**Why is the bank asking about business ownership?**
In an effort to fight financial crime, the federal government has mandated that certain financial institutions obtain, verify, and record information about the beneficial owners of legal entity customers. Legal entities can be abused to disguise involvement in terrorist financing, money laundering, tax evasion, fraud, and other financial crimes. Requiring the disclosure of key individuals who own or control a legal entity helps law enforcement prosecute these crimes.

**I’m not involved in financial crime. Why do I have to give beneficial owner information?**
You’re not a criminal, and we don’t bank criminals. Nonetheless, the federal government has mandated that we collect this information for every new account, loan, or safe deposit box opened.

**What is a beneficial owner?**
A beneficial owner is each individual, if any, who owns directly or indirectly, 25 percent or more of the equity interests of the legal entity and an individual with significant responsibility for managing the legal entity.

**What is a legal entity?**
According to the regulation, a legal entity includes a corporation, limited liability company, or other entity that is created by a filing of a public document with the Secretary of State or a similar office, a general partnership, and any other similar business entity formed in the U.S. or foreign country. You’ll notice that this definition does not include sole proprietorships, unincorporated associations, or natural persons opening accounts on their own behalf.

**What information do I have to provide?**
For each beneficial owner, you must provide the name, address, date of birth, Social Security number (or passport number in the case of Non-U.S. Persons), and a copy of a state-issued photo ID or passport. You’ll notice that this information is the same information you would provide for signers on an account. Remember, this information is only needed for owners with 25 percent or more of the equity interest and one individual who has significant responsibility for managing the legal entity.

**Do I have to sign anything?**
Yes. We obtain beneficial ownership information on a special certification form. The person opening the account will sign and date the form. Signing the form means that the person signing is stating that, to the best of his or her knowledge, the information on the form is complete and correct.

**What if no one owns 25 percent or more of the entity?**
If no one owns 25 percent or more, then the form just got a lot easier to complete. In this case, we will only need the information for one individual who controls or manages the organization.

**Which financial institutions are required to collect this information?**
On May 11, 2018, all banks, savings associations, and credit unions will be required to obtain certification of beneficial ownership as required by federal law.

**Is this information confidential?**
Beneficial ownership information is absolutely confidential. You can rest assured knowing that your information is protected by the same security and privacy standards that we have always maintained.

**Do I only need to certify beneficial owner information once?**
No, it is required for every new account. This includes deposit/savings accounts, CDs, loans, and safe deposit boxes. Additionally, in certain situations, we may be required to collect certification of beneficial ownership on a renewal of a CD or loan.