



Fact Sheet for Women Owned Businesses

What is WEConnect Canada?

WEConnect Canada is a Canadian non-profit organization led by corporate members. The organization certifies firms that are at least 51% owned, managed and controlled by women and connects them with the growing corporate and public sector demand for diverse suppliers. It is an affiliate of WEConnect International, which promotes the leading international certification standard for women-owned businesses to give them a foothold in the global supply chain, and is building on successful models in the U.S. and U.K.

In addition to certification, WEConnect Canada delivers education, training, coaching and mentoring programs that are essential for Canadian women business enterprises to bid successfully on procurement contracts. This support contributes to significant growth for women's businesses. The organization also facilitates the building of strong networks for women by connecting them both with procurement officers of top corporations and with other qualified firms in order to enhance bidding capacity.

Who Should Apply?

The program is open to women business owners who:

- are based in Canada
- own a minimum 51% of their firm
- manage and control their business
- operate an established, successful business – whether product or service-based – in any sector
- are growth-oriented
- have the capacity to sell to large corporations and/or the ability to scale their operations accordingly. It is recommended that applicants have a minimum of \$100,000 in annual revenues and the capacity to deliver on large contracts within one to five years.

Why Should You Get Certified?

- To maximize your potential to do business with big business by providing access to local, national and global procurement opportunities that are otherwise difficult to identify.
- To take advantage of the search by our corporate members to diversify their supply chains and find new sources of innovation, quality and competitive pricing. Large corporations need a broad range of services, covering everything from technology to HR, event management and marketing.

- To gain a marketing edge for your company by raising its visibility with these corporations and providing opportunities to develop relationships with supportive corporate and government buyers as well as with other qualified businesses.
- To access training on capacity building for your business.
- To build new sales opportunities and create partnerships with other qualified firms to enhance your access to large supply chain contracts.
- To significantly accelerate the growth of your company nationally and globally.

Certification as a Women Business Enterprise (WBE) by WEConnect is all about increasing your access to contract opportunities with corporations in Canada and even internationally. Note that the average contract size for a certified woman business owner in the U.S. is \$500,000. Certification verifies that your business is majority-owned (51%), managed and controlled by a woman, or women – crucial to multinational corporations and government procurement departments that need to demonstrate and measure diversity in their procurement practices.

Specific benefits for you and your firm:

- Inclusion of your company details in the WEConnect Canada database that our corporate members access to source new and diverse suppliers
- Your company profile on the WEConnect Canada website
- Opportunity for you to meet with procurement officers from our member corporations – an impressive and growing list of top national and international organizations, all eager to diversify their supply chains – and to bid on potentially lucrative corporate contracts
- Education on the commercial opportunities to market to large corporations through supplier diversity initiatives
- Training workshops on how to use the opportunity of being ‘qualified’ to further develop your marketing plan, with specific activities to help you professionally pursue procurement opportunities
- Coaching and mentoring from other qualified women-owned firms on key success factors for implementing marketing plans and gaining supply chain access
- Invitation to forums presented by corporate members, with overviews of their procurement process and practical tips on responding to Requests for Proposals (RFPs) and submitting professional bids
- Opportunity to participate in the dynamic annual conference of the Women’s Business Enterprise National Council (WBENC), the U.S. certifying body
- Potential to do business with other qualified firms, run by like-minded, high-growth women business owners, and to create partnerships that can increase your strength and clout in tendering for larger contracts

What is the Certification Process?

The certification process is robust but the steps are simple:

1. Submission of completed application with supporting documentation and non-refundable fee.
2. Review of application by WEConnect Canada.
3. Site visit conducted by WEConnect Canada to verify information in application and to get to know you and your business.
4. If certification is confirmed, a Certificate is sent to you.

5. Your company is added to the WEConnect database system used by our member buyers searching for potential suppliers, for a one-year period.
6. After the first year, you may renew for each of the following two years by annually updating your information and remitting the annual renewal fees. A re-application and site visit will be required again in year 4.

**Fee as of March 2, 2009 is \$750 and is subject to review after the 2009 pilot.*

Which Companies are WEConnect Corporate Members?

For a full list of our Corporate Members, please visit:

http://www.weconnectcanada.org/corp_members.html

Who to Contact?

WEConnect Canada has a strong leadership team on the ground that has both a proven track record in serving the women's business market and a passion to help women entrepreneurs grow and succeed nationally and globally. Their goal is to aggressively ramp up the capacity of women business owners to bid successfully on large procurement opportunities. The organization was incubated by Quantum Leaps Inc., a global non-profit that promotes women's enterprise development worldwide and that is spearheading the international growth of WEConnect.

For general inquiries, contact:

info@WEConnectCanada.org 416-646-6233 or 1-855-831-8169

If you are a woman business owner who meets the application requirements, visit

www.WeConnectCanada.org for more information and an application. Direct any questions to:

Betty Wood, Head of Qualification & Programs (*Primary contact for women business owners*)

bwood@WEConnectCanada.org 705-657-3880

- Experienced commercial banker, Founder and Head of Finance, Governance and Operations of the Global Banking Alliance for Women, and former National Director of Women Entrepreneurs Market for RBC Royal Bank
- Principal, W Consulting Group, focusing on marketing to women within the financial services industry

For inquiries about corporate membership and partnerships, contact:

info@weconnectcanada.org

info@WEConnectCanada.org

www.WEConnectCanada.org