



**FEDBIZACCESS**

**WHITEPAPER**

# **WOMEN-OWNED SMALL BUSINESS CERTIFICATION (WOSB/WBE CERTIFICATION)**

**Benefits, Requirements, and Support**

## **TABLE OF CONTENTS**

1. Understanding Socio-Economic Certifications
2. WOSB Certification and Benefits in the Government Marketplace
3. The Commercial Sector's Embrace
4. Eligibility Requirements
5. The Certification Process

# Introduction:

## Understanding Socio-Economic Certifications

The Essence of Socio-Economic Certifications Socio-economic certifications are not merely labels; they are a testament to a business's commitment to fostering diversity and equality in the business world. These certifications are designed to give disadvantaged groups a fighting chance in competitive markets, ensuring that small businesses owned by women, minorities, veterans, and others can thrive.

### Purpose and Impact

The overarching aim of these certifications is to level the playing field, allowing businesses that might otherwise be overshadowed by larger corporations to shine. They ensure that small businesses have a seat at the table, particularly when it comes to securing government contracts. By setting aside certain contracts exclusively for businesses holding these certifications, the government ensures that diversity and inclusion are not just buzzwords but are actively practiced.



***The overarching aim of these certifications is to level the playing field, allowing businesses that might otherwise be overshadowed by larger corporations to shine.***



# WOSB Certification Benefits in the Government Marketplace

## The WOSB Edge

The U.S. government is one of the world's largest buyers of goods and services, and it has recognized the need to diversify its supplier base. The WOSB certification program is part of this effort, enabling women-owned businesses to compete for and win federal contracts. This not only boosts the growth of these businesses but also supports the government's aim to work with a more diverse range of suppliers.

In 2023, the U.S. government maintained its goal to allocate at least 5% of all federal contracting dollars to Women-Owned Small Businesses (WOSBs), underscoring its commitment to support women in business. While the exact amount of spending with WOSBs in 2023 requires access to the most recent government reports or databases, it's clear that the federal government has been channeling a significant portion of its contracting dollars towards women-owned businesses. This initiative not only aims to empower women entrepreneurs but also to create a more diverse and inclusive marketplace.

In FY2022, for instance, the federal government spent over \$28.1 billion on prime contracts with women-owned small businesses, which amounted to approximately 4.57% of the total contracting dollars spent. This indicates a concerted effort towards reaching the 5% goal, highlighting the significant impact of WOSB certification on facilitating access to federal contracting opportunities for women-owned businesses.

The Women-Owned Small Business Federal Contract Program plays a pivotal role in this process by limiting competition for certain contracts to businesses that participate in the program. These contracts are for goods and services in specific industries where WOSBs are underrepresented, further promoting equitable opportunities. In addition to the standard WOSB certification, the program also recognizes Economically Disadvantaged Women-Owned Small Businesses (EDWOSBs), which are eligible for certain contracts set aside to level the playing field in sectors where women's businesses are substantially underrepresented.

It's important for women-owned businesses to understand and leverage the benefits that come with WOSB certification. Not only does certification provide priority in bidding for federal contracts, but it also enhances the visibility and credibility of the business, thereby opening doors to more contractual opportunities and fostering growth in a competitive marketplace.

# 5%

**Yearly WOSB  
Spending Goal**

***In 2023, the U.S. government maintained its goal to allocate at least 5% of all federal contracting dollars to Women-Owned Small Businesses (WOSBs), underscoring its commitment to support women in business.***

# WOSB Certification

## The Commercial Sector's Embrace

### Customer Loyalty and Demographic Trends

The phrase "Women buy from women-owned businesses" captures the essence of customer loyalty in the commercial sector. This loyalty is not merely transactional; it is deeply rooted in the desire to support businesses that reflect one's own values and identity. Certified women-owned businesses, particularly those with WBE certification, often find a welcoming and loyal customer base, eager to support them in their endeavors.

### E-Commerce Giants and Socio-Economic Certifications

Platforms like Amazon have recognized the importance of socio-economic certifications, integrating them into their marketplace. This acknowledgment by e-commerce leaders not only validates the significance of these certifications but also enhances the visibility of certified businesses, thereby expanding their reach and potential.



*The phrase "Women buy from women-owned businesses" captures the essence of customer loyalty in the commercial sector.*

# WOSB Certification Eligibility Requirements

## Ownership and Control

- The business must be at least 51% owned by women who are U.S. citizens. Ownership must be direct and not subject to conditions that diminish the women's rights to the benefits of ownership.
- Women must manage the day-to-day operations and make the long-term decisions for the business. This ensures that the business is not only owned but also controlled and operated by women.

## Economic Disadvantage (for EDWOSB)

- For the Economically Disadvantaged WOSB (EDWOSB) subset, there are additional criteria regarding the personal net worth, adjusted gross income, and the fair market value of all assets of the woman owner, ensuring that the benefits of the program reach those who need it most.

## Industry-Specific Requirements

- The business must qualify as "small" in its primary industry according to the Small Business Administration's (SBA) size standards, which vary by industry. This is usually measured by the number of employees or average annual receipts.

## Operational Requirements

- The woman owner(s) must demonstrate a clear expertise in the business's area of operation, ensuring that they can make informed decisions regarding the business's management and daily operations.



# 51%

**Owned by women  
who are U.S.  
citizens.**

# WOSB Certification

## The Certification Process

### Self-Certification vs. Formal Certification for WOSB

- Prior to changes in the certification process that were implemented, businesses could self-certify as a WOSB or EDWOSB. However, the process has evolved, and as of now, formal certification through the SBA or an approved third-party certifier is required.
- The shift to formal certification aims to enhance the integrity of the certification process, ensuring that only eligible businesses benefit from the program.

### Application Preparation

- The first step in the certification process involves gathering all necessary documents. This includes, but is not limited to, proof of citizenship, business documents (e.g., articles of incorporation, bylaws), and evidence of day-to-day and long-term management and decision-making by women.

### Choosing the Certification Path

- For WOSB and EDWOSB certifications, businesses can apply through the SBA's online certification portal. Alternatively, they can obtain certification through one of the SBA-approved third-party certifiers.
- For WBE certification, businesses must apply through one of the Women's Business Enterprise National Council (WBENC) regional partner organizations or other approved entities.

### Application Submission and Review

- Once the necessary documentation is prepared, the business submits its application through the chosen certification path. The reviewing body then thoroughly examines the application and supporting documents to verify that all eligibility criteria are met.

### Site Visit and Interview

- As part of the vetting process, a site visit and interview with the woman owner(s) may be conducted. This step is crucial for verifying the accuracy of the application and assessing the true control and management of the business by women.

# WOSB Certification

## The Certification Process Continued

### Certification Approval

- If the business meets all the eligibility criteria and successfully passes the review process, it will be granted WOSB or WBE certification. This certification is typically valid for one to three years, after which the business must undergo recertification to ensure ongoing compliance with the program's requirements.

### Utilizing the Certification

- Upon receiving certification, businesses can begin leveraging their status to compete for set-aside and sole-source contracts in the government sector, as well as to enhance their appeal to corporations and consumers in the commercial market.



## Certification Assistance

### Simplifying the Certification Journey

[FedBiz Access](#) stands out as a beacon for businesses navigating the complex waters of WOSB and WBE certifications. With expertise in government business development, FedBiz Access offers a streamlined approach to certification, making it more accessible and less burdensome for women-owned businesses.

### The FedBiz Access Advantage

The ["2 for 1" certification](#) support offered by FedBiz Access is particularly noteworthy, providing comprehensive assistance for businesses seeking both WOSB and WBE certifications. This approach not only saves time and resources but also maximizes the potential benefits of certification.

# Conclusion: The Path Forward

As we've explored, [WOSB and WBE certifications](#) are more than just accolades; they are critical tools for women-owned businesses aiming to thrive in the government and commercial sectors. The journey to certification, while complex, opens a world of opportunities, from government contracts to enhanced consumer trust and loyalty.

[FedBiz Access](#)® emerges as a key ally in this journey, offering the expertise and support needed to navigate the certification process with confidence. By partnering with FedBiz Access, businesses can unlock their full potential, leveraging socio-economic certifications to pave the way for success in competitive markets.

## The FedBiz Access® Difference

At FedBiz Access®, our mission is to empower small businesses by providing them with the tools, resources, and expertise needed to compete in the federal marketplace. With over 23 years of experience, our dedicated team of experts is committed to helping businesses of all sizes and industries navigate the complex world of government contracting.

We pride ourselves on our innovative solutions, personalized support, and unwavering commitment to our clients' success. By building long-lasting relationships and delivering exceptional results, we've become a trusted partner for countless small businesses looking to expand their contracting opportunities.

Join us in our pursuit to foster economic growth, create jobs, and contribute to the prosperity of small businesses across America. Discover the FedBiz Access® difference and let us help you unlock your full potential in the federal marketplace.

**Call Today for WOSB/WBE Eligibility: (888) 299-4498**

[Schedule Complimentary  
Consultation with a  
FedBiz Specialist](#)







**GSA Access Group, LLC**  
**DBA Fedbiz Access**  
**St. Petersburg, FL 33716**  
**Call: (888) 299-4498**  
**M-F 8:30AM-5:30PM ET**



**FEDBIZACCESS**  
STRATEGIC CONTRACTING SOLUTIONS