

September 6, 2023

Making The Connection Oklahoma Department of Veterans Affairs

**Women Owned Business Certification
Program**

Diverse Business Certification Program

Oklahoma Department of Commerce



OKLAHOMA



Overview of the Women Owned Business Certification (WOBC) and the Diverse Business Certification (DB)

These are both state legislated programs.

They are not affiliated with any other certification programs (SBA, National, etc.).

There is not a fee for certification for either program.

There is not a guarantee of contracts or financial gain from the certification.

The purpose of the certification is to assist you in any contracting opportunities. This is to provide to any of your clients, suppliers or potential contract that you have a third party certification as a Women Owned and/or Diverse Owned business.

Upon certification, the company name, contact, location (including county) website and industry information will be posted on the Commerce website in a searchable database.

You will receive a certification letter and a logo for the certification program to display on your website and in communication with clients.

The certification is not an automatic registration with OMES or any State of Oklahoma agency for contract awards. You must also register with the Central Purchasing Division for any procurement activities with Oklahoma state agencies.

Role of the Oklahoma Department of Commerce

- **The Oklahoma Department of Commerce is responsible for maintaining the certification programs, including reviewing, certifying, notifying the business owner of certification and providing a Certification Letter.**
- **The Department will provide information and send applications to interested applicants.**
- **The program manager will notify approved certified business of upcoming recertification dates (Annual Renewal and the Five Year Recertification) and provide appropriate renewal forms to be completed and returned by or before the recertification date.**
- **The Department shall maintain a current database of the Women Owned Business Certified and the Diverse Business Certified companies with all required contact information. A copy of the list will be made available upon request to interested entities from the Department. The companies are listed in a searchable database (including company contact, location, website, contact information and industry) on the Commerce website for any interested contractors, suppliers or other businesses that are interested in doing business with Women Owned or Diverse businesses.**
- **There are currently 154 Women Owned Business Certified and 45 Diverse Business companies in the program.**

Women Owned Business Certification Program

- **Established in 1991, the Women Owned Business Certification (WOBC) program was designed to facilitate contracting and commerce capabilities with public and private entities, and to establish the criteria to certify such Women Owned Businesses.**
- **The WOBC program is not a guarantee of contract awards, but for the purpose of verifying that the business is woman owned.**
- **Any business/industry is eligible to participate as long as they meet the small business guidelines established by the SBA Table of Small Business Size Standards, matched to the NAICS Codes and fulfill the requirements of the WOBC Application process. A link to the Table is located on the WOBC Application.**
- **Out of state companies are eligible to be certified with the WOBC program if they are registered with the Oklahoma Secretary of State and any other required agencies and are properly registered in the home state.**

WOBC Application Process

- The WOBC requirements, instructions and application are located on the Commerce website: <https://www.okcommerce.gov/doing-business/business-services/women-owned-business-certifications/>
- Verify that the company meets the requirements set forth in the SBA Table of Standards (matched to NAICS code). Any industry is eligible for the program as long as they meet the Table of Standards requirement.
- Read through the application and gather any required documents. Use the labeled divider pages to paper clip the documents in order in a section after the application.
- Complete the application. If any question does not apply to the business, state “not applicable” with an explanation.
- Review the completed application completely and make sure there is no omitted information or documents.
- Keep a complete copy of the application and documents for your records.
- Upon receipt of the application, you will be notified that it is received, and the manager will contact you for any questions. The application is required to be reviewed within 90 days of receipt.

Women Owned Business Certification Renewals

- The WOBC requires an Annual Renewal to be completed by the anniversary date of the certification
- A Five Year Recertification is required with additional documents to verify the business still meets the Small Business Size Requirements.
- The business is eligible to remain certified (with the submission of Annual and Five Year Recertification form) unless:
 - There is a change in ownership or management to persons other than those upon which the certification was based;
 - The business exceeds the “small business” size standard as defined by the SBA Table of Size Standards;
 - The business ceases to be an independent operation;
 - There is any change which if it had occurred before certification would have prevented the applicant from being certified by the Department.

Criteria and Requirements of the WOBC Program

- The applicant must attest to and submit documents of proof that the business is:
 - Is at least 51% or greater owned, controlled and managed on a day to day basis by one or more women;
 - All owners of the firm are citizens of, or lawfully reside, in the U.S. (legal U.S. resident)
 - Authorized to do business under the laws of the State of Oklahoma (Oklahoma Secretary of State registration and any other requirements).
 - Out of state business are eligible to apply by submitting proof of authorization to do business in Oklahoma (Oklahoma Secretary of State and any other requirements) and proof of legal authorization status in the home state.
- The company may be registered as a Sole Proprietorship, LLC, PLLC, Partnership or Corporation.
- An example of legal documents required: proof of residence; gender; financial statements of the business; listing of principals/management with resumes; organizational documents; and any additional information required to determine ownership and control required by the application, and that the applicant qualifies for the program under the required rules.
- The application (and any renewals) are notarized by a licensed notary

Diverse Business Certification Program

- The Oklahoma Supplier Diversity Initiative (Diverse Business Certification) was created in 2021 to provide a resource for state agencies and public and private business to utilize Certified Diverse Business firms in procurement opportunities and to encourage growth in the Oklahoma economy.
- The requirements, instructions and applications are available on the Department of Commerce website.
- Requirements:
 - Must have annual revenue of equal to or less than twenty-five million dollars (\$25,000,000).
 - Have less than five hundred (500) total employees.
 - Be Oklahoma owned and operated (out of state companies are not eligible).
 - All owners of the firm are citizens of, or lawfully reside, in the U.S. (legal U.S. resident).
 - Be registered with Oklahoma Secretary of State.
 - Not be a publicly traded company.
 - Not a non-profit entity.

Diverse Business Certification Program

- The company must meet one or more of the following criteria:
 - Certified by United States Small Business Administration (SBA) as:
 - Woman-Owned Small Business
 - Minority Business Enterprise
 - Small Disadvantaged Business
 - Service-disabled Veteran Owned Small Business
 - HUBZone Small Business
 - 8(a) Business Development Program

OR

- Fifty-one percent (51%) or more owned and controlled by a member of one or more of the following diverse group:
 - Native Americans
 - United States Military Veterans
 - Women
 - Racial Minorities (including African American, Hispanic, Asian American)

OR

- Oklahoma Department of Transportation Disadvantaged Business Enterprise

Diverse Business Application Process

- The Diverse Business requirements, instructions and application are located on the Commerce website: <https://www.okcommerce.gov/about-us/diverse-business-certification-program/>
- Confirm that the business meets the annual revenue and size requirements
- The company may be registered as a Sole Proprietorship, LLC, PLLC, Partnership or Corporation.
- Read through the application and gather any required documents. Use the labeled divider pages to paper clip the documents in order in a section after the application.
- Complete the application. If any question does not apply to the business, state “not applicable” with an explanation
- Review the completed application completely and make sure there is no omitted information or documents
- Keep a complete copy of the application and documents for your records
- Upon receipt of the application, you will be notified that it is received, and the manager will contact you for any questions. The application is required to be reviewed within 90 days of receipt.

Diverse Business Certification Program Renewals

- **If approved, the certification will remain active for five (5) years unless one of the following occurs:**
 - **There is a change in ownership or daily management to persons other than those upon whom the certification was based;**
 - **The business has change in annual revenue or number of employees that exceeds the size requirements of the program;**
 - **The business ceases to be an independent operation;**
 - **There is a change which, had it occurred before certification, would have prevented the business from being certified.**
 - **Any event that causes the business not to meet the criteria for certification must be reported to the Department in writing and certification relinquished.**

Prior to the certification expiration, the program manager at the Department of Commerce will provide the Recertification Affidavit to the primary contact of the company for renewal. The renewal affidavit must be completed and submitted by or before the expiration date.

If approved, the recertification period is for an extended five (5) years.

For more information contact:

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405-815-5262

- <https://www.okcommerce.gov/doing-business/business-services/women-owned-business-certifications/>
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