

4th Annual Women Building Businesses Conference



Colleen LaCoss

WBEC EAST

WOMEN'S BUSINESS ENTERPRISE CENTER

www.wbec.org

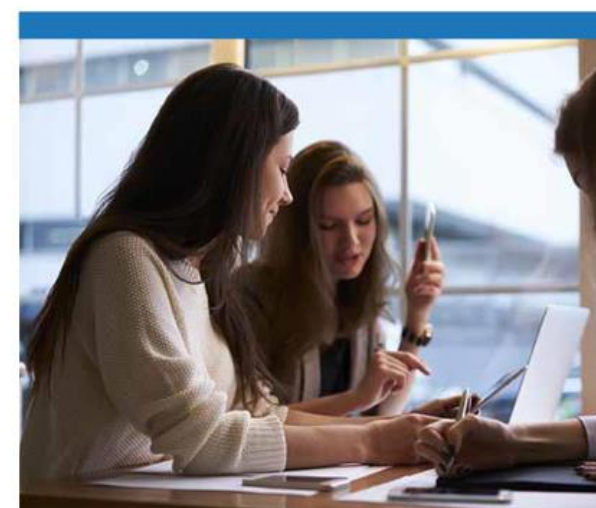


How to Get Your Woman-Owned Business Certified



How to Get Certified

A Guide to the Importance and Process of WBE Certification



Agenda

Thank you for your interest in WBENC WBE certification!

- What is Supplier Diversity?
- About WBENC and WBEC-East
- WBE & WOSB Eligibility
- Benefits of Certification
- The Application Process
 - Steps
 - Cost
 - Using WBENCLink 2.0
 - Documents Required
 - Confidentiality & Privacy
- Need Help? Contact Us!
- Once You're Certified...



What is Supplier Diversity?

Supplier diversity is a business practice that ensures that goods and services are derived from a diverse supplier base. It doesn't guarantee you contracts, but rather an equal opportunity to compete.

Many corporations and government agencies set annual spend goals to create a diverse supply chain by working with companies certified as women-owned, minority-owned, disability-owned, veteran-owned, and LGBT-owned.

WBENC is the **largest national certifier** of women-owned businesses and is nationally recognized among corporate and government supplier diversity programs.

Many organizations require that you be WBENC certified before becoming a part of their supplier diversity portals.



6 Things to Know About Supplier Diversity

1. Every organization and state is different when it comes to supplier diversity. Do your research!
2. There is no one national certificate accepted by every procurement department and every state, but we're as close as you can get.
3. Being a diverse supplier does not guarantee you contracts or give your business an edge over a male-owned business. It's all about leveling the playing field and giving you a networking tool.
4. Being a WBE is just one of a bunch of ways to be certified as a diverse business.
5. Supplier diversity is not good will... it's good business sense.
6. You can have supplier diversity goals too. 80% of WBEs are looking to work with other WBEs.



What is a WBE?

WBE = Women's Business Enterprise

It's not just about ownership!

WBENC certified WBEs must be:

- At least 51% owned
- Run
- Controlled

By a woman or women!



The business is certified, not the individual owner. This means that owners and employees are welcome to participate equally in WBENC and WBEC-East networking, events and committees.



Is WBE Certification Right for Me?

Take this short self-assessment:

- Is your product/service targeted at corporations, wholesale retail and/or government agencies?
- If you're a new business, are you ready? Do you have the capacity to provide quality service to large contracts that may be looking to work with certified WBEs?
- Are you willing to share the details of your business including capital investment, full tax returns, legal documents and compensation records?
All documentation and information is kept in a secure, encrypted online portal and reviewed confidentially by a trained committee and staff who sign non-disclosure agreements.
- Are you clear that WBE certification is a marketing and networking tool and does not guarantee or entitle your company to receive new business or contracts?



WBE Benefits

- Receive a **WBE certificate** to upload to supplier diversity portals.
- Access to **supplier diversity and procurement executives** at hundreds of major U.S. corporations and federal, state and local government agencies that accept WBENC certification.
- **Inclusion in WBENC's database** of certified WBEs, which is accessed by supplier diversity professionals across the country.
- Ability to **utilize the WBENC seal** and Women-Owned logos on your business card, website, product, and marketing materials.
- Participation in **local WBE networking events** including WBEC-East Business Connections Days and Food for Thoughts.
- Access to **national one-on-one matchmaker meetings** with Corporate Members at WBENC events.
- Inclusion in a local network of women entrepreneurs with access to **education, mentoring and eligibility for awards**.



What's Your Strategy?

Having a diversity certificate **is not on its own** a strategic plan

Having a diversity certificate **should be a part of your** strategic plan

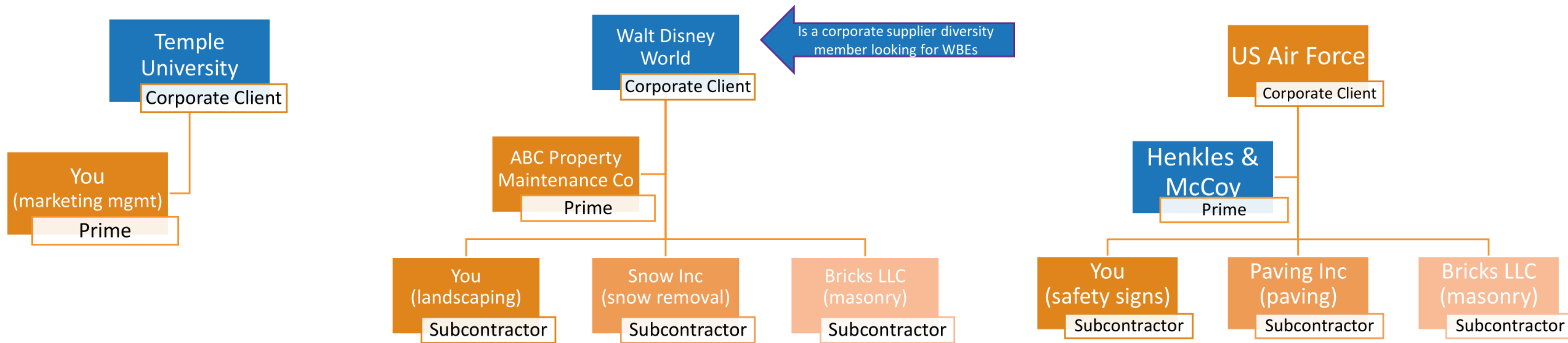
- Are my target clients local or national corporations?
- Am I better suited to be a sub or a prime?
- Do I understand the bidding and networking environment in my industry?
- Are my marketing strategies effective even without the certificate?

You get out of the network what you put into it



Corporate Clients and Small Businesses

There are different ways of working with corporate procurement offices depending on your size and services. Its important to identify who your target clients are, how their bidding and contracting system is set up, and where you fall in the supply chain.



Our corporate members are both large and small, national and local.



About WBENC & WBEC-East

WBENC is the premier provider of the women's business enterprise (WBE) certification. – WBENC.org

Comprised of 14 regional partner organizations (RPOs).

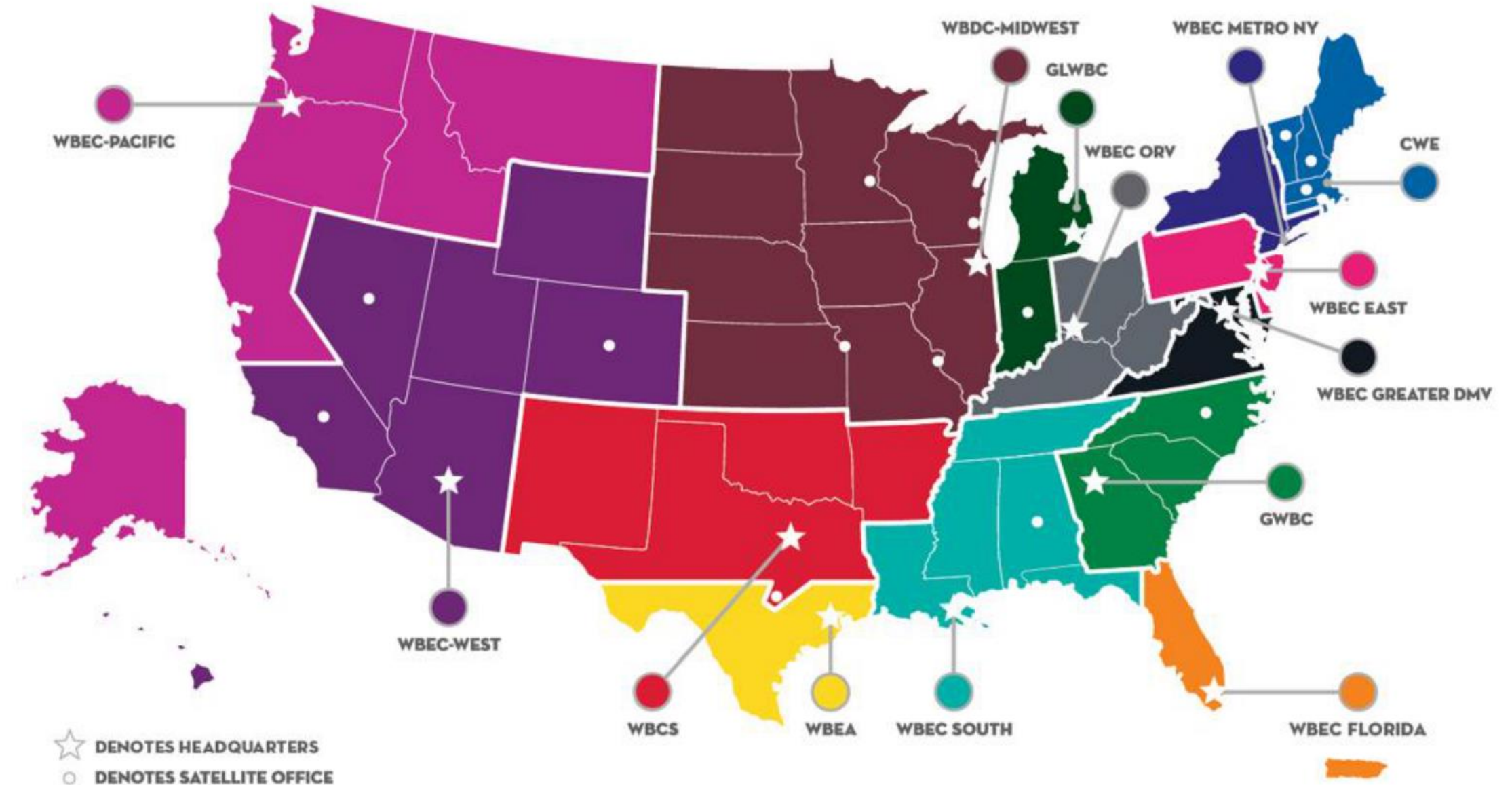
WBENC certification is a **national certification**, which means certified WBEs can take part both locally and nationally in any region that they do business in and network with other WBEs and Corporate Members in any territory.

18,000+ certified WBEs nationally

400+ Corporate Members nationally

WE ARE WBENC!

All WBENC-Certified WBEs and WOSBs may engage in their headquartered state RPO and any other RPO where they have a footprint



* The National WBENC Headquarters is located in Washington, DC

WBEC**EAST**
WOMEN'S BUSINESS ENTERPRISE CENTER



About WBENC & WBEC-East

WBEC-East is your local regional partner organization (RPO). WBENC applicants are assigned an RPO based on headquarters address.

We serve women business owners in **Pennsylvania, Delaware and the 8 southern counties of New Jersey** through certification, networking, workshops and special events for both new and experienced business owners.

Two offices: Philadelphia & Pittsburgh

1700+ certified WBEs regionally

60+ Corporate Members regionally



WBE Certification Eligibility

Businesses must meet the following requirements:

- For profit, incorporated business
- 51% owned by a woman or women, including voting and non-voting ownership
- Female owner(s) are US citizens or legal permanent residents
- Female owner or other woman holds the highest office (President, CEO, etc.)
- Owner displays evidence of legal and managerial control- she is actively running the day to day
- Owner displays evidence of contribution of capital and/or expertise- she is essential to the business
- Business demonstrates independence and ability to function on own from a male-owned company

No size, industry or length of time in business requirements. Brand new businesses welcome!

Most business structures are certifiable- LLCs, corporations, sole proprietors, partnerships, some ESOPs



Husband/Wife Teams

Businesses where a woman holds 51% may or may not be eligible:

- Is this MY business?
- Do I have the final say on all decisions?
- Am I the expert in the industry?
- Am I overseeing the day-to-day operations or just passively involved?
- Does my male partner defer to me?
- Can I fire my male partner?
- Am I reliant on my male partner for a license/equipment/clients etc.?
- Ultimately, will I be successful if he immediately left the company?



Governing Documents

The #1 reason an eligible business gets denied!

Take a look at your:

- **Bylaws:** If you're a corporation
- **Operating Agreement:** If you're an LLC
- **Partnership Agreement:** If you're a partnership
- **Shareholders Agreement:** If your corporation has shares
- **Franchise/Service Agreement:** If you're a franchise

If you're a sole proprietor or single member LLC, you may not have any of these documents, and that's ok.

These documents define how your company is run if there are multiple managers or owners, and are legally binding, **whether or not it reflects what's actually happening in real life.**



Governing Documents

Unanimous Consent or Supermajority Clauses

- **What they are:** Clauses that state that all owners/directors (or a supermajority, usually 75% or above), must agree in order for certain actions to be taken.
- **Example:** 4(a)(iii) Unanimous consent of all directors is required to borrow a loan exceeding \$25,000.
- **Why this isn't eligible:** The female owner(s) must have complete control over the company. Her decision making power cannot be vetoed by a minority share male owner. A unanimous consent clause, like the one above, limits her ability to take certain actions. In the example above, if she brought on a minority share male owner, she would need his approval in order to take out a new loan.
- **How to fix it:** Draw up an amendment and sign it, changing the “unanimous consent” to “a majority 51% consent.” WBENC requires women to hold 51% or more, so even if you bring on a 49% co-owner, you'd still be protected.



Governing Documents

Highest Title Definitions in the Officers & Directors Sections

- **What they are:** In your bylaws or operating agreement, the section on officers should define what the highest title is in your company. This could be President, CEO, Managing Member, etc. A woman must hold this title. If a corporation has both a Board of Directors and a separate level of officers, the document should define what title is the highest on the Board (usually Chairperson) and what the highest officer title is (usually President). In this case, a woman must hold both of these titles, though it can be two separate women.
- **Example:** 5(b) The President is the CEO of the company.
- **Why this may not be eligible:** If you hold the CEO role, and you have a man in the President role, legally by the example above, he is the one in charge of the company, not you. Whether or not this is truly what's happening in real life unfortunately doesn't matter... we have to go by the legally binding documents.
- **How to fix it:** Draw up another amendment and sign it, defining your title as the head of the company. For example: "The CEO shall be the highest officer in the company, and all other officers shall report to the CEO."



We also offer a second certificate:

Question #1 of the WBE application will ask you if you want to add this on.



Do You Need the WOSB Certificate?

Are you...

- Interested in contracting with the federal government?
- Working in one of the approved NAICS code industries?
 - These are typically male dominated industries
 - Make sure the NAICS code on your application matches your tax return
 - **Qualifying NAICS Codes:** <https://www.sba.gov/document/support--qualifying-naics-women-owned-small-business-federal-contracting-program>

If you answered no to the above, WOSB will likely not benefit you. You don't need to check "Yes" on question 1 of the WBE recertification!



What's a NAICS Code?

North American Industry Classification System (NAICS)

This code represents the services you offer as a business.

YOU CHOOSE the code that you feel best represents you, and there are thousands of codes to choose from. www.naics.com/search

On your WBE application, you can select **1 primary code**. We recommend selecting **5-20 additional codes** for other services/products you offer (but don't overdo it!). Once you are approved, the public info from your application will go into the WBE directory, and these codes serve as keywords so you show up in searches.

Ideally, your primary NAICS code should also be put on your annual tax return, though often accountants won't ask what code you want, and will just put the catchall code 541990- general professional services

Form 1120-S		U.S. Income Tax Return for an S Corporation		OMB No. 1545-0123
Department of the Treasury Internal Revenue Service		Do not file this form unless the corporation has filed or is attaching Form 2553 to elect to be an S corporation. Go to www.irs.gov/Form1120S for instructions and the latest information.		2019
For calendar year 2019, year beginning , ending		Name GEOCONVERGENCE, LLC		D Employer identification number [REDACTED]
A S election effective date 06/15/08	TYPE	Number, street, and room or suite no. If a P.O. box, see instructions. [REDACTED]		E Date incorporated 06/02/2008
B Business activity code number (see instructions) 541511	OR			



WOSB Certification Eligibility



***Registration in SAM is free at SAM.gov. Don't get scammed by people who will ask you to pay \$500 to get registered.**



Application Process

The entire process takes about 3-4 months, depending on the complexity of your business. Recertification is annual.

Phase 1

Documentation Review 30-60 days

- Once your application and processing fee are submitted, it will go into a thorough review by staff. You will be contacted generally within 1-2 weeks with any clarifying questions or requests for additional documentation. Almost every applicant gets additional questions, so don't be dismayed! You have up to 60 days to send us all additional documentation requested.

Phase 2

Committee Review 30 days

- All applications are reviewed by an anonymous committee, and a recommendation is made. You will receive an automated notification once phase 2 is complete.

Phase 3

Site Visit 30 days

- Once the review is complete, you will be connected with a site visitor for a 1-hour meeting. Site visits may be in person or virtual depending on the nature of your business and if you have a facility. This site visit occurs between the site visitor and the female owner(s) representing 51% or more of the company. This is our chance to get to know you and your company in person. We do our best to work with both you and our site visitors' schedules to get your site visit scheduled as soon as possible.

Once the site visit is completed, you will generally hear back within a week regarding the final decision.



Cost to Apply

Application fees operate on a sliding scale based on your gross receipts from the previous year:

Gross Receipts	Application Fee
Under \$1 Million	\$350
\$1-5 Million	\$500
\$5-10 Million	\$750
\$10-50 Million	\$1,000
\$50 Million and Above	\$1,250

Note that this is a **non-refundable** processing fee to review your application and does not guarantee certification.



Confidentiality & Privacy

Your information's security and privacy is the #1 priority of WBENC!

- The WBENCLink 2.0 portal has several layers of encryption.
- All staff, committee members and site visitors sign confidentiality agreements.
- If certified, confidential information is NOT shared with Corporate Members.
- If certification is discontinued for any reason, all records are purged.
- No documents or records are kept in hard copy.

Important Note: If there is an additional individual besides the owner who is assisting with the certification process such as an administrator or consultant, please list them as the application contact in question #17 on the application. If their name is not listed as a contact, we cannot discuss or disclose any information about the application to them.



Getting Started: WBENCLink 2.0



The screenshot shows the WBENCLink 2.0 website. At the top, there is a navigation bar with the WBENCLink 2.0 logo, a link to "OUR MAIN SITE", and a "CONTACT SUPPORT" button. The main header area features the text "Women's Business Enterprise National Council" in a large, teal font, with a "WBENCLink2.0 Log In" button below it. The main content area is divided into three columns. The first column, titled "Seeking Certification", describes the goal of promoting companies to major corporations and lists four links: "Certification Benefits", "Certification Criteria", "Certification FAQ's", and "Apply for or Renew Certification". A yellow box with the text "CLICK HERE TO APPLY" and a red arrow points to the "Apply for or Renew Certification" link. The second column, titled "System Training", describes learning to utilize the online application system and includes a "See Upcoming Training & Events" button. The third column, titled "About the WBENC Network", describes additional information for users and includes buttons for "WBEs" and "Corporate & Government Members".

WBENCLink 2.0

OUR MAIN SITE

CONTACT SUPPORT

Women's Business Enterprise National Council

WBENCLink2.0 Log In

Seeking Certification

Promote your company to major corporations that are actively seeking to conduct business with women owned firms.

- Certification Benefits
- Certification Criteria
- Certification FAQ's
- Apply for or Renew Certification

CLICK HERE TO APPLY

System Training

Learn how to fully utilize our online application system with a live trainer

See Upcoming Training & Events

About the WBENC Network

Additional information for our users

- WBEs
- Corporate & Government Members



Getting Started: WBENCLink 2.0

The screenshot displays the WBENCLink 2.0 interface. The top section is the 'Dashboard', which includes a 'Key Actions' bar showing '1 Certification Applications pending' with a link to 'Manage/Apply for Certification'. Below this is a 'Certification Center' with a message about submitting a request for active certifications. The bottom section is the 'Vendor Profile: Certifications' for 'Yammies Jammies, Inc.', showing 'Current Certifications' (none) and a table of 'Applications'. The table has columns for Status, Application Number, App Type, Organization, Dates, Contact, and Actions. One application is listed with Status 'Incomplete (0%)', Application Number '3713679', App Type 'New', Organization 'Center for Women & Enterprise', and Dates 'Started: 4/27/2018'. The 'Actions' column for this application has a 'Process' link. A red box highlights the 'Dashboard' tab in the top left, and a red arrow points from a yellow callout box to the 'Process' link.

Dashboard

Displaying records assigned to: your company

Key Actions

1 Certification Applications pending [Manage/Apply for Certification](#)
[Take a Training Class](#)

Certification Applications

Status	Pending Submission	Pending Receipt	Pending Processing
	1	0	0

Certification Center

If your firm holds active certifications (SBE/MBE/WBE/DBE/HUB/etc) from any organization, [submit a request](#) to add them to your account.

Alerts

No Activated Alerts. [View Pending Alerts](#)

System News

Configure

[Change Your Password](#) [Business Info](#)

Vendor Profile: Certifications

General Users Contacts **Certifications**

Yammies Jammies, Inc. System Vendor Number: 20602746

[Manage/Apply for Certification](#) [Request Missing Certification](#)

Current Certifications

No current certifications

Applications

Status	Application Number	App Type	Organization	Dates	Contact	Actions
Incomplete (0%)	3713679	New	Center for Women & Enterprise	Started: 4/27/2018	j y	Process

[Customer Support](#)
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[Home](#) | [Help](#) | [Print This Page](#) | [Print To PDF](#)

Click here to get back into your application

Then click on "Process"



Getting Started: WBENCLink 2.0

Test System

B2G NOW

Home

View »

Search »

Message »

Settings »

Help & Support »

Logoff

Show All

Hide All

Certification Application: Main Summary

Main Documents Signature Submit Utilities Cert List

Yammies Jammies, Inc.
Application Type: New
Application Number: 3713679

Application status: **Incomplete**
Application started: 4/27/2018

0% complete

Fill in each of the sections noted below by clicking the Process buttons. You can complete the sections in any order and the system will save your information as you go. Once all sections have been completed, the application will be complete and you will be able to sign and submit.

The Contact Person noted below is the only user authorized to access this application. If someone else needs access, change the contact by clicking the drop down menu or grant them access on the Utilities tab.

Application Information

Application Type	New
Certifying Agency	Center for Women & Enterprise
Business Name	Yammies Jammies, Inc.
Current Status	Incomplete
Application Number	3713679
Date for Deletion	7/26/2018 (Extend)
Contact Person	

This is the assigned user for this application. To ensure security of the application, only YOU have access to this application unless you reassign it to another user for completion or explicitly grant access by clicking the Utilities tab and adding a user to the Access List.

Sections and Documentation

Section 1: General Information	Process	Incomplete: 1 completed of 18 required; 0 completed of 2 optional
Section 2: Real Estate	Process	Incomplete: 0 completed of 7 required; 0 completed of 1 optional
Section 3: Capabilities	Process	Incomplete: 0 completed of 15 required; 0 completed of 6 optional
Section 4: Business/Credit References	Process	Incomplete: 0 completed of 2 required; 0 completed of 0 optional
Section 5: Ownership/Management	Process	Incomplete: 0 completed of 4 required; 0 completed of 1 optional
Section 6: Additional Information	Process	Incomplete: 0 completed of 7 required; 0 completed of 0 optional
Document List	Process	Incomplete: 0 attached of 17 mandatory; 0 attached of 16 required

Signature and Submittal

Signature	Sign	
Submittal	Submit	

Delete Application

Need Help?

Download Part 2 of the user manual

Sign up for a Training Class

Incomplete applications delete after 90 days

Follow the Steps & Track Your Progress

WBEC EAST
WOMEN'S BUSINESS ENTERPRISE CENTER

Getting Started- Documents

For the full list visit: <https://www.wbenc.org/documentation-required-for-wbenc-certification/>

All documents must be uploaded. We do not accept anything by email or hard copy.

Documents Required (if applicable to business)

- **Legal & Governance:** Articles of incorporation, Stock certificates, bylaws, operating agreement, etc.
- **Owner Eligibility:** Proof of gender and citizenship or permanent resident status, resumes of all owners and directors, proof of contribution of capital, etc.
- **Financial Structure:** 3 full years of tax returns, balance sheets, profit loss statements, bank signature cards, loan agreements, leases, service or franchise agreements, etc.
- **Personnel:** W2s, list of employees, payroll documentation, etc.

Fear not! Annual recertification is not nearly as arduous...



If You're a Brand New Business...

What to send in for those tricky documents

- All governance and eligibility documents that apply to your legal structure such as articles of incorporation, stock certificates, bylaws, operating agreement, director resumes, proof of citizenship/gender etc. still apply.
- **Contribution of Capital:** A copy of a deposited check, no matter how small, into your business account if you started the business. Or a purchase agreement if you bought the business.
- **3 Full Years of Tax Returns:** For each year that you do not have a company tax return, send in the first two pages of your personal tax return. You can redact sensitive info about you and your family.
- **Balance Sheet & Profit/Loss Statement:** Send them in even if they're short and covered with zeros!
- **Other things that may not apply:** W2s, list of employees, payroll documentation, lease agreements, loan agreements, etc. Send a statement in a word doc explaining why this doesn't apply to your business.



Why Do We Ask for So Much Stuff?

We are not a pay for play! Every doc we ask for verifies that a woman owns and runs her company.

Examples:

- Bylaws or Ops Docs: Do you legally have control over your business?
- Resumes: Who has the expertise and who oversees what?
- Lease & Loans: Who is signing on behalf of the business?
- Balance Sheet: Are there any loans you're not reporting to us?
- Payroll & W2s: Are you valued by the company enough to be compensated accordingly?
- Capital Contribution: Are you beholden to anyone?
- Tax Returns: Are you legally being reported as the owner each year?



10 Insider Tips for a Quick and Easy Certification Process

- 1. Create the profile at wbenc.wbenclink.org using the female owner's email address.**
She will be the holder of the certification. Remember admins can be added in question #17.
- 2. Remember that the public information you submit will become your company's directory listing.**
Type in upper- and lower-case letters, enter a catchy business description with keywords for your capabilities, and include your website.
- 3. Submit as many documents as possible in your initial application.**
You have 90 days to submit the application from when you start it, and you can always save and come back.
- 4. Make sure your bylaws and operating agreement support female control.**
Look out for unanimous consent clauses that could overrule your decision as majority owner. And in the officer's section, find out what the highest title is. CEO seems higher up than a President, but not legally if your documents don't say so.
- 5. Do not sign/submit the application until the female owner has reviewed everything for accuracy.**



10 Insider Tips for a Quick and Easy Certification Process

6. **Pay the processing fee by credit card rather than check.**
We won't start reviewing the application until payment has been received, so don't wait on snail mail.
7. **Whitelist the email wbenclink@wbenclink.org**
Periodic updates regarding your application and questions from your certification officer will be sent from this address.
8. **Send all responses to Q&As and requests for documents as one response in a timely manner.**
Every application receives some degree of questions from their reviewing officer. Piecemeal responses make it longer for your officer as they have to find out what's still missing.
9. **Be flexible when it comes to your site visit so we can schedule you with a site visitor ASAP.**
10. **Remember that the whole process takes about 3-4 months.**
We process applications in the order they were received. We always have a large number of applicants, so if you think you'll need the certificate soon, apply early! And don't worry, recertification generally is much easier and can take as little as 2 weeks.



Your Certification Staff Team

Don't get intimidated by the process,
we're here to answer all of your questions!



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What Comes Next?

- Think about who your target clients are – corporations, government agencies, wholesale products?
- Do your research- find which of your target (and current) clients have supplier diversity programs and decide which certificate(s) you need
- Decide whether you're ready for certification and ready to start fulfilling contracts and projects with clients
- Get your documents in order, and make sure everything supports your control
- Once you're certified, come up with a plan to market yourself as a WBE, attend networking events, participate in WBE programs, and grow your business network. Go to **WBECEast.com/Events** for upcoming events.
- Mark your calendar! Remember to reapply 3 months before your expiration.

Certification can open doors to new business opportunities if you work your network. Remember that certification is not a magic ticket and does not guarantee business. The most successful certified WBEs build relationships in order to build business.

