



Benefits of Certification

Washington State needs you!

Why Certify **With OMWBE?**

Certification opens the door to contracting opportunities, but the path looks different for every small business. There are numerous benefits, based on:

- Which certifications you choose
- The industry you operate in
- Your business goals



Certification Types

FEDERAL CERTIFICATION

- ✓ Disadvantaged Business Enterprise (DBE)
- ✓ Airport Concession Disadvantaged Business Enterprise (ACDBE)
- ✓ Small Business Enterprise (SBE) or "Federal SBE" (FSBE)

You can get certified in our Federal and State programs with **one** application!

STATE CERTIFICATION

- ✓ Minority Women's Business Enterprise (MWBE)
- ✓ Minority Business Enterprise (MBE)
- ✓ Women's Business Enterprise (WBE)
- ✓ Combination Business Enterprise (CBE)
- ✓ Socially and Economically Disadvantaged Business Enterprise (SEDBE)
- ✓ LGBTQ+ Business Enterprise (LGBTQBE)
- ✓ Public Works Small Business Enterprise (PWSBE)



*Let's talk about **spending goals**, and
what it means for small businesses.*

How Do Spending Goals Work?



Federal Program (DBE, ACDBE, SBE)

The U.S. Department of Transportation uses a 10% aspirational goal for federally-funded highway, transit, and airport construction projects. State agencies, like WSDOT, establish DBE Program Participation Plans.

State Program (MWBE, MBE, WBE, CBE, SEDBE, LGBTQBE, PWSBE)

State agencies use aspirational goals to increase small and diverse business utilization. OMWBE works with each state agency to develop an annual Business Diversity Spending Goal Plan to help reach their targets.

Prime Contractors (Both Federal & State Certifications)

Primes are often the only businesses capable of winning large multimillion-dollar contracts. However, they often employ subcontractors to meet diversity goals, which provides opportunities for certified businesses.

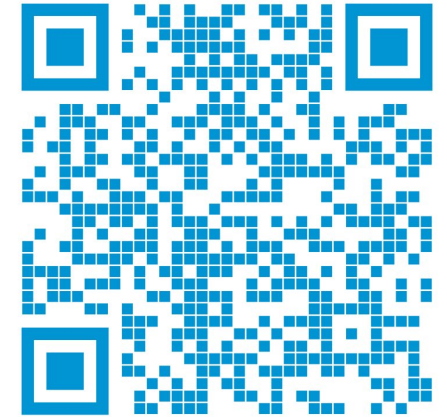
DBE Goals & Rule Changes

Prepare your business for the DBE program to resume, with enforceable contract goals.

Until the DBE program resumes, WSDOT will set **FSBE goals** for federally funded projects.

USDOT Final Rule (DBE and ACDBE programs)

RECENT NEWS – The United States Department of Transportation (USDOT) issued a Final Rule on Sept. 25, 2026, which allows applicants to include race and gender in their Personal Narratives of social disadvantage. While you can mention this, you must go beyond to demonstrate social disadvantage.



DBE Form

State Agency Goals



Every year, OMWBE sets **Business Diversity Spending Goals** for state agencies. We require agencies to develop annual plans to reach their goals.

- Agency goals are intended to be realistic and achievable. *We want to see sustained progress!*
 - We are working with universities and colleges to initiate the goal setting process.
-

Two agencies use **Public Works Small Business Enterprises (PWSBE)**.

- **WSDOT** has a Small and Veteran Business program that utilizes PWSBE certification to set mandatory goals on state-funded projects, up to a maximum of 20%.
- **DES** also has a Small and Veteran Business program and started using PWSBE certification to track small business participation on public works projects on July 1, 2026.

Small Business Certifications



We offer two certifications that are “**race and gender-neutral**” which means every small business can get certified, regardless of the business owner’s identity.

Small Business Enterprise (SBE)

- The **Federal Certification** used by WSDOT, Sound Transit, Port of Seattle, and others.
- Businesses with Federal DBE Certification are also SBEs. You can also apply for SBE by itself.

Public Works Small Business Enterprise (PWSBE)

- The **State Certification** used by Washington state agencies and local governments.
- Businesses with any State Certification are also PWSBEs. You can also apply for PWSBE by itself.

Linked Deposit



The Linked Deposit Program provides affordable capital for State Certified firms – MWBE, MBE, WBE, CBE

- Women and minority owned businesses historically denied access to capital
- Provides additional economic opportunities for Veterans and Service members
- Any business-related loan for a state certified firm made by a participating lender is eligible for enrollment and receiving an interest rate reduction of up to 2%
- **Total pool of funds:** \$175 Million (OMWBE) and \$15 Million (DVA)
- **Remaining funds:** ~\$50 Million (OMWBE)



Additional Benefits



There are several other reasons to get certified:

- Recognition as a small and diverse business
- Increased visibility in our Certified Business Directory
- Access to free business resources, financial help, and consulting
- Build relationships with community business organizations
- Fast track enrollment in the King County SCS program for Small Contractors and Suppliers
- Join the Statewide Small Works Roster with MRSC Rosters for free!

Three stylized human figures, represented by light blue circles for heads and rounded rectangles for bodies, are positioned in the background behind the text. They are arranged with two figures in the back row and one centered figure in the front row.

*Here are **three examples** of business owners, and their certification journeys.*

Scenario 1: Meet Alisha

Alisha runs a trucking firm and wants to increase her subcontracting opportunities.

She knows that there are different goals and requirements for federally-funded and state-funded contracts and wants to position her business to compete on either type, regardless of the funding source.

After reviewing OMWBE's website, Alisha applies for as many certifications as possible.



DBE, SBE
MWBE, PWSBE

Scenario 2: Meet James

James runs an excavation firm and wants to expand his business.

He didn't think he would qualify for OMWBE certification, until he heard about the new Public Works Small Business Enterprise (PWSBE) certification program.

After speaking with a Certification Analyst, James decides to apply for both Federal and State programs, to maximize his visibility.



SBE
PWSBE

Scenario 3: Meet Avery

Avery runs a mission-based marketing agency serving the healthcare industry.

They are proud of their multicultural heritage and want to highlight themselves as a member of the LGBTQ+ community in Washington.

After deciding that Federal Certification is not the right fit for their business, Avery applies for two State Certifications and receives PWSBE status automatically.



**MBE, LGBTQBE
PWSBE**



*Who uses the **Certified
Business Directory?***

Directory Users

- State Agencies
- Educational Institutions
- Local Governments
- Prime Contractors
- Conscientious Consumers



Are all looking for vendors in our Certified Business Directory!

Ready to apply? 

*Start your Federal application, and add-in
State to get multiple certifications at once!*

Don't Wait! Get Started Now



Whether you are gathering your materials to apply, or waiting on a pending application, you can take steps to prepare for state contracting today.

These are the exact steps we share with every certified business:

1. Register in WEBS (Washington's Electronic Business Solution)
2. Register in the Statewide Vendor/Payee System
3. Claim Your Free Consultation With APEX Accelerator
4. Join the Statewide Small Works Roster
5. Consider Veteran Owned Business (VOB) Certification



LEARN MORE

Thank You!



Contact Us

Email: support@omwbe.wa.gov

Phone: (360) 664-9750

Office of Minority & Women's Business Enterprises

1110 Capitol Way S #150, Olympia, WA 98501

Phone: (360) 664-9750 | omwbe.wa.gov

