



## **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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### **WPEO & NY STATE PARTNERSHIP INTRODUCES FAST-TRACK TO CERTIFICATION**

*New Agreement Allows Women-Owned Businesses to Be Certified Quicker and Easier*

**NEW YORK, N.Y.**– The Women Presidents’ Educational Organization (WPEO) will sign a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the New York State Department of Economic Development, Minority and Women’s Business Development Division on January 24, at 6:30 pm at the WPEO “Celebrating Our Partners” event in New York City. Michael Jones-Bey, director of Empire State Development, will attend to co-sign the document with WPEO president Marsha Firestone, Ph.D.

As the regional affiliate of the Women’s Business Enterprise National Council (WBENC) the WPEO provides third-party private sector certification for women-owned businesses as well as access to Fortune 1000 supplier diversity programs. The MOU with New York State will offer an added benefit to New York WPEO-Certified Women’s Business Enterprises (WBEs): the ability to fast-track their public sector certification. The WPEO currently maintains a similar relationship with the City of New York.

“According to the Center for Women’s Business Research, there are more than 630,000 women-owned businesses in New York State that employ nearly 500,000 people, and generate \$88 billion in sales. These businesses have a significant impact on the local economy and are a valuable resource for New York State,” said Marsha Firestone, Ph.D., president and founder of the Women Presidents’ Educational Organization. “We are proud that together the WPEO and New York State can pave the way for increased contract opportunities for women-owned businesses.”

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#### **About the WPEO & Women’s Business Certification**

WPEO is a regional affiliate of the Women’s Business Enterprise National Council (WBENC), the nation’s leading advocate of women-owned businesses and third party certification organization. The mission of the WPEO is to increase access to business opportunities for WBEs. Our programs develop skills and knowledge for WBEs, advocate in the public and private sectors, foster relationships between WBEs, corporations and the government, and provide certification services. WPEO provides full service third party certification to women entrepreneurs in the New York and D.C regions. For more information about the WPEO, including upcoming events and membership, call (212) 688-4144 or visit the website [www.wpeo.us](http://www.wpeo.us).