



WBE Application Pro Tips

Know the rules before you apply!

Read [WBENC's Standards and Procedures](#), especially pages 9-15. After you have applied for WBE certification, we are unable to consider changes or amendments to your documents.

Remember that WBE certification is about more than ownership.

- Simply having a woman or women own 51% of the company isn't enough. A woman/women need to control the company and be responsible for its management and operation. The company needs to be independent of other companies. Read more here.
- Only operating companies may be certified, not companies that exist simply to own other companies. If the applicant firm is owned by a parent company, that parent must meet WBENC's criteria for majority ownership and control.

Read your organizational documents!

Your bylaws or operating agreement matter. They set out the rules under which your company operates, and if there is ever a problem with your co-owners, they are the documents which would be consulted to resolve the dispute. WBENC's Standards and Procedures require that the woman or women owner(s) of a company control decision making at both the shareholder/owner and the Board of Directors/Managers level.

If any of the following are true, your company does not meet WBENC criteria:

- Some or all decisions require the consent of a higher percentage of ownership than is owned by the woman/women owner(s). (For instance, a woman owns 51% and a man owns 49%, and 2/3 majority is required for decisions such as changing the purpose of the company or taking out a loan.)
- A woman does not have the highest title as defined in the bylaws or operating agreement.
- Women do not control the company's Board of Directors.

Check other documents that impact ownership:

- If 51% or more of your company is owned by a trust, make sure you are aware of [WBENC's Standards](#) for ensuring female control of the trust/s. See pages 11 and 12.
- Power of Attorney documents must ensure that the female business owner/s has/have sole authority, during her/their lifetime, to make decisions about the business.

Federal Tax Returns means the complete Federal Tax Return. Please. With the password, if you are unable to provide tax returns that are not password-protected. Schedule C by itself is not a complete tax return.

NAICS codes matter, too.

NAICS codes are a numeric code for your industry. Corporate and government buyers use those NAICS codes to search for suppliers. If you're applying for WOSB certification, your NAICS code needs to be consistent with what you have on your Federal tax returns. Even if you're only applying for WBE, having the wrong NAICS code disadvantages your business because it makes it harder for potential customers to find you. Take five minutes and check out [this handy website to](#) make sure you are using the right code for your business. You may have more than one, but you must select one to be primary.

WOSB has additional required documents:

The United States Small Business Administration (SBA) makes the rules for WOSB certification. They require the following documentation, regardless of whether it is required for WBENC certification:

- Active status on the U.S. government [System for Award Management \(SAM\)](#).
- By-laws if you are a corporation or an Operating Agreement if you are an LLC. This is true even if you are a one-person company, and even if your state does not require such a document.
- For a corporation, you must provide stock certificates and a stock ledger, which is a list of all the stock certificates ever issued. This is true even if you are the sole owner and have never issued stock certificates to anyone else.
- First page of IRS Form 941 for the preceding 12 months OR W-3 for the past year OR list of all employees, if Forms 941 or W3 are not available for the past year.