



## Frequently Asked Questions

### 1. What are the mission and goals of the Women's Business Enterprise National Council (WBENC)?

WBENC is dedicated to advancing the success of certified women's business enterprises (WBEs), Corporate Members, and government agencies, in partnership with its Regional Partner Organizations.

WBENC works to foster diversity in the world of commerce. Its programs and policies are designed to expand opportunities and eliminate barriers in the marketplace for women business owners. WBENC works with corporate representatives to encourage the use and expansion of Supplier Diversity programs.

### 2. Who are WBENC's Corporate Members?

Membership is open to corporations, government agencies and nonprofit organizations that have a demonstrated interest in supplier diversity programs. As of September 1, 2014, WBENC has over 270 [Corporate Members](#). WBENC's more than 12,000 certified WBEs are not classified as members.

### 3. Who is eligible to join?

Corporations, government agencies and nonprofit organizations that have a supplier diversity program or are in the process of starting one are eligible to join. They must proactively seek women business enterprise (WBE) suppliers.

### 4. What is the value of a WBENC Corporate Membership?

WBENC was founded by 11 corporations to provide a national standard of certification for women business enterprises (WBEs) that could be trusted and accepted by hundreds of U.S. corporations with Supplier Diversity programs. Since its inception, WBENC continues to provide critical value to major corporations as the leading private sector certifier of WBEs.

- **Access to WBENC-Certified WBEs.** WBENC provides access to certified WBEs via [WBENCLink](#), an exclusive, searchable online database that provides immediate access to essential information about prospective or existing suppliers. Corporate Members can designate one or more individuals within its supplier diversity and/or procurement staff to have access to [WBENCLink](#). A downloadable version of each WBE certificate is also available through this database.
  - **National MatchMaker Series.** MatchMaker sessions are face-to-face or virtual meetings that allow corporations to pre-qualify a WBE company for a specific contracting opportunity. Corporations pre-qualify a WBE company for specific contracting opportunities before extending an invitation to participate.
  - **National MatchMaker (Face-to-Face) Sessions** will be arranged for companies participating as a sponsor during WBENC's annual National Conference & Business Fair.
- Individual Corporate Members** may request a custom-designed, Microsoft Office Live Meeting to assist in their outreach to encourage certification of women owned companies that are suppliers.
- **The Business Fair** held during WBENC's annual National Conference & Business Fair is the largest event of its kind that focuses on providing opportunities for corporate supplier diversity and procurement professionals to meet qualified WBE suppliers.
  - WBENC provides tools which help supplier diversity professionals continuously improve their programs through self-assessment.
  - **Workshops for Corporate Members** are held on topics such as *Using the Balanced Scorecard* and *Selling Supplier Diversity*. Corporate Members also can participate in the Corporate Track of seminars presented at the National Conference & Business Fair, and in a workshop held in conjunction with the Summit & Salute to Women's Business Enterprise held each year in mid-March.

- **Diversity of WBENC-Certified WBEs.** WBENC actively seeks minority women business owners for certification. A cooperative relationship with the U.S. Hispanic Chamber of Commerce has enabled WBENC to expand the number of certified Latina businesses to ensure Corporate Members have access to an inclusive field of potential vendors. In 2005, WBENC also forged an alliance with the National Minority Contracting Association. WBENC's Regional Partner Organizations work closely with the local chapters of the USHCC, the NMSDC, and other minority-focused business organizations.
- Each year, WBENC names **America's Top Corporations for Women's Business Enterprises**, a valued recognition of corporations that demonstrate substantive commitment to enhancing contracting opportunities for WBEs and "raising the bar" in innovative best practices in purchasing from WBEs.

In general, membership allows your company to reach thousands of vibrant women-owned companies that meet the standards required to attain WBENC certification. In addition, Corporate Members receive services, information, and tools designed to bring qualified women's business enterprises into your Company's supply chain. As a new Corporate Member, your Company joins more than 270 major corporations and government agencies that have discovered and are recognized for the bottom line value of adding diversity to their vendor pool. =

#### 5. **Is Supplier Diversity or WBE utilization training provided?**

Yes, training is provided on an informal basis. For companies seeking to start a new program, WBENC refers an experienced consultant or connects you to a Corporate Member with a national leader in Supplier Diversity. Many of these Corporate Supplier Diversity leaders either serve as WBENC Board Members or in our [Ambassadors' program](#). These leaders can be an invaluable resource in providing support and advice.

Support and information is also provided through research such as the Benchmarking Survey referenced above, and through workshops, Live Meetings on a variety of topics, online services such as WBENCLink, plus tools such as the Balanced Scorecard that assists member companies in self-assessing their programs.

#### 6. **How can my company participate?**

WBENC offers many high visibility opportunities for corporate participation. Two-thirds of WBENC's Board seats are held by corporations, and corporate representatives are eligible to serve on standing committees of the Board. Involvement in the Ambassadors' program or providing event sponsorship and support (see below) are additional ways for companies to participate.

#### 7. **Are corporate sponsorship opportunities available?**

Sponsorship of events and programs such as our annual [Summit & Salute to Women's Business Enterprises](#) (a mid-March fund-raiser), [Women in Business National Conference & Business Fair](#), the Tuck-WBENC Executive Program, the Dorothy B. Brothers Executive Scholarship Program, WBENC publications and books, and many others are significant sponsorship opportunities. In addition to the events and programs listed above, WBENC undertakes research and other special projects, each with well-established benefits and attractive outreach opportunities. Please contact Paige Adams at [padams@wbenc.org](mailto:padams@wbenc.org) or Mia Delano at [mdelano@wbenc.org](mailto:mdelano@wbenc.org) for more information.

#### 8. **What is the certification process and how do I know it is reliable?**

WBENC provides a national standard for the certification of women owned companies. Our 14 Regional Partner Organizations implement this standard utilizing professional staff and trained volunteer certification committees. The process begins when a woman applies through the WBENC website. After completion of the online application, she must then submit the required documents to complete her file and send it to the designated Regional Partner Organization. A regional Certification Review Committee reviews the file and directs the next step, a site visit, be conducted.

The Certification Review Committee outlines specific questions for the site visit, and the result of the site visit is reported during the next monthly Certification Review Committee meeting. If the file review and site visit have led the committee to determine that the business meets all of WBENC's criteria, certification as a Women's Business Enterprise (WBE) will be issued. While approximately 23% of applications are denied, an appeal process is in place that provides a review at both the regional and, if appropriate, the national level.

Corporate Members can track a WBE through the certification process, access, and download a PDF version of the WBE certificate via WBENCLink, the WBENC online database of WBEs.

The national Board of Directors' Certification Committee maintains the standards. WBENC oversees the standards and training for Certification Committee members and Regional Partner Organization program staff. WBENC staff conducts an

annual audit of each Regional Partner Organization's processes to ensure that each is following the WBENC certification standards.

**9. How many Women's Business Enterprises (WBEs) does WBENC have and what is the profile of these businesses?**

As of September 2014, there were nearly 12,300 certified WBEs in WBENCLink. As the Certification process addresses extensive criteria, many applicants do not meet WBENC's thorough requirements and do not complete the process.

A profile of WBENC certified WBEs:

- Five have annual revenues in excess of \$1 billion
- 140 have revenues of \$100 million or more

Excluding the billion dollar companies, the average WBENC business has:

- \$7.7 million in annual revenue
- 46 employees
- 14 years in business

**10. Where are the Regional Partner Organizations located? What is their relationship to WBENC?**

There are 14 Regional Partner Organizations located around the country. Together, they cover the 50 states. The following is a list of the states covered by WBENC's Regional Partner Organizations. [Click here](#) to view an interactive Regional Partner Organization Territory map.

|   |                                   |
|---|-----------------------------------|
| Astra Women's Business Alliance                   | AK, OR, WA, No. CA, ID            |
| Center for Women & Enterprise                     | MA, CT*, ME, NH, RI, VT           |
| Greater Women's Business Council                  | GA, NC, SC                        |
| Ohio River Valley – Women's Business Council      | OH, KY, WV                        |
| Women's Business Enterprise Council – Great Lakes | MI, IN                            |
| Women's Business Enterprise Council-South         | LA, AL, TN, FL*                   |
| Women's Business Council - Southwest              | No.Texas, OK, AR, NM              |
| Women's Business Development Center of Florida    | FL*                               |
| Women's Business Development Center-Chicago       | IL, WI, ND, SD, MN,IA, NE, KS, MO |
| Women's Business Enterprise Council/PA-DE-sNJ     | PA, DE, So. NJ*                   |
| Women's Business Enterprise Alliance              | South Texas                       |
| Women's Business Enterprise Council - West        | AZ, CO, So. CA., NV, HI           |
| Women Presidents' Educational Organization/DC     | DC, MD, VA                        |
| Women Presidents' Educational Organization/NY     | NY, No. NJ*, CT*                  |

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\* Indicates a shared territory.

A more detailed listing of presidents/executive directors of the organizations is included on the [Regional Partner Organization](#) webpage.

In addition to conducting WBENC certification, many of the Regional Partner Organizations offer separately funded programs designed to help women establish and grow businesses. Others only handle certification, provide local Women's Enterprise Leadership Forums, and host events to connect buyers and WBE suppliers. WBENC has a Designation Agreement with each Regional Partner Organization that details the relationship and the territory covered.

For more information about WBENC, call us at 202.872-5515, ext. 8020.