

OMWBE Certification Q&A

The purpose of this Q&A is to help agencies and organizations provide information to customers about certifications offered by the Office of Minority and Women's Business Enterprises (OMWBE).

Q: What types of certifications does OMWBE offer?

- A:** State certifications
- Minority Business Enterprise (MBE)
 - Woman Business Enterprise (WBE)
 - Minority Woman Business Enterprise (MWBE)
 - Combination Business Enterprise (CBE)
 - Socially and Economically Disadvantaged Business Enterprise (SEDBE)
- Federal certifications
- Disadvantaged Business Enterprise (women, minority, and individuals found to be socially and economically disadvantaged owned businesses) (DBE)
 - Airport Concessionaire Disadvantaged Business Enterprise (ACDBE)
 - Small Business Enterprise (SBE)

Q: What are the requirements to become certified?

- A:** Business must be:
- A for-profit business.
 - Licensed to do business in Washington (state certification only).
 - A small business according to U.S. Small Business Administration size standards.
 - Able to perform the services necessary to fulfill the contract (state certification only).

Eligible owner(s) must:

- Be female, African American, Hispanic American, Native American, Alaska Native, Asian American, or Pacific Islander. Other individuals may be found to be socially and economically disadvantaged on a case-by-case basis.
- Be a U.S. Citizen or permanent resident.
- Own at least 51% of the business.
- Control managerial and day-to-day operations.
- Have personal net worth of less than \$1.32 M (federal certification only).

Q: Why become certified?

- A:** Government agencies have goals for the participation of small, minority, women and veteran owned firms in procurement and contracting. Agencies that receive funds from the U.S. Department of Transportation are required to set and meet supplier diversity goals.

By becoming certified, agencies can count spending with the business toward state and federal goals. Agencies and prime contractors/suppliers can find certified firms in centralized government databases.

State certification also makes a firm eligible to apply for the Linked Deposit Program that can decrease interest rates on qualified small business loans up to 2 percent.

Q: How does a business apply for certification?

A: Download an application from OMWBE’s web site: <http://omwbe.wa.gov/certification>
Or see below for OMWBE contact information.

Q: How long does it take to get certified?

A: State application = 45 days from when OMWBE receives complete application
Federal application = 90 days from when OMWBE receives complete application
If the application is not complete, the process will take longer. See below.

Q: How can a customer make sure the application process goes as smoothly as possible?

A: Please encourage customers to review the application and instructions on OMWBE’s web site and to call us with any questions before they apply. Submitting the right documents the first time will save time.

Customers can also visit OMWBE to have an analyst go through the process and review an application and supporting documents.

OMWBE
360-664-9750 or 1-800-208-1064
Email: receptionist@omwbe.wa.gov
210 11th Avenue SW, Suite 401
Olympia, WA 98504

Q: How does a business become certified as “small?”

A: To become certified as a minority or women owned business, a firm has to be “small” according to SBA size standards. If a business wants to be considered “small” and is not interested in being certified as a minority or woman owned business, they must meet the [state’s definition of small](#) and self-certify their status as a vendor in Washington Electronic Business Solutions (WEBS).

OMWBE has a [Small Business Enterprises](#) certification for firms that want to participate in federally funded transportation projects.

Q: Does OMWBE certify veteran owned firms?

A: Veteran-owned firms are certified by the Washington State Department of Veteran’s Affairs. To start the application, the business should register as a vendor in WEBS.

For more information, contact the Department of Veterans Affairs
www.dva.wa.gov • 1-800-562-0132 option “1” • email: vob@dva.wa.gov

Q: What are the U.S. Small Business Administration size standards?

A: There are two ways the SBA size standard is measured:

- OMWBE assigns North American Industry Classification System (NAICS) codes for the goods and services the business indicates it will provide to the state. OMWBE reviews the SBA size standard tables with the NAICS codes.
- There is also an overall size standard for the business of \$23.98 million in gross receipts over a three-year average.