

U.S. SMALL BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION
8(A) BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT CERTIFICATION

SUMMARY

CERTIFYING AGENCY	U.S. SMALL BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION
DESIGNATIONS	8(A)
RACE CONSCIOUS	NO
GENDER CONSCIOUS	NO
RECERTIFICATION	ANNUAL
GRADUATION	NINE (9) YEARS; OR \$100 MILLION IN CONTRACTS; OR FIVE (5) TIMES THE VALUE OF THE COMPANY'S PRIMARY NAICS CODE
FEE/COST	NONE
CERTIFICATION PROCESS TIMEFRAME	90-180 DAYS

OVERVIEW

In order to help small, disadvantaged businesses compete in the marketplace, the SBA created the 8(a) Business Development Program. The 8(a) Business Development Program is a business assistance program for small disadvantaged businesses. The 8(a) Program offers a broad scope of assistance to firms that are owned and controlled at least 51% by socially and economically disadvantaged individuals. The 8(a) Program is an essential instrument for helping socially and economically disadvantaged entrepreneurs gain access to the economic mainstream of American society. The program helps thousands of aspiring entrepreneurs to gain a foothold in government contracting. Participation in the program is divided into two phases over nine years: a four-year developmental stage and a five-year transition stage.

Benefits of 8(a) certification include:

- Participants can receive sole-source contracts, up to a ceiling of \$4 million for goods and services and \$6.5 million for manufacturing. While we help 8(a) firms build their competitive and institutional know-how, we also encourage you to participate in competitive acquisitions; and
- 8(a) firms are also able to form joint ventures and teams to bid on contracts. This enhances the ability of 8(a) firms to perform larger prime contracts and overcome the effects of contract bundling, the combining of two or more contracts together into one large contract. Also, see the [Mentor-Protégé Program](#) for more information on allowing starting 8(a) companies to learn the ropes from other experienced 8(a) businesses.

Eligibility

Generally, to be approved into the 8(a) Business Development program and become certified the business must meet these eligibility requirements:

The business must be majority-owned (51 percent or more) by an individual(s).

The individual(s) must be an American citizen, by birth or naturalization.

The business must be majority-owned (51 percent or more) and controlled/managed by socially and economically disadvantaged individual(s).

The individual(s) controlling and managing the firm on a full-time basis must meet the SBA requirement for disadvantage, by proving both social disadvantage and economic disadvantage.

The business must be a small business.

The business must demonstrate potential for success.

The principals must show good character.

Separate eligibility requirements exist for a business that is owned by American Indians, Native Alaskans, Native Hawaiians or Certified Development Companies.

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8(A) BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT CERTIFICATION

CERTIFICATION PROCESS

FIRST! Complete 8(a) certification training online at www.sba.gov or through the Louisiana District Office.

1. Complete the Is the 8(a) Business Development Program Right for My Firm? assessment. After completing this, you will know whether applying for the 8(a) Business Development program is the right choice for you and your firm.
2. Get official copies of all governing documents. Articles, licenses, permits, etc. must be current and approved by your state. You must check with your state about its requirements for doing business. Bylaws, operating agreements, stock certificates, etc., must be signed by you, the owners, the officers and directors. Check with your firm's principals for the proper signatures and correct copies.
3. Get a free D-U-N-S number from Dunn and Bradstreet either online or by calling 1-866-705-5711. D-U-N-S numbers are unique nine-digit identification numbers for each physical location of your business. D-U-N-S numbers are required to register with the federal government for contracts or grants.
4. Obtain a free Tax Identification Number (TIN) or Employer Identification Number (EIN) from the Internal Revenue Service (IRS). Learn more about filing and paying taxes.
5. Create a profile in the federal government's System for Award Management (SAM). SAM is required for all firms seeking to do contracting with the federal government. SBA requires you to create a business profile in SAM to apply for SBA certifications. A SAM profile is also required for the 8(a) electronic application.

Here's how to create a free SAM account:

- Go to SAM.gov
- Click "Create User Account"
- Click "Create User Account" under "Individual Account Details"
- Fill out the required fields

If you are having problems with EIN/TIN mismatches in SAM/CCR concerning your TIN/EIN, please contact the IRS at 1-866-255-0654 (Option 4). If you are having problems with TIN mismatches in SAM/CCR concerning your Social Security Number, please contact the Social Security Administration at 1-800-772-1213.

6. Get a free SBA General Login System user ID. Here's how:
 - Go to SBA's General Login System
 - On the left-hand side click on "Request SBA User ID"
 - Create your own User ID with the following criteria:
 - At least 8 characters long
 - Contains three of the four:
 - Lowercase letter
 - Uppercase letter
 - Number
 - Special character (except "&")
 - Complete the SBA General Login profile
 - Scroll down to "Business Information" and add your business (EIN/TIN and DUNS number) – see Step 3 – and (DUNS number) Step 4 (TIN/EIN)
 - Click on the "Submit" button
 - Check for an email from gls@sba.gov (It will arrive immediately and contain your temporary password).
 - You must change the temporary password you receive from SBA (gls@sba.gov) within 24 hours of receipt.
 - If not changed within 24 hours, then you must request another, which takes several steps and could delay your access to the electronic application.

U.S. SMALL BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION
8(A) BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT CERTIFICATION

7. Start the free 8(a) online application

- Go to the SBA General Login system
- Select “Electronic 8(a) Certification and Annual Review System (BDMIS)”
- Select “Download & Print Authorization Form” and select “I Have Completed this Step” button
- Select “Complete Required Application Forms.”
 - Complete the 1010 Form first
 - For each form, you must scroll down and select “Update/Complete Form” and select “Verify Completeness.” This will highlight any missing data
 - Select the “Save” button
 - You must have green checks by each form
- Select “Return to Overview”
- Go to “Assemble Supporting Documentation”
- Select “Submit On-Line Input”
- Select “Download, Print and Sign Completed Application.” This will prompt you to “Mail the Application Package, Supporting Documents and Checklist to the SBA”
- Once you have mailed the documents to SBA, login and select “I have mailed the package...” This puts your application in the queue for processing so an SBA analyst can begin the review process. Only two SBA offices receive and process applications for the 8(a) Business Development program (California and Pennsylvania). Follow the instructions on the application carefully. For questions on where to send the application, contact 8aquestions@sba.gov.

The 8(A) application is also available online at www.CertAssist.net.

Contact

Louisiana District Office

U.S. Small Business Administration

365 Canal Street, Suite 2820

New Orleans, LA 70130

Office: 504.589.6685

www.sba.gov

- For general questions about the 8(a) Business Development program, please contact 8aquestions@sba.gov
- For help with SBA's General Login System, contact GLS@sba.gov
- For help with SAM, which replaced the Central Contractor Registration, please go to sam.gov or fsd.gov
- For help with the 8(a) online application, please email BDMIS@sba.gov
- For help with 8(a) regulations and requirements, please email 8aBD@sba.gov