

Questions and Answers for Program Announcement B2B-2014-01
Informational Webinar: February 13, 2014 – 10:00 a.m. EST

1. Upon grant decision, how will it publish for individuals that may be interested in doing contract work for the grant recipient?

The agency has no relationship between the grant recipient and any other parties that the grant recipient wants to use to help fulfill its obligations. As a courtesy, the agency would be willing to forward any inquiries to them but the agency accepts no responsibility in that regard.

The grant recipient may contract with other parties for the performance of project support functions or services. However the grant recipient may not contract out more than 20 percent of this project to other parties (as measured by project funds). The grant recipient may not contract out the overall administration or day-to-day management of this project to any party.

The grant recipient may follow its procurement policies and procedures when contracting with Project funds, but must comply with the requirements of 2 C.F.R § 215.40 – 215.48 or 13 C.F.R. § 143.36, as appropriate.

The following additional rules apply to contracts involving less than \$25,000 in Project Funds:

- *The grant recipient does not need to submit copies of the proposed contracts to the GOTR for approval before executing them,*
- *The contracts are not required to be awarded via competition.*

These additional rules apply to contracts involving \$25,000 or more in Project Funds:

- *The grant recipient must submit copies of the proposed contracts to the GOTR for approval before executing the contract.*
- *The contracts must be awarded via competition. Non-competitive contracting at this level is only allowed if the recipient can demonstrate to SBA's satisfaction either: 1) there is only one possible source for a particular good or service or 2) there is an emergency involving the risk of imminent danger to property or injury to people.*

2. Section 1.4 1). Document says a network of instructors to teach "Foundations of Entrepreneurship" Question-Does the Grantee develop their own curriculum or does the Grantee use content for the 2 day training that already exists?

The grant recipient would be required to use the official Boots to Business program curriculum that has been developed. This curriculum will be periodically revised and updated by the grant recipient selected to perform Requirement 3 in Section 1.4.

3. Section 1.4 3) document says "Managing the SBA owned course curricula including continuous improvement and compatibility with Department of Defense (DOD) learning management systems". Does this content exist or will the Grantee develop the content?

This curriculum exists. It will be periodically revised and updated by the grant recipient selected to perform Requirement 3 in Section 1.4.

4. Section 1.4 5) Do the criteria for" metrics Collection, analysis, and reporting on metrics and measures for program outcomes assessment" come from the Grantee or will the SBA provide that?

The grant recipient will be responsible for developing those metrics and measures with guidance and direction from the agency.

5. Is the online training intended to be self-directed learning or instructor presented content?

The eight week online Foundations of Entrepreneurship course component of the Boots to Business program can be characterized as high-touch instructor facilitated and graded time-limited independent study. Students complete and submit assignments daily over an eight week period. Students are able to interact with instructors and each other via email, within a forum discussion group, and during scheduled web-based office hours. The goal of this course is to provide students the needed knowledge and feedback required to generate an actionable business plan.

6. Are universities and non-profits eligible to apply directly or do they need to partner with small businesses?

Qualified universities and nonprofits may apply directly through the grants.gov portal. No, they don't have to partner with a small business. However, be aware that applicants must fulfill all program requirements and meet eligibility requirements (See Sections 3.2 and 3.3).

7. We are a non profit of economical development in Puerto Rico. Could we apply for this grant? We provide entrepreneurial courses but we aren't an educative institution.

This funding opportunity is open to all qualified organizations, as such qualified nonprofit economic-development organizations may apply; however be aware that applicants must fulfill all program requirements and meet eligibility requirements (See Sections 3.2 and 3.3).

8. We saw that public or private institutions are eligible. We are a management company that teaches professional development classes such as entrepreneurship. Are we eligible to apply?

All qualified organizations may apply; however be aware that applicants must fulfill all program requirements and meet eligibility requirements (See Sections 3.2-3.3).

9. Is this for non-profit or profit organizations?

All qualified organizations may apply; however be aware that applicants must fulfill all program requirements and meet eligibility requirements (See Sections 3.2-3.3).

10. Are in-kind contributions mandatory?

No in-kind contributions are required. However, in accordance with Section 2.6, the availability of additional funds or in-kind resources should be noted in the technical proposal.

11. What is a cooperative agreement?

Cooperative Agreement is an award of financial assistance that, consistent with 31 U.S.C 6305, is used to enter into the small kind of a relationship as a grant, except that substantial involvement is expected between the Federal agency and the recipient when carrying out the activity contemplated by the award.

The definition of a cooperative agreement is also provided in Section 8.1.3 as:

“A legal instrument reflecting a relationship between the United States government and a Recipient when the principal purpose of the relationship is to transfer a thing of value to the Recipient to carry out a public purpose of support or stimulation and substantial involvement is expected between the awarding agency and the Recipient when carrying out the activity contemplated in the agreement.”

Any additional information on the nature of a cooperative agreement would have to be found by applicants through their own independent research.

12. Has this program been done before in the US? If so, where?

The two-day classroom course component has been delivered at 140 military installations in the United States. It has also been delivered at some additional locations for the National Guard and Reserve components. The “Foundations of Entrepreneurship” 8 week online course has been delivered worldwide through: <http://boots2business.org/>

13. Is there a deadline to have applications submitted to grants.gov?

Proposals responding to this Program Announcement must be posted to www.grants.gov by 11:59 Eastern Time, March 5, 2014. No other submission will be permitted. Proposals after the stipulated deadline will be rejected without being evaluated.

14. Are SBDCs eligible to apply and receive the award? SBDCs are not specifically included nor excluded.

All qualified organizations may apply; however be aware that applicants must fulfill all program requirements and meet eligibility requirements (See Sections 3.2-3.3). The agency also anticipates awarding a separate grant to its resource partners for delivery of some of the two-day Introduction to Entrepreneurship courses in overseas locations.

15. Please clarify - the \$3 MM budget is for an initial 12 month period, with 2 option periods of 12 months, subject to the availability of funds and continuation of the program and sufficient performance. Would the two option years be funded at \$3 MM for each 12 month period as well (if funds are available and the program is still authorized), for a total of \$9 MM over the 36 month period?

Yes, see Section 2.1. Be aware funding is based on availability, continuing program authority, and satisfactory performance by the grantee.

16. Should the Applicant propose for the base period and both option periods (a 3 year budget), or just the base period (one year budget)?

The applicant should propose for the base period and the 2 option years; however, each option year constitutes a new budget period, as such the grantee will be required to submit a new budget with accompanying documents for each of the remaining option years.

17. The initial budget period is anticipated to be April 15, 2014 through April 15, 2015. The project starting date is stated to be "within 30 calendar days of the date of the award". Will the initial or base budget period be adjusted based upon the date funds are awarded (i.e., any delays in the receipt of the NOA)?

The date the Notice of Award is issued determines the starting and ending for the award. A Notice of Award could be completed as early as April 15, 2014. However, it could be later depending on the time it takes to award the grant and complete the Notice of Award with the awardee.

18. Is this award eligible for Letter of Credit drawdowns?

No, the drawdown is based on submission of the required budget documents. See the Program Announcement.

19. If the recipient pays their training instructors through a contract, are those instructor contracts included in the definition of a subcontractor, and then part of the 20% limitation?

A determination can't be made solely based upon the information provided. If a direct employer-employee relationship exists between the grant recipient and the training instructors, then the employees are not counted in the 20% limitation. If the training instructors are considered independent contractors or if they are hired through another entity, then they would count toward the 20% limitation.

20. If contracted instructors are considered subcontractors under this award, if the recipient pays the instructor's travel expenses directly (that is, outside the contract) do the travel charges for those instructors count against the 20% limitation on payments to contractors?

Any travel expenses paid directly by the grant recipient do not count against the 20% limitation on payments to contractors.

21. Will the recipient (through the collaboration with SBA resource partners and the VBOCs, etc.) be responsible for all marketing of the program directly to the military personnel or will the military participate in that as well?

The agency has no authority over the military's marketing efforts. The agency has worked very closely with the military and anticipates no problem securing further support and assistance. The grant recipient will be expected to collaborate with the agency and the military services where possible. However, the grant recipient will be responsible for developing an effective marketing plan for the target population regardless of the support and assistance received from the military.

22. In terms of the website administration – does this refer to the administration of the current boots2business.org website or is it anticipated that the recipient would develop a separate and new website for this specific part of the B2B program? If it is administration of the current B2B website, what is meant by administration - content management and/or the technical administration of the entire website including registration for this program through the B2B website? What are limitations, if any, regarding affiliations with a recipient's SBDC program?

The agency owns all rights to the current <http://boots2business.org/> website and the grant recipient responsible for Requirement 4 in Section 1.4 would be expected to take over content management and/or the technical administration of the entire website including registration for this program through the Boots to Business website. There are no limitations regarding affiliations with a recipient's SBDC program.

23. Under 4.1.4, bullet 6 refers to the required submission of the Applicant's Cost Policy Statement. Does this refer to a DS-2 statement (disclosure statement)?

Applicants must submit all documentation relating to their Cost Policy Statement, including the disclosure statement as required by SBDCs; however be aware that SBA has capped Indirect Costs at 25 percent.

24. Under 5.2.1, bullet 3 under additional items to discuss/include, Applicants are asked to include letters from their institution to commit resources in support of the program. Does this refer only to the use of existing computers, facilities, furniture, etc., that staff will use to fulfill the statement of work? In other words, are the salary expenses of existing staff (particularly administrative staff) who devote time to this program allowed as a direct charge to the award rather than committed resources if it is substantive? It is understood that positions included as part of the recipient's F&A rate may not be direct charged to the project.

This clause refers to any financial or in-kind assistance the institutions will be providing. As a requirement the program manager must devote 100 percent of his or her time to the grant, as such 100 percent of his or her salary may be charged to the grant. This also applies to the percentage of time any employee devotes to the grant, e.g., if the administrative assistant devotes 20 percent of his or her time to the grant only 20 percent of his or her salary may be charged to the grant. Applicant must complete A9-A12 of budget documents.

25. Also under 5.2.1, bullet 4 under additional items to discuss/include refers to raising capital for this project. If there are no cost sharing requirements for this award, is there an advantage in the award process if the Applicant proposes to raise additional funds in support of the project?

Section 1.5 requires the grant recipient to leverage funding by working with other entities. The capacity and intention to raise additional funds and commit other resources in support of the project is also part of the evaluation criteria outline in the Organizational Experience and Capacity factor described in Section 5.2.1.

26. What video protocol will be preferred for distance learning? H.323, VoIP, or some other protocol? If H.323 is preferred, will we be responsible for providing a Multipoint Control Unit (MCU) to facilitate bridging together multiple locations?

The agency has no specific technical requirements. The grant recipient will be free to use the current technical specifications or it may change those specifications to suit its own preferences. The only requirement is that the grant recipient needs to be able to take the current curriculum and deliver it online in an interactive streaming video format to remote locations worldwide, providing simultaneous coverage to 100 to 150 servicemembers in each class – some of whom may have limited internet connectivity and bandwidth.

27. Is there a preferred Learning Management System (LMS) to be used with this project?

The agency has no specific technical requirements. The grant recipient will be free to use the current technical specifications or it may change those specifications to suit its own preferences. The only requirement is that the grant recipient needs to be able to take the current curriculum and deliver it online in an interactive streaming video format to remote locations worldwide, providing simultaneous

coverage to 100 to 150 servicemembers in each class – some of whom may have limited internet connectivity and bandwidth.

28. If the online courses are to be live, at what local time and for how long will students be available for online courses?

There is no requirement for “live” delivery of the eight week online Foundations of Entrepreneurship course. The course is delivered via pre-recorded video. Students interact with the instructor(s) via email or other web-enabled mediums such as discussion forums and webinars. Should a webinar be held for student interaction, scheduling would be coordinated with participants and should be accommodative of disparate time zones. Applicants should be prepared to deliver the course in an interactive streaming video format to remote locations worldwide, providing simultaneous access to approximately 100 users/students – some of whom may have limited internet connectivity and bandwidth.

29. Planned assessment methodologies / outcomes for program participants in “Foundations” online course: Is this a business plan?

The plan for assessment methodologies and outcomes is something that the applicant should include as part of its technical proposal. There are no set requirements for the plan and the nature of that plan is open to the applicant’s creativity. At minimum, basic measures of course completion should be included which could include a business plan and/or academic credit at an accredited college or university. Beyond basic measures, the Agency is interested in assessing the micro and macro impacts of the Boots to Business program on the beneficiaries and the Nation’s economy respectively. Methodologies and frameworks are sought to evaluate the impact B2B has on a transitioning service members in terms of contributing to their ability to create an actionable business plan, the probability they will action the plan, and the program’s impact on their likelihood of success. In terms of “macro” impacts, the Agency is interested in outcomes measures such as, new business starts, aggregate gross revenue, and number of employees attributable to businesses operated by B2B beneficiaries.

30. Will the instructors for the live classes stay on the military base at the respective military installations, or should the Applicant include private lodging for the instructors while in the foreign country?

If military lodging is available, training instructors will be expected to utilize those facilities. However, the military is not required to provide lodging for training instructors. Applicants should create a technical proposal which accounts for those travel expenses using published government per diem rates in accordance with Joint Federal Travel Regulations.

31. At what point will the Applicant obtain information on who will coordinate the scheduling of the live training with the respective military bases?

The grant recipient will be required to coordinate with the military and make all arrangements for the scheduling of live training at overseas military locations. The agency will help the grant recipient coordinate these details with the military after the grant is awarded.

32. Will the recipient be required to obtain approval for the foreign travel each time a recipient arranges for an instructor to travel to the military installation or will blanket approval be given for foreign travel annually or the life of the award? What is that process?

The grant recipient will be required to coordinate with the military and make all arrangements for travel to overseas military locations. The agency will help the grant recipient coordinate these details with the military after the grant is awarded.

33. Foundations of Entrepreneurship (online course) – can it be taped and rebroadcast or does it have to be live each time?

As part of the eight-week Foundations of Entrepreneurship online course, the grant recipient will be required to provide at least one hour of live, interactive, web-based instruction each week of the course. The course should be recorded and available on demand and as assigned by the facilitating instructor.

34. How many days and hours per week is the online course? Are there any specifications in terms of time length of the online training modules and/or the number of modules? Are there specific dates/months that the training must be done?

As part of the eight-week Foundations of Entrepreneurship online course, the grant recipient will be required to provide at least one hour of live, interactive, web-based instruction each week of the course. The training instructors are also expected to have office hours when they are available to answer any questions about course content and assist any students attempting to create their own business plan.

The current grant recipient uses a custom text created by McGraw-Hill which draws upon two texts: (1) Chapters 3, 4, and 8 of “Entrepreneurship: A Small Business Approach” by Bamford, 2011; and (2) the Glossary and Chapters 5, 6, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 17, 18, and 19 of Entrepreneurial Small Business, Third Edition by Katz, Green, 2011. The curriculum may be periodically revised and updated by the grant recipient selected to perform Requirement 3 in Section 1.4.

Applicants are expected to provide a technical proposal which includes a training plan on how they would deliver this curriculum. Other than the minimum requirements stated above, applicants are free to propose the time length of the online training modules and/or the number of modules. The technical proposals will be evaluated based upon the plans submitted.

35. Under section 1.4 it is states that the agency anticipated that there will be 3,725 participants in the first full year, but the anticipated split of the number of attendees between live and online classes is not stated. The forecasted number of participants for the “Intro to Entrepreneurship” live classes

from the attendance matrix in that section totals to be approximately ½ of the 3,725 participants or 1,860 attendees, and the assumption is that the remaining ½ of the participants is anticipated to be from the online classes. However, in section 5.2.2 the second bullet states that the requirement is to have available capacity to train 3,725 “Foundations” participants in the first full year. Please clarify. Are there numbers available of how many overseas military personnel at each installation are considered to be in the transitioning category?

There are two separate requirements.

The first requirement for 3,725 participants is for required capacity for the eight-week online Foundations of Entrepreneurship course.

The table in Section 5.2.2. is the anticipated demand for the two-day Introduction to Entrepreneurship course in overseas locations. This is a “live” classroom based course. Thus, the second requirement is the delivery of these live classes at those locations at the frequency in the table. The number of classes in the forecast is not firm. It is subject to change depending on demand for the course and other factors. The agency also reserves the right to use other organizations (i.e. SBA resource partners) periodically to provide instructors for the two-day course – with adjustments to the award as appropriate.

The numbers in the table in Section 5.2.2. are derived from the numbers provided by the military services projecting how many service members will transition at each installation.

36. Does the recipient develop any curriculum or will just the current SBA curriculum be utilized and modified as needed?

This curriculum exists. It will be periodically revised and updated by the grant recipient selected to perform Requirement 3 in Section 1.4.

37. Does the recipient develop the course evaluation?

The Department of Defense has developed a survey which is currently in use. The grant recipient responsible for Requirement 5 in Section 1.4 is expected to develop a course evaluation as part of its metrics and measures for program outcomes assessment.

38. Is the recipient expected to provide meals during the classroom course and/or pay for facility usage?

The grant recipient is not expected to provide meals during the classroom course and grant funds may not be used to purchase food or beverages. The salaries for all training instructors should be calculated assuming that room and board will not be provided. Facilities for the classroom instruction component are also expected to be provided by the military. So, the grant recipient does not need to include facility usage fees in its budget proposal.

39. Is the awardee required to purchase any course materials directly from a third party vendor?

It depends on what requirements are being fulfilled by the grant recipient. All course materials are provided by the grant recipient responsible for Requirement 2 in Section 1.4. The grant recipient responsible for Requirement 2 may produce and distribute course materials with internal resources and capabilities or may contract for materials production and distribution services subject to the subcontracting caps delineated in the program announcement.

40. Under section 4.1.4 at the end of the 5th bullet narrative, it states that if the SBA decided to provide B2B program assistance to OCONUS by any other means other than this award, the recipient would be notified and the award reduced by \$800,000. How soon would that decision be made? Assuming it is after the base year award was executed, what if the recipient had already entered into agreements with instructors for the live overseas "Intro" courses?

These details will be fleshed out in the final cooperative agreement with the grant recipient. The grant recipient will be responsible for negotiating all agreements with the appropriate cancellation clauses. For the purposes of this grant announcement, applicants should provide a technical proposal which assumes that the agency is using them for OCONUS delivery. However, there will be a separate grant for the agency's resource partners who are tapped to deliver some of the courses overseas.

41. Under section 5.2.4, , the last paragraph refers to existing B2B grant recipients whose local business communities may overlap with those of an Applicant to this Program Announcement, and that may be a reason for non-funding of the Applicant. Other than the University of Syracuse, what other B2B grants have been awarded? Where can we get a listing of recipients and locations? What are the differences in this Program Announcement and the statement of work of the other existing programs, including the one held by the University of Syracuse?

This clause is boilerplate language included in all grants produced by the Office of Veterans Business Development. In this particular case, it is not something our office anticipates exercising. New grants for all elements of the Boots to Business program are being competed as this Program Announcement is being issued.

The current grant recipient is operating under a six-month grant put in place as a stop-gap measure to ensure continuity of service until this grant could be put in place. The stop-gap grant ends on June 29, 2014. However, that grant has no effect on this process. For the purposes of this Program Announcement, applicants should act as though there are no "existing" grant recipients to whom this clause would apply.

42. Can you please describe the relationship between the Boots to Business RFP and www.boots2business.org?

The agency owns all rights to the current <http://boots2business.org/> website and the grant recipient responsible for Requirement 4 in Section 1.4 would be expected to take over content management and/or the technical administration of the entire website including registration for this program through the Boots to Business website.

43. Who currently manages the Boots to Business website and program sponsored by the SBA?

The University of Syracuse's Institute for Veterans and Military Families currently manages the Boots to Business website and program sponsored by the SBA.

44. Has that vendor been invited to participate in this solicitation?

The current grant recipient has been invited to participate in this solicitation.

45. Is that vendor allowed to participate in this solicitation?

The current grant recipient is allowed to participate in this solicitation.

46. If invited to participate in the Cooperative Agreement, would our institution be required to partner with Syracuse University?

All entities receiving grants under this Program Announcement will be required to work with all other entities. The nature of those partnerships is up to the grant recipients.

47. If the applicant is interested in only applying for specific areas of the grant ie: instructor for the Foundations of Entrepreneurship online courses would he/she have to be included in the original application or can that person be included after the grant is awarded to an organization?

In accordance with Section 1.4, applicants are encouraged to apply for any portion of the grant that may be reasonably segregated. Once the grant is awarded to an organization, that organization is only permitted to subcontract no more than 20% of the total award.

48. If after the grant is awarded can the interested applicant reach out to the grantee? If yes will SBA provided interested parties with the grantee's contact information.

The agency has no relationship between the grant recipient and any other parties that the grant recipient wants to use to help fulfill its obligations. As a courtesy, the agency would be willing to forward any inquiries to them but the agency accepts no responsibility in that regard.

49. I am an SDVOB for profit California Corporation and meet all the applicant requirements, unless this is limited to nonprofits. Are for profit SDVOB an eligible applicant?

All qualified organizations may apply; however be aware that applicants must fulfill all program requirements and meet eligibility requirements (See Sections 3.2-3.3).

50. Section 1.4 describes an 8-week online course entitled "Foundations of Entrepreneurship". Is this an established curriculum, or would we create a curriculum in its entirety, or perhaps modify your existing established curriculum?

This curriculum exists. It will be periodically revised and updated by the grant recipient selected to perform Requirement 3 in Section 1.4.

51. Section 1.4 describes a 2-day face-to-face course entitled "Introduction to Entrepreneurship". Same questions, is this an established curriculum, or would we create a curriculum in its entirety, or perhaps modify your existing established curriculum?

This curriculum exists. It will be periodically revised and updated by the grant recipient selected to perform Requirement 3 in Section 1.4.

52. The table lists 13 different locations for the face-to-face classes, listing a total of 64 classes to be taught. Is the number 64 firm? Are the dates scheduled?

The table lists the forecast demand for two-day Introduction to Entrepreneurship courses required to be taught by the grantee. They represent a portion of the total number of expected overseas courses. Other organizations will also provide instructors. The number of classes in the forecast is not firm. It is subject to change depending on demand for the course and other factors. The dates are not scheduled. Scheduling will occur after the Notice of Award. Scheduling will occur between the grantee and the appropriate representatives of the military services. This process will be facilitated by the agency program office.

53. Section 4.1.4 indicates that the SBA may decide to provide B2B program assistance to OCONUS personnel via other means. Does this refer to the 64 face-to-face classes, so it is possible that the awardee will teach only the online Foundations course, and not the face-to-face Intro course?

Yes. In accordance with Section 1.4, applicants are also encouraged to apply for any portion of the grant that may be reasonably segregated.