operated by veterans (L.2011, c.147, s.2; amended 2019, c.500, s.13). Text via Justia. https://law.justia.com/codes/new-jersey/title-52/section-52-32-50/

20. N.J.S.A. 52:32-31.2, Definitions relative to set-asides for businesses owned, operated by disabled veterans (L.2015, c.116). Text via Justia. https://law.justia.com/codes/new-jersey/title-52/section-52-32-31-2/

21. State of New Jersey, Business.NJ.gov. Veteran and Disabled Veteran-Owned Business. https://business.nj.gov/pages/vob-dvob

22. New Jersey Division of Revenue and Enterprise Services. Uniform Certification Service: What You Will Need to Apply. https://www.nj.gov/treasury/revenue/ucs.shtml

23. New Jersey Division of Revenue and Enterprise Services. Getting Registered (Form NJ-REG and the Business Registration Certificate). https://nj.gov/treasury/revenue/gettingregistered.shtml

24. New Jersey Division of Revenue and Enterprise Services. NJ Portal: Uniform Certification Service (SBE Registry). https://www.njportal.com/DOR/SBERegistry

25. State of New Jersey. NJ SAVI Access (Selective Assistance Vendor Information search). https://data.nj.gov/stories/s/NJ-SAVI-Access-Story/9k98-6fqb/

26. New Jersey Division of Purchase and Property. Doing Business with the State of New Jersey (briefing on the Cooperative Purchasing Program). https://www.nj.gov/treasury/diversity/pdf/events/Presentation-AmyDavis.pdf

27. U.S. Small Business Administration. Veteran contracting assistance programs. https://www.sba.gov/federal-contracting/contracting-assistance-programs/veteran-contracting-assistance-programs

28. New Jersey Division of Purchase and Property. Doing Business with the State of New Jersey. https://www.nj.gov/treasury/purchase/doingbusiness.shtml

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29. Federal Acquisition Regulation 4.1102, Policy (registration in the System for Award Management). https://www.acquisition.gov/far/4.1102

30. Association of Procurement Technical Assistance Centers. SAM Registration Is Free of Charge. https://www.aptac-us.org/news/sam-gov-registration-is-free-of-charge/

31. U.S. General Services Administration. SAM.gov: Entity Registration. https://sam.gov/entity-registration

32. Federal Acquisition Circular 2024-03. Federal Register, February 23, 2024 (SDVOSB certification requirement). https://www.govinfo.gov/content/pkg/FR-2024-02-23/pdf/2024-02797.pdf

33. U.S. Small Business Administration, VetCert Knowledge Base. How do I know when I need to recertify my business? https://sbaone.atlassian.net/wiki/spaces/VCKB/pages/2861531407

34. Congressional Research Service. Service-Disabled Veteran-Owned Small Business Contracting Program (IF13309), September 8, 2026. https://crsreports.congress.gov/product/pdf/IF/IF13309

35. U.S. Small Business Administration. MySBA Certifications. https://certifications.sba.gov/

36. New Jersey Institute of Technology. NJIT APEX Accelerator: Client Criteria. https://www.njit.edu/apex/client-criteria

37. UCEDC. APEX Accelerator at UCEDC: Connecting Businesses to Government Opportunities. https://ucedc.com/government-contracting-apex/

38. UCEDC. Frequently Asked Questions (APEX Accelerator service area). https://ucedc.com/about-us/frequently-asked-questions/

39. America's SBDC New Jersey (New Jersey Small Business Development Centers). https://njsbdc.com/

40. U.S. Small Business Administration. Resource Partners: Veterans Business Outreach Centers. https://www.sba.gov/vboc

41. U.S. Department of Defense, Office of Small Business Programs. APEX Accelerators service area locator. https://www.apexaccelerators.us/#/service-area-locator

Register first, certify where you qualify, and introduce yourself with one strong page.

One-on-one help is available through the Public Service Transition Program at agardresearchassociates.org/public-service-transition.

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