

Dear Business Owner,

Welcome to the Washington State Office of Minority and Women's Business Enterprises (OMWBE). We are pleased to receive your application for certification. OMWBE is by statute, the sole certifying agency in the state of Washington for businesses seeking to be recognized in the public sector as minority business enterprises, women's business enterprises or socially and economically disadvantaged business enterprises. In addition, OMWBE is the state's Unified Certification Provider for the U.S. Department of Transportation's Disadvantaged Business Enterprise program (DBE) as administered by the Washington State Department of Transportation.

In the following pages, you will find a series of questions designed to establish that your company is a small independent business, owned and controlled by US citizens or lawful permanent residents who are minorities,* women, or socially and economically disadvantaged individuals. If you are eligible, certification will become one of the many tools in your business arsenal to achieve success. Some of the benefits of certification include access through OMWBE to state agencies and educational institutions, and a listing of your company in our online directory which is available for use by public and private sector buyers everywhere. One of the best known benefits is the Linked Deposit Program which makes loans through participating banks to OMWBE certified firms.

Certification is not an automatic guarantee of business. You will need to vigorously market your firm and bid competitively and often to win State business.

If you have questions, we are here to answer them. Please call us at (360) 753-9693 or toll-free at (866) 208-1064. You may also visit our website, www.omwbe.wa.gov, to learn more about our services; to find out about upcoming opportunities; and to register for a class, seminar or workshop. www.omwbe.wa.gov/training/documents/business%20planner%20schedule.pdf.

Women and minority owned businesses are the fastest growing sector of the small business community. You are an essential and important segment of the state economy. We welcome your application for certification and look forward to your full participation as a supplier or vendor to State government. After completing our application, we strongly recommend that you go to the Department of General Administration's website at www.ga.wa.gov and register in the WEBS database. Once registered, your firm will get an email each time an agency posts a solicitation in the commodity codes and geographic areas that match your registration.

Best Regards,

Cynthia Cooper, Director

Juan Huey-Ray, Certification Manager

* Black, Hispanic, Asian American, Native American