

Are you a Minority or Woman Business Owner?

At the Washington State Department of Social and Health Services (DSHS), we believe that minority and women owned businesses should have every opportunity to do business with DSHS. This principle is consistent with the Governor's Supplier Diversity Initiative (SDI) aimed at increasing state spending with minority and women business owners in contracting and procurement opportunities. Ultimately, our entire State's economy benefits, but we need your support in achieving our supplier diversity initiative goals.

The Department of Social and Health Services strives to ensure minority and women owned businesses have maximum practical opportunity for increased participation. The Governor's Supplier Diversity Initiative demonstrates DSHS' commitment to the inclusion of certified minority and women owned businesses in the purchasing and contracting process. DSHS' plans identify achievable goals that will increase contracting and procurement opportunities with diverse businesses. These plans also identify strategies, such as genuine outreach, real opportunity, and inclusion to accomplish these goals. The buyers and procurement officers for public and private entities are currently setting and meeting voluntary goals for doing business with certified firms. Therefore, certification can assist with marketing your business to these buyers for contracting opportunities in addition to assisting them with meeting their goals.

Why You Should Participate

What OMWBE does for you as a certified minority or woman enterprise:

- **Improves economic development:** provides access to capital through the Linked Deposit Program for minority and women business enterprises by decreasing interest rates on small business loans up to 2%;
- **Works with agencies to develop processes** (i.e., Supplier Diversity Plans) that encourage the use of certified firms; and
- **Makes it easier for DSHS to contract with your business**, by including your company on the OMWBE directory of certified firms. This lets DSHS run customized searches for certified businesses based on the type of work they do.

By statute, OMWBE is the sole certifying agency for the state of Washington for businesses seeking to be recognized by the public sector as a minority business enterprise, women's business enterprise or socially and economically disadvantaged business enterprise.

For that reason, the Department of Social and Health Services strongly encourages all minority and women owned business partners to apply for OMWBE certification to improve the contributions of minority and women owned small businesses to Washington State's economy. In addition, this demonstrates the responsibility of DSHS to the customers and community it serves.

To learn more about certification, please contact OMWBE technical assistance at (360) 664-9750 or toll-free at (866) 208-1064, or visit OMWBE's website, www.omwbe.wa.gov. We look forward to supporting your business by providing inclusion of business opportunities and thank you for your support of our Supplier Diversity goals.

OMWBE also connects small businesses with resources and opportunities through their Email Newsletter and [Facebook](#) page. [Click Here](#) to read past newsletters or subscribe.