

WOMEN-OWNED BUSINESS OPPORTUNITIES

“Take a chance. Because you never know how absolutely perfect something could turn out to be.”---Unknown

The above quote reflects the wisdom of the woman veteran and those qualities that made you successful in your life. You have served your country! Now is the time to use the experience and training you learned through that experience for your continued success by taking advantage of the opportunities that you have earned.

As a woman veteran you are entitled to be awarded Government contracts based on “preferences” developed by the United States specifically to recognize your past service to your country. There is a universal Government goal to award Woman Owned Small Businesses 5% of prime contracting dollars; this does not count the subcontract dollars. These preferences are meant to provide your business with the capability to compete with other businesses on a more level “playing field.” If awarded a contract, however, you **MUST** still perform as any other contractor to successfully complete all contractual obligations within the performance baseline of that contract. In that regard, it is important to realize the full extent of these preferences---yes I said “preferenceS.”

As a woman veteran, you are entitled to preferential status when competing for a potential award of a Government contract due to a number of separate factors, if applicable. These factors include:

- Being a Woman Owned Small Business (WOSB) or Economically Disadvantaged Woman Owned Small Business (EDWOSB);
- Being a Veteran (Veteran Owned Small Business “VOSB”) (There are a total of 2,180 VOSBs);
- Being a Small Business; or
- Potentially a Service Disabled Veteran Owned Small Business (SDVOSB) (There are a total of 6,431 SDVOSBs).

The WOSB program was enacted with the goal of expanding the number of industries where WOSBs are able to compete for business in the federal government marketplace. For example, there are set-aside programs for Economically Disadvantaged WOSBs and WOSBs in industries underrepresented.¹ In fact, a 2015 study by the U.S. Department of Commerce expanded the industry groups to provided increased opportunities for WOSBs and EDWOSBs to pursue set-aside contracts (you will compete only against other WOSBs or EDWOSBs, as applicable) In addition, you may be qualified for a potential sole source federal contract based upon certain factors that identify your business as a sole-source capable of performing the contract.)² Consequently, the WOSB Federal Contract Program provides preferential treatment for WOSBs and EDWOSBs for set-aside and sole source contracts.

¹ Remember, all EDWOSBs are WOSBs, but not all WOSBs are EDWOSBs)

² Businesses that have certified as WOSBs or EDWOSBs are still eligible to win contracts outside of the set-aside program. However, only WOSBs and EDWOSBs may win contracts through the set-aside program.

To be eligible for these programs, the Government must verify that you are registered in the System for Award Management (SAM), have a self-certification as an EDWOSB or WOSB concern in SAM, and you have submitted documents verifying your eligibility at the time of initial offer to the WOSB Program Repository. The contract can NOT be awarded until all required documents are received.

The characteristics of the type of contracts eligible for WOSB or EDWOSB only contract competitions include certain NAICS codes assigned to an industry in which WOSBs are substantially under-represented---there are currently 92 Industry Codes. To qualify for EDWOSB status there are 21 additional Industry codes where EDWOSBs are under-represented. The Contracting Officer must have reasonable expectations that two or more WOSBs will submit an offer (Remember ---- as stated earlier, all EDWOSBs are WOSBs, but not all WOSBs are EDWOSB). Finally, the proposals must result in a fair market price.

Remember, in order to qualify as a WOSB, that business must:

- Meet small business size standard;
- At least 51% unconditionally and directly owned by a woman who is a U.S. citizens;
- Day to Day operations managed by a woman;
- The woman must make the long-term decision for that business;
- A woman must hold the highest officer Position in that company;
- That woman must work at the business full-time during normal working hours; and
- There is no minimum amount of time for the business to be operational.

In addition to the above, a EDWOSB business must also have the following qualification standards:

- Personal Net Worth thresholds;
- Adjusted gross income average over three years threshold; and
- Fair Market Value of all assets threshold limits.

This “primer” for Women-Owned Business Opportunities is only a thumbnail summary of the very basic “preference” guidelines for a woman veteran to consider to expand or grow her business in the Federal Government market place.