



U.S. Small Business
Administration

FAQs for WOSBs/EDWOSBs

U.S. SMALL BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION

General Questions

1. What is the Women-Owned Small Business (WOSB) Federal Contract Program?

- a. The Women-Owned Small Business Federal Contract Program was created to help provide a level playing field for women small business owners. When buying goods and services, the federal government can limit competition for certain contracts to businesses that participate in the U.S. Small Business Administration's (SBA) women's contract program. Becoming certified for the WOSB Federal Contract Program means your business is eligible to compete for set-aside and sole-source federal contracts within eligible industries. These contracts are for industries where women-owned small businesses are underrepresented.

Some contracts are restricted further to Economically Disadvantaged Women-Owned Small Businesses (EDWOSBs). The SBA maintains [a list of those eligible industries and their NAICS codes](#).

The federal government's goal is to award at least 5 percent of all federal contract dollars to women-owned small businesses each year.

Firms that choose not to participate in SBA's WOSB Contract Program may continue to identify as a women-owned small business in SAM.gov for the purposes of competing for other contracts. However, they WILL NOT be eligible to pursue federal contracts restricted for SBA-certified WOSBs and/or EDWOSBs.

To review eligibility requirements for the WOSB Federal Contract Program, firms can visit the [WOSB Ready website](#) to see if they qualify.

2. Why is the certification process for WOSBs and EDWOSBs changing?

- a. The change to the certification process will implement Congress's changes to the WOSB and EDWOSB programs as put forth in the 2015 National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA).

3. When do the changes to the certification process go into effect?

- a. The SBA expects that the regulations enacting the statutory requirement will be published in the Federal Register by the end of May and will be effective 30 days later.

4. Will currently certified WOSBs need to re-certify?

- a. Please see the "Currently Certified WOSBs/EDWOSBs" section below or the certification table at sba.gov/wosbready to see if you will need to re-certify.

WOSB READY



- 5. Is SBA going to offer a free certification?**
 - a. Yes. Once the statutory requirement is enacted, you will be able to begin the process for certifying through SBA for FREE.
- 6. Will third-party certification still be an option?**
 - a. Yes, third-party certification will still be an option. Please note, third-party certification may come with a monetary cost.
- 7. Will self-certification still be an option?**
 - a. Firms must be certified in order to compete for WOSB/EDWOSB set-aside and sole-source contracts through the WOSB Federal Contract Program. Once the new rule goes into effect, you will have to either certify through SBA's FREE online certification or through an approved third-party entity at a cost.
- 8. When and how will SBA provide us with more information about the changes to the certification process?**
 - a. We will provide regular updates on sba.gov/wosbready and email and e-newsletter updates.
- 9. Who should I contact with questions about the new certification process?**
 - a. You can find resources at sba.gov/wosbready. You also can contact your local SBA regional and district office or Women's Business Center by visiting SBA.gov/local-assistance.
- 10. Who can qualify as a small business?**
 - a. In order to qualify as a WOSB or EDWOSB, a business concern must be a small business as defined in Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) [Title 13 part 121](#) for its primary industry classification. [13 CFR 127.200\(a\)](#) and [13 CFR 121.105\(a\)\(1\)](#) provides that a business concern must be organized for profit in order to meet the definition of a small business.
- 11. Does the WOSB or EDWOSB Program have a logo I can use to market my business as a certified women-owned small business?**
 - a. No, please note that SBA currently does not have an approved logo for usage by small businesses for the WOSB or EDWOSB certifications.
- 12. Do I need to operate in a particular NAICS code in order to demonstrate that I am a women-owned small business?**
 - a. The NAICS codes are not a requirement to demonstrate that you are a women-owned small business. Your company may qualify as a women-owned small



business provided that it meets the eligibility requirements. To qualify, one or more women must own and control the business. The ownership must be at least 51 percent and direct and unconditional. Regulations do not require a women-owned small business to primarily operate in an eligible NAICS code. However, if you wish to participate in set-asides for the WOSB Federal Contract Program, you must offer services in one of the [designated NAICS codes](#) and become a certified women-owned small business. If you do not see your NAICS codes designated for WOSB procurements, you might not see any set-aside opportunities you can compete for.

Currently Certified WOSBs/EDWOSBs

- 1. I'm aware that there are upcoming changes to the WOSB Program in summer 2020. What will be required of me?**
 - a. Please note that the formal certification process for the SBA WOSB Federal Contract Program will be moving into a platform that will have a similar look and feel as the current certify.sba.gov. The new platform comes with technical enhancements to better manage the processing of WOSB/EDWOSB applications. All WOSB Program participants will be required to create a new profile and upload all necessary documents to demonstrate their eligibility. Please visit the “Application Process” section of this FAQ for further information. Additional guidance on the SBA’s WOSB Federal Contract Program will be available once the new rule is published. Please visit our website at sba.gov/wosbready for the most up to date information.
- 2. I am a third-party certified WOSB or EDWOSB. Do I need to re-certify?**
 - a. All third-party certified firms that are certified through approved third-party entities will have to create a profile on SBA’s new online platform and upload their certificate from an approved third-party certifier (TPC). Third-party certified firms must re-certify three years after the date of their most recent re-certification as a third-party certified firm.
- 3. I am a self-certified WOSB or EDWOSB with active WOSB or EDWOSB set-aside contracts. Do I need to re-certify?**
 - a. A firm that was eligible as a WOSB or EDWOSB at the time of offer for the contract is considered a WOSB or EDWOSB throughout the life of the contract. For the purposes of contracts (including multiple award contracts) with durations of more than five years (including options), a firm must get certified by SBA or an approved TPC prior to the end of the fifth year of the contract.
 - b. **NOTE:** Once the new application process via the new online platform is live, all WOSB Program participants will be required to create a new profile and upload



all necessary documents to demonstrate their eligibility in order to compete for new contracts set aside for restricted competition for SBA-certified WOSBs and/or EDWOSBs. During a WOSB application, firms will be provided an option to also complete an EDWOSB application, if eligible.

4. I am a self-certified WOSB or EDWOSB with no active contracts. Do I need to re-certify?

- a. Self-certified firms with no active contracts need to get formally certified by SBA under the updated process to compete for WOSB set-aside contracts.

WOSBs/EDWOSBs Aspiring to Become Certified

1. Does my status in another certification program (CVE and 8(a)) make me certified for WOSB procurements?

- a. Evidence of certification through the Department of Veterans Affairs' Center for Verification and Evaluation (CVE) or SBA's 8(a) certification in conjunction with evidence that the applicant meets the additional eligibility requirements of a WOSB or EDWOSB will be accepted by SBA for WOSB/EDWOSB certification. Going forward, SBA will evaluate the suitability of other potential certifiers, including new TPCs, and other government entity certifiers. Please see the certification table at sba.gov/wosbready for necessary documentation for each program.

2. Where can I find resources to help me prepare to do business with the federal government?

- a. Visit sba.gov/local-assistance to connect with entities such as your local SBA office or Women's Business Center that can help you prepare for doing business with the federal government.

3. Do I need to be certified through a TPC?

- a. No, once the statutory requirement is enacted, you will be able to begin the process for certifying through SBA for FREE. Small businesses can alternatively be certified through approved TPCs at a potential monetary cost.

The Application Process

1. How can I apply to become self-certified as a WOSB or EDWOSB?

- a. Currently, the WOSB Federal Contract Program is a self-certification program with an option to use a TPC at a cost to complete the self-certification. Once the statutory requirement is enacted, you will be able to certify through a formal SBA



process free of charge. Small businesses can continue to certify through approved TPCs at a cost. Additional guidance on the SBA's WOSB Federal Contract Program will be available once the new rule is published.

- b. The current self-certification process is facilitated by certify.sba.gov. You can find a [checklist](#) and [quick start guide](#) to assist you in completing the application on certify.sba.gov.

2. Once new changes are in effect for the WOSB Program in summer 2020, how do I apply to become SBA-certified as a WOSB or EDWOSB?

- a. The new FREE SBA certification will transition to a new online platform for program participants that will include many technical improvements. Further guidance on how to apply to this platform will be given when it is complete.
- b. All firms should be aware of the following:
 - i. All firms, regardless if they are self-certified or certified by a TPC will need to create a new profile in certify.sba.gov.
 - ii. Firms certified by a TPC will be able to upload their TPC certificate located at certify.sba.gov in order to get SBA-certified.
 - iii. Documents in certify.sba.gov will not transfer to the new platform. Firms with documentation in certify.sba.gov should download their documents, make the necessary updates, and prepare to create a new application.

3. Once new changes are in effect for the WOSB Program in summer 2020, will other certifications be accepted?

- a. Yes, certain other certifications will be accepted. You may be required to submit additional information in addition to evidence of your certification. Currently, the SBA will accept current 8(a) participants, approved third-party certificates, and certifications from the CVE.
 - i. **Current 8(a) Program Participants**—Upload most recent annual review letter or their 8(a) acceptance letter if the firm is in program year 1
 - ii. **Third-Party Certified**—Upload of WOSB and/or EDWOSB certificate
 - iii. **CVE**—Upload certificate and supporting documentation (based on the proposed rule)