

**WAC 326-20-050 Proof of ownership of business.** (1) In determining whether a socially and economically disadvantaged participant(s) in a firm owns the business, the agency considers all facts in the record viewed as a whole, including the origin of all assets and how and when they were used in obtaining the firm. All transactions for the establishment and ownership, or transfer of ownership, must be in the normal course of business.

(2) To be an eligible for certification, a firm must be at least fifty-one percent owned by a socially and economically disadvantaged individual(s).

(a) In the case of a sole proprietorship or other cases where documentary proof of ownership is not available, the agency may undertake further investigation and may require documents showing how and when the socially and economically disadvantaged owner(s) interest in the business was acquired.

(b) In the case of a corporation, a socially and economically disadvantaged individual(s) must own at least fifty-one percent of each class of voting stock outstanding and fifty-one percent of the aggregate of all stock outstanding.

(c) In the case of a partnership, a socially and economically disadvantaged individual(s) must own at least fifty-one percent of each class of partnership interest.

(d) In the case of a limited liability company, a socially and economically disadvantaged individual(s) must own at least fifty-one percent of each class of member interest.

(3) The socially and economically disadvantaged individual(s) ownership, including the individual's contribution of capital or expertise to acquire ownership interests, must be real, substantial, and continuing, going beyond pro forma ownership of the firm. It may include ownership interest acquired:

(a) As the result of a final property settlement or court order in a divorce or legal separation, provided no term or condition of the agreement or divorce decree is inconsistent with this section;

(b) Through inheritance or because of the death of the former owner; and

(c) Through debt instruments from financial institutions or other organizations lending funds in the normal course of business, even when the debtor's ownership interest is security for the loan.

(4) The disadvantaged owner(s) must enjoy the customary incidents of ownership, share in the risks, and be entitled to the profits and loss commensurate with their ownership interests, as demonstrated by the substance, not merely the form of arrangements.

(5) When expertise is relied upon as part of a disadvantaged owner's contribution to acquire ownership, the applicant must have a significant financial investment in the firm, and the applicant's expertise must be:

(a) In a specialized field;

(b) In areas critical to the firm's operations;

(c) Indispensable to the firm's potential success;

(d) Specific to the type of work the firm performs; and

(e) Documented in the records of the firm, which must show the contribution of expertise and value to the firm.

(6) The following are insufficient to be considered ownership in a firm by a socially and economically disadvantaged individual for the purposes of certification:

(a) A promise to contribute capital; an unsecured note payable to the firm or an owner who is not a disadvantaged individual; mere par-

ticipation in a firm's activities as an employee; capitalization not commensurate with the value for the firm; and any terms or practices giving a nondisadvantaged individual or firm a priority or superior right to a firm's profits, compared to the disadvantaged owner(s).

(b) Except as allowed by this section, interests or assets obtained by an applicant in the form of a gift or transfer without adequate consideration from any nondisadvantaged individual or firm who is: Involved in the same firm or affiliate where the individual is seeking certification; involved in the same or a similar line of business; or engaged in an ongoing business relationship with the firm or an affiliate where the individual is seeking certification. To overcome this presumption and permit the interests or assets, the disadvantaged individual must demonstrate by clear and convincing evidence that: The gift or transfer to the disadvantaged individual was made for reasons other than obtaining certification; and the disadvantaged individual controls the management, policy, and operations of the firm, notwithstanding the continuing participation of a nondisadvantaged individual who provided the gift or transfer.

[Statutory Authority: RCW 39.19.030 and 39.19.120. WSR 19-13-014, § 326-20-050, filed 6/7/19, effective 7/8/19; WSR 04-08-093, § 326-20-050, filed 4/6/04, effective 5/7/04. Statutory Authority: RCW 39.19.030(7). WSR 92-11-007, § 326-20-050, filed 5/11/92, effective 6/11/92. Statutory Authority: Chapter 39.19 RCW. WSR 87-18-030 (Order 87-6), § 326-20-050, filed 8/27/87; WSR 84-09-002 (Order 84-5), § 326-20-050, filed 4/5/84. Statutory Authority: 1983 c 120 § 3(7). WSR 83-22-045 (Order 83-3), § 326-20-050, filed 10/28/83.]