



# WHAT IS THE 8(A) BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM?

The Small Business Administration's (SBA) 8(a) Business Development (BD) Program is a nine-year program created to help socially and economically disadvantaged entrepreneurs gain access to—and succeed in—the federal marketplace.

- Businesses that participate in the 8(a) BD Program receive training and technical assistance and business development services, exclusive access to reserved federal contracting opportunities, and a unique opportunity for direct contract awards.
- 8(a) certification is a path to new business growth. The 8(a) BD Program diversifies small businesses' revenue streams with federal contracting dollars. Once certified, 8(a) participants have access to new business paths to create jobs through increased revenues from government contracting.
- Federal contracting officers see 8(a) certification as a valuable asset. They understand that 8(a) certification represents exclusive access to uniquely qualified small disadvantaged business entrepreneurs who are ready to do business with the federal government.

## WHAT ELSE SHOULD I KNOW?

- The federal government's goal is to award at least **11 percent** of all federal contracting dollars to small disadvantaged businesses each year.
- The SBA has simplified the process for qualified small businesses to participate in the 8(a) BD Program and pursue contracting opportunities.
  - In November 2020, the SBA implemented comprehensive changes to the program, detailed in [Title 13 Part 124 of the Code of Federal Regulations \(CFR\)](#).

## AM I ELIGIBLE?

The federal government defines who qualifies for the 8(a) BD Program in [Title 13 Part 124 of the CFR](#). An applicant must:

- [Be a small business](#);
- Not have previously participated in the 8(a) BD Program;
- Be at least 51 percent owned and controlled by U.S. citizens who are socially and economically disadvantaged;
- Have a personal net worth of \$750K or less, adjusted gross income of \$350K or less, and assets totaling \$6 million or less; and
- Demonstrate good character and potential to perform on contracts.



## HOW CAN I APPLY?

- Identify your primary [NAICS code\(s\)](#).
- Register your business in the [System for Award Management](#) (SAM) and the [Dynamic Small Business Search](#) (DSBS).
- Make sure to apply for 8(a) certification at [certify.sba.gov](#). Before you start, make sure you visit the Knowledge Center on the Certify website.
- [Get local assistance](#) and find out if you are ready to apply by meeting with an SBA Business Opportunity Specialist or Procurement Technical Assistance Center counselor.

## LEARN MORE:

- Visit our [website](#) or email us at [8aquestions@sba.gov](mailto:8aquestions@sba.gov) for general information about the program.
- Contact your [local SBA office](#) to learn more about the 8(a) BD Program and how to apply.
- Visit the [Certify Help Desk](#) for technical questions as it relates to your 8(a) application.
- Call us with program eligibility questions at:
  - Eastern Processing Office:  
610-382-3062
  - Western Processing Office:  
415-744-0328