

Why Should I Get A Woman-Owned Small Business Certification?

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The land of certifications can be an overwhelming alphabet soup. If you are a woman business owner, you may have heard of Woman-Owned Small Business (WOSB) and/or Economically Disadvantaged Woman-Owned Small Business (EDWOSB) Certifications. In a nutshell, these are certifications that will help your business gain access to certain government contracts. Your business can obtain these certifications in addition to DBE (Disadvantaged Business Enterprise) or WBE (Women's Business Enterprise) Certifications.

If you have a WOSB or EDWOSB Certification, you can compete for certain government contracts under the women's contracting program. Those opportunities are linked to qualifying NAICS Codes (North American Industry Classification System – see my prior blog post on NAICS codes. A list of the qualifying codes can be found [here](#). Certain contracts are open to WOSB, while certain contracts are open only to EDWOSB.

In order to qualify as a WOSB, the business must:

- Be a small business under the SBA size standards;
- Be at least 51% owned and controlled by women who are U.S. citizens; and
- Have women manage the day to day operations and make long term decisions.

In order to qualify as an EDWOSB, the business must:

- Meet the standards to qualify as a WOSB;
- Be owned and controlled by one or more women, each with a personal net worth less than \$750,000;
- Be owned and controlled by one or more women, each with \$350,000 or less in adjusted gross income averaged over the past three years; and
- Be owned and controlled by one or more women, each with \$6 million or less in personal assets.

While the SBA used to allow self-certification, beginning in June of 2020 you must certify through one of four approved third parties, or through the SBA's own certification website. The four third party agencies 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)

Many women owned businesses find it convenient to certify as a WOSB or EDWOSB while obtaining other certification, such as WBE certification.

If you have any questions about the certification process or whether or not your company may qualify, please feel free to contact me for a consultation.