



Illinois Commission on Equity and Inclusion

Nina Harris, Chairperson

Alexandria Wilson, Executive Director

115 South LaSalle Street, Suite 4N, Chicago, IL 60603

Notice 2026.1 **Commission on Equity and Inclusion**

Date: September 10, 2025

To: Purchasing Entity Procurement Staff

Cc: Commission on Equity and Inclusion Staff and Commissioners
Procurement Policy Board
Chief Procurement Office for General Services
Chief Procurement Office for Higher Education
Chief Procurement Office for Capital Development Board
Chief Procurement Office for the Department of Transportation
Business Enterprise Council for Minorities, Women, and Persons with Disabilities

From: Alexandria Wilson, Executive Director

Re: New BEP Class Contract Exemption Request and Review Form and Process

This notice is effective January 5, 2026.

At its meeting on August 26, 2025, the Business Enterprise Council for Minorities, Women, and Persons with Disabilities (BEP Council) voted to adopt a revised process for reviewing class contract exemption requests under Section 7(2) of the Business Enterprise for Minorities, Women, and Persons with Disabilities Act (BEP Act). This new process will take effect on January 5, 2026. Section 7(2) of the BEP Act allows the BEP Council, at the written request of an affected agency or public institution of higher education, to exempt an entire class of contracts from State contracting Business Enterprise Program (BEP) goals when there is a written determination, based on the best information available, that an insufficient number of certified firms are available to ensure adequate competition and reasonable pricing. These exemptions are valid for a period of one year.

Under the revised process, purchasing entities will no longer submit class exemption requests as part of their annual compliance plan submissions. Instead, entities will be required to submit requests using the newly created BEP Class Contract Exemption Request and Review Form. The most current version of the form will be posted to the Commission on Equity and Inclusion's (CEI) compliance webpage at <https://cei.illinois.gov/purchasing-entity-resources/compliance.html> under the "BEP Class Contract Exemptions" section. Requests must be submitted before publication of the procurement, consistent with the statutory requirement. Once submitted, the BEP Council Compliance Subcommittee may review each request and provide a recommendation to the full BEP Council. At each quarterly meeting, the full BEP

Council will vote on all pending exemption requests. Purchasing entities may be asked to present or respond to questions before a vote is taken.

The new form is designed to standardize the process by requiring purchasing entities to provide identifying information about the contract class, disclose the number of exemption requests submitted in the current and prior three fiscal years, and demonstrate whether BEP-certified vendors are available under the applicable scope identifier codes. Each of these requirements is drawn directly from the statutory language in Section 7(2) of the BEP Act. Purchasing entities must also attest that the information submitted is complete and accurate, and forms must be submitted to CEI's BEP Compliance unit, with a copy to CEI's Deputy Director over BEP compliance, before the applicable BEP Council meeting.

To support the transition, CEI will post a training video and an FAQ document on its website. These materials will be developed using questions and feedback submitted by purchasing entities. Purchasing entities may submit their questions or concerns and provide feedback on the new process by clicking [here](#). CEI will notify BEP liaisons once the training resources are posted. To confirm the liaison CEI has on file, please refer to the list available at this link: <https://cei.illinois.gov/purchasing-entity-resources/bep-liaisons-list.html>. If any liaison updates or changes are necessary, please submit the request to CEI.Equity.Inclusion@Illinois.gov.

The BEP Council's meeting schedule is available on CEI's public meeting calendar at <https://cei.illinois.gov/meetings-and-events.html>.

Purchasing entities are asked to review the new form and prepare to use it for any class exemption requests submitted on or after January 5, 2026. If you have any questions or require assistance, please contact CEI's BEP Compliance Unit at CEI.BEP.Compliance@illinois.gov.

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