



8(a) Business Development PROGRAM BENEFITS

The federal government's goal is to award at least 11 percent of all federal contracting dollars to small disadvantaged businesses each year, which includes the 8(a) Program.

Doing business with the government can help you expand your business. The government wants to provide a level playing field for small businesses owned by socially and economically disadvantaged individuals or entities by limiting competition for certain contracts to businesses that participate in the 8(a) Business Development Program.

Participants in the 8(a) program can:

- Compete for set-aside and sole-source contracts in the program
- Participate in SBA's Mentor-Protégé Program
- Receive management and technical assistance

PROGRAM QUALIFICATIONS

- Be a [small business](#)
- Be in business for 2 years
- Not have previously participated
- Be 51% owned and controlled by U.S. citizens who are socially and economically disadvantaged
- Have a net worth and adjusted gross income of less than or equal to \$750K and assets less than \$4 million

GET CERTIFIED

1. Establish a SAM account at [SAM.gov](#) as required in order to do business with the federal government.
2. Use [certify.SBA.gov](#) to complete the application process.
3. Provide requested information based on business structure and participation in other SBA programs.

You'll be notified in writing about the status of your application for certification and acceptance into the program.

You can find the full qualification criteria in [Title 13 Part 124](#) of the Code of Federal Regulations (CFR). You can also get a preliminary assessment to see if you are eligible to participate in the 8(a) program at [SBA's Certify website](#).

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DETERMINE WHEN TO APPLY

Can you/your business meet these qualifications?

- Two years in business (in your primary industry classification)
- Access to capital to sustain operations
- Record of successful performance on contracts from governmental or non-governmental sources in the primary industry category
- Demonstrated ability to expand personnel, facilities and equipment and meet any other requirements to perform on contracts
- Open to advice on growing your business

Utilize the SBA Mentor-Protégé Program

- Enhance capabilities
- Help meet established business plan goals
- Improve ability to compete for contracts
- Obtain financial and general administrative assistance

Participate in a Joint Venture

- Get enhanced market penetration
- Share costs, expenses and returns
- Increase knowledge and experience

Take Advantage of the 7(j) Program

- Assistance with training, executive education and one-on-one consulting in a broad range of business disciplines
- Technical assistance for business plans, coaching, technology and financing services

Access Other SBA Certification Programs

- Gain access to further contracting opportunities by combining the 8(a) certification with other certification types such as WOSB and HUBZone

PROACTIVE SELF MARKETING

The 8(a) Business Development program is **NOT** a contracting program. The program requires significant commitment on the part of the business to market its programs and/or services in order to succeed in the program.

- Focus on areas in your **niche** market and prioritize
- Identify federal **buyers** and get to know them
- Identify the agency contracting **procedures** and those who make buying decisions
- Make **contacts** through small business events and network your business

LEARN MORE:

Visit our [website](#) or email us at 8aquestions@sba.gov for general information about the program.

