



U.S. Small Business Administration

# Frequently Asked Questions: SBA's 8(a) Business Development (BD) Program & Application Process

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## **Your Small Business Resource**

Every day, the U.S. Small Business Administration and its nationwide network of partners help millions of potential and current small business owners start, grow and succeed.

Resources and programs targeting small businesses provide an advantage necessary to help small businesses effectively compete in the marketplace and strengthen the overall U.S. economy.

SBA offers help in the following areas:

- Starting a Business
- Financing a Business
- Growing a Business
- Opportunities in Contracting
- Recovering From Disaster
- A Voice for Small Business in Government

Visit SBA online at [www.sba.gov](http://www.sba.gov) for 24/7 access to small business news, information and training for entrepreneurs.

*All SBA programs and services are provided on a nondiscriminatory basis.*

## **What is the 8(a) BD Program?**

- This Program was named after Section 8(a) of the Small Business Act. It was created to help small disadvantaged businesses compete in the Marketplace and access the Federal procurement market. The main objective of the program is to enable firms to compete successfully in the open market after completing their nine year term in the Program.

## **What does the 8(a) BD Program Offer?**

- Procurement assistance, Business counseling, Training, Financial assistance, opportunities to grow your business through Joint Venture and Mentor-Protégé Agreements; access to surplus property and surety bonding assistance for construction firms.

## **Who is eligible for the 8(a) BD Program?**

- Must Be:
  - A Small Business Concern
  - Owned & Controlled by one or more Socially and Economically Disadvantaged Individuals
  - Owned & Controlled by US Citizens
  - In Business for at least Two Years and have the Potential for Success—demonstrated ability to successfully compete in the private sector

## **Who is Socially & Economically Disadvantaged?**

- Social Disadvantaged: African American, Native American, Hispanic American, Asian-Pacific American, Subcontinent Asian American OR any Individual that can prove chronic discrimination
- Economic Disadvantaged: Personal Net Worth cannot exceed \$250,000; Total Assets cannot exceed \$4.0M

## **What is the term of the 8(a) BD Program?**

- Participation is for 9 years: 4 years in the Developmental Stage and 5 years in the Transitional Stage

## **What are 8(a) BD Program Contracting Opportunities?**

- Eligible 8(a) firms may receive Sole Source contracts up to:
  - \$6.5M for manufacturing acquisitions
  - \$4.0M for all other acquisitions including construction

## **How does a firm apply for the 8(a) BD Program?**

- Electronic Application Process
  - At [www.sba.gov](http://www.sba.gov), click on "Apply for the 8(a) Business Development Program"
  - Read the regulations
  - Select "8(a) Business Development Suitability Tool"

## **What is the 8(a) BD Suitability Tool?**

- This tool offers interested firms an opportunity to complete an assessment profile that will provide guidance on whether they are 8(a) BD Program Ready and if not, what steps should be taken to get there. After completing the questions, click on "Apply for the 8(a) BD Program" and follow the directions to complete the online application.

## **How Long does the Application Process take?**

- A COMPLETE application will be processed within 90 days from receipt by SBA's Division of Program Certification and Eligibility.

## **Are Any Businesses Ineligible?**

- Ineligible businesses: brokers, debarred or suspended persons or concerns, nonprofit organizations. Franchises may be allowed contingent upon SBA review of the franchise agreement.

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## **NOTE:**

- **A BUSINESS MAY PARTICIPATE ONLY ONCE. EVEN IF OWNERSHIP AND CONTROL HAS COMPLETELY CHANGED, FIRM MAY NOT RE-APPLY**
- **MUST BE REGISTERED IN THE CENTRAL CONTRACTOR REGISTRATION (CCR) - GO TO [WWW.CCR.GOV](http://WWW.CCR.GOV)**

## **What if I have more questions?**

- Contact SBA's Buffalo District Office!
- Pamela.Andolina: (716)551-4301 X 301 or [Pamela.Andolina@sba.gov](mailto:Pamela.Andolina@sba.gov)
- Laura McCabe: (716)551-4301x310 or [Laura.McCabe@sba.gov](mailto:Laura.McCabe@sba.gov)

