

# SAVING ENERGY IN SCHOOLS WITH WINDOW FILM



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## How to Win Contracts with Schools (and other Government Entities)

Governmental **contracts** can generate huge, game-changing business for small businesses. Really, what's the common denominator on big government-run buildings like schools and municipal buildings? They all have windows, and saving money through the benefits of window film can be an enormous benefit to the institution, and by extension, to the community that it serves.

The biggest challenge to small businesses is that **governmental contracts** can be intimidating. The size of the contracts is one obstacle; it's challenging for many businesses that consider themselves small to realize that **scaling up** is simply a matter of resources and mindset. However, the majority of government or large business contracts are required to use a process called **procurement**, which can present challenges.

## Bypassing the Procurement Process?

There are few circumstances in which small businesses can bypass the procurement process.

Occasionally, governmental facilities or large companies are allowed to use a process known as **indirect procurement**, or indirect spend, to keep the day-to-day operations alive. Direct procurement naturally goes toward production, but there are plenty of other things needed to keep operations going, such as facilities, utilities, maintenance services, etc. There may be atypical opportunities to take advantage of a governmental body's unique circumstances, e.g., a circumstance where a school gets a grant to help improve its environmental costs might open up an opportunity to sell window film as an indirect procurement.

However, these opportunities remain rare, so today we want to focus on a more likely means to sell products to schools and governmental facilities, which is to attain **certifications** in order to become more competitive with these opportunities.

## Standing Out Through Certification

Certifications, usually obtained through the U.S. Government via the **Small Business Administration** (SBA) or state governments, can help you gain access to specialized funding and scholarships, allow you to compete for set-aside contracts, and can be a great bonus to potential customers. There are nearly a dozen major certification programs available to access as well as key organizations such as the **National Association of Women Business**



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Owners, the [Women's Business Enterprise National Council](#), and the [National Minority Supplier Development Council](#) that can offer guidance, support, networking, and resources. Let's briefly examine a few major certification programs.

## Woman Owned Small Business (WOSB) and Women's Business Enterprise (WBE) Certification

The SBA manages these two [certifications](#) for women-owned businesses via [four SBA-approved third-party certifiers](#) as well as self-certification through the SBA.

## Minority Business Enterprise (MBE) Certification

There's a lot to be gained from [this certification](#) including access to private, governmental, and corporate contracts, networking events, searchable supplier databases, and specialized financing.

## Veteran Owned Small Business (VOSB) and Service-Disabled Veteran Owned Small Business (SDVOSB) Certification

These [certifications](#) for veteran-owned businesses require some work to obtain, but also allow for participation in the [Veterans First Contracting Program](#) and the System for Award Management (SAM), formerly known as [Central Contractor Registration](#), for eligibility for government contracts.

## The HUBZone Program

The [HUBZone program](#) is for historically underutilized businesses including those in urban and rural areas.

## 8(a) Business Development Program

The [8\(a\) Business Development](#) certification by the SBA was created to assist socially and economically disadvantaged small businesses.

## B Corp Certification

This [designation](#) is for companies that meet rigorous standards of social and environmental performance, accountability, and transparency.

There are a variety of [certifications](#) that can be a great way to differentiate your small business. Once you've obtained your new status, be sure to maintain your renewals each year, and let your clients know. Be sure to take advantage of perks that come with certification as well, such as member events, mentoring programs, and opportunities to apply for new contracts.



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