

Certification Criteria and Processes for Women-Owned Businesses

Woman Business Enterprise Certification Criteria

- Woman(en) must own and control at least 51.0% of the business
- Woman owner must be a U.S. citizen or legal resident
- Woman owner must serve as President or CEO (if both positions exist)
- Woman owner must have ownership and officer position for at least six months
- Woman owner must be active in daily management

Where to Get Certified

In addition to private third-party certifiers like the Women's Business Enterprise National Council (WBENC) and The National Women Business Owners Corporation (NWBOC) -- both of which provide national certification -- several state and local agencies offer programs for certification. It is also important to note that many agencies, both federal and state, have their own certification processes.

Women-Owned Small Business Federal Contracting Program

The [Women-Owned Small Business \(WOSB\) Federal Contracting program](#) authorizes contracting officers to set aside certain federal contracts for eligible WOSBs.

Eligibility Requirements for the Program:

To be an eligible WOSB, a company must:

- It must be a small business by SBA standards.
- Be a small business that is at least 51% percent unconditionally and directly owned and controlled by one or more women who are United States citizens.
- Have a woman manage the day-to-day operations, make long-term decisions for the business, hold the highest officer position in the business and work at the business full-time during normal working hours.

WOSB Federal Contracting Program Certification

Firms must be certified through the Small Business Administration (SBA), the Department of Veteran Affairs' Center for Verification and Evaluation (CVE), or a third-party certifier to compete for WOSB set-aside and sole-source contracts through the WOSB Federal Contracting Program.

The SBA has approved four national organizations to act as third-party certifiers at a cost under the program. The four organizations and contact information are:

- [El Paso Hispanic Chamber of Commerce](#)
- [National Women Business Owners Corporation](#)
- [US Women's Chamber of Commerce](#)
- [Women's Business Enterprise National Council \(WBENC\)](#)

The SBA also accepts a current, valid 8(a) certification. 8(a) firms that are owned and operated by women can submit documentation of their ongoing 8(a) eligibility for their Economically Disadvantaged Women-Owned Small Businesses (EDWOSB) certification.

To become certified at no cost by the SBA, businesses can apply through [certify.SBA.gov](https://certify.sba.gov).