

There are various small and minority-owned business certifications that can be very beneficial to your success. The first step is to qualify. Be sure to do your research thoroughly before seeking certification, but the following list is a great start in knowing how to qualify:

- Minorities must own and control at least 51.0% of the business
- Minority owner(s) must serve as President or CEO (if both positions exist)
- Minority owner(s) must be active in daily management
- Minority owner(s) must be a U.S. citizen

WBENC Certification

<https://www.wbenc.org/certification>

The Women's Business Enterprise National Council (WBENC) is currently distinguished as the leading certifier of women-owned businesses in the United States and offers a wide array of opportunities to its members. Being certified as a WBENC business involves a formal process that includes completion of an application, gathering of a set of required documents and an on-site visit from WBENC officials. Yet in the end, it is well worth the effort. Included among the many benefits that WBENC Certification provides are, access to major corporations and other potential business partners, technical assistance with capacity building, marketing support and increased visibility, and greater overall community support.

NMSDC Certification

<https://nmsdc.org/mbes/mbe-certification/>

The core goal of the National Minority Supplier Development Council (NMSDC) is to advance business opportunities for certified minority business enterprises by connecting them to various corporate members. As an emerging leading resource to the world of "minority" owned businesses, NMSDC offers a new online certification and re-certification application that is now integrated with NMSDC's new Minority Supplier Management Information Database. Included among the benefits of acquiring NMSDC certification are access to top corporate purchasing agents; inclusion in and access to the NMSDC supplier database; eligibility for participation in NMSDC development programs; access to educational programs; invitations to networking events; request for Proposals; business leads; and alerts for procurement opportunities from corporate members.

Small Business Administration 8(a) Certification

<https://certify.sba.gov>

The Small Business Administration is a cabinet-level federal agency established to support small business and offers very helpful resources to "minority" owned businesses as well. One of those resources is the 8(a) Certification. The first step to qualify for an 8(a) certification business is to set up a profile at [SAM.gov](https://sam.gov). Next, visit the [certify.SBA.gov](https://certify.sba.gov) website to begin the certification process. After you successfully complete your certification process through [certify.SBA.gov](https://certify.sba.gov), you should update your business profile at [SAM.gov](https://sam.gov) to show contracting officers that your business is in the 8(a) program.

It's a bit of a process, but once you're done, the benefits are well worth it. Key among them is membership in the 8(a) Mentor-Protégé program, designed to encourage mentor businesses to provide development assistance to protégé businesses. These mentors can be extremely helpful in the success of your business by providing business plan development assistance; marketing assistance; management training and coaching; and actual financing in the form of equity investments and or loans.