

# The Supply Chain Mandate: Becoming a Target for Corporate Buyers

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When small businesses think of the **WOSB certification**, they almost exclusively think of direct contracts with the government. While this is a primary benefit, it ignores a massive secondary market: the supply chains of Large Prime Contractors. Companies like Boeing, General Dynamics, and Raytheon do not just hire diverse subcontractors out of goodwill; they do it because their federal contracts legally require it. They have aggressive "Small Business Subcontracting Plans" with specific goals for Women-Owned Small Businesses. If they miss these goals, they face financial penalties and a "Negative" rating on their past performance, jeopardising future awards.

This dynamic flips the script. Instead of you chasing the Prime, the Prime is actively hunting for you. However, they can only count your participation if you are formally certified. For a woman-owned business, the certification is the key that unlocks the door to these corporate boardrooms. It transforms you from a "vendor" into a "strategic asset" that helps them meet their regulatory compliance scorecard.

## **The Subcontracting Plan Requirement**

For every federal contract over \$750,000 (\$1.5 million for construction), a Large Prime must submit a subcontracting plan. This plan details exactly what percentage of the work will be outsourced to small businesses, including WOSBs.

Contracting officers monitor these plans closely. They conduct "surveillance reviews" to ensure the Prime is making a "Good Faith Effort" to find diverse partners. This creates internal pressure within the Prime's procurement department. Small Business Liaison Officers (SBLOs) are tasked specifically with finding qualified WOSBs to plug into their supply chain. Your certification makes their job easier. When you approach a Prime, leading with your certified status solves a problem for them immediately.

## **Tier 1 vs. Tier 2 Opportunities**

The opportunities within a corporate supply chain are tiered. "Tier 1" means you invoice the Prime directly. "Tier 2" means you work for a

subcontractor of the Prime. The pressure to utilise WOSBs trickles down the entire chain.

Often, entering as a Tier 2 supplier is an easier entry point. A major sub might need a specific component or service and is also under pressure from the Prime to show diversity spend. The certification flows through the chain. By marketing yourself to the major subcontractors—not just the giants at the top—you can find niche opportunities to provide specialised services while building your resume.

### **Corporate Supplier Diversity Portals**

Almost every Fortune 500 government contractor has a dedicated "Supplier Diversity" portal on their website. Registering in these portals is different from registering in SAM. It puts you in their internal proprietary database.

When an internal program manager needs a widget, they query this internal database first. If you are a certified WOSB, you often get flagged for "exclusive" bid opportunities that are never released to the general public. These are "invitation only" solicitations designed specifically to boost the company's diversity spend numbers. The certification is your ticket to this VIP lane.

### **Network Effect of Certification**

Once you are a verified WOSB partner for one Prime, your reputation spreads. SBLOs from different companies talk to each other at industry days and conferences. They share lists of reliable, high-performing diverse suppliers.

If you perform well for Lockheed Martin, and you are certified, you become a known quantity. When Northrop Grumman needs a similar capability, your name comes up. The certification provides the initial trust, but your performance builds the network. It creates a flywheel effect where the regulatory pressure on Primes drives constant business to your door.

### **Conclusion**

The WOSB designation is a dual-use asset. It opens doors at federal agencies, but it also opens the side doors of the world's largest government contractors. By positioning your firm as the solution to a Prime's compliance headache, you secure a lucrative and stable role in the industrial base.

## **Call to Action**

Unlock opportunities with both Government and Prime Contractors by getting certified.

Visit: <https://www.federalcontractingcenter.com/edwosb-certification/>