

U.S. Small Business Administration

Mentor/Protégé Program for 8(a) Participants

If you're a small business owner classified as socially and economically disadvantaged, you can turn to the U.S. Small Business Administration for in-depth business advice to become more competitive in obtaining federal government contracts.

The SBA's mentor/protégé program encourages private-sector relationships and broadens the agency's efforts to address the developmental needs of clients in the 8(a) Business Development Program.

Mentors can provide you with technical and management assistance, financial assistance in the form of equity investments or loans, subcontract support, and assistance in performing prime contracts through joint-venture arrangements with 8(a) businesses.

The program is offered under the SBA's 8(a) Business Development Program, which provides an avenue for socially and economically disadvantaged Americans to achieve entrepreneurial success.

Under SBA's mentor/protégé program, your business can gain the following benefits:

- Technical and management assistance — The mentor's expertise, resources and capabilities are made available to your protégé business.
- Prime contracting — Your mentor can enter into a joint-venture arrangement with you to compete for government contracts.
- Financial assistance in the form of equity investments or loans — A mentor can own equity interest of up to 40 percent in your protégé business to help it raise capital.
- Qualification for other SBA programs — Eligibility requirements for other forms of SBA assistance, such as loan programs, do not change because of participation in the mentor/protégé program.

To participate in the program, your protégé business must —

- be in the developmental stage of the 8(a) Business Development program, or
- never have received an 8(a) contract, or
- be less than half the size of a small business, as defined by the SBA, based on its primary Standard Industrial Classification code,
- be in good standing in the 8(a) Business Development Program, and
- be current with all 8(a) reporting requirements.

Businesses involved in the program may have only one mentor at a time.

What Are the Requirements to Become a Mentor?

Your business can become a mentor if it has graduated from the 8(a) Business Development Program, is a company in the transitional stage of the program, or is a small or large business. As a mentor, you must be able to assist the protégé business, make a commitment for at least a year and demonstrate —

- that your business enjoys favorable financial health, including profitability for at least the last two years,

- that your business is a federal contractor in good standing, and
- that you can provide valuable support to a business through lessons learned and practical experience gained from the 8(a) Business Development Program, or through your general knowledge of government contracting.

Generally, a mentor will not assist more than one protégé business at a time without SBA authorization.

How Does an 8(a) Participant Enter the Program?

Both mentor and protégé enter into an SBA-approved written agreement, which outlines the protégé's needs and describes the assistance the mentor is committed to providing. The protégé's servicing SBA district office evaluates the agreement according to the provisions contained in Title 13, Code of Federal Regulations, Part 124.520. The SBA conducts annual reviews to determine the success of the relationship.

Business opportunity specialists located in SBA district offices can provide assistance with the agreements.

For additional information, call or write:

8(a) Business Development —
Mentor/Protégé Program
U.S. Small Business Administration
409 Third Street, SW
Washington, DC 20416
Phone: 202-205-6423

Or visit our Mentor/Protégé Program Web site at www.sba.gov/med/mentorproc.html.

For More Information

SBA offices are located in all 50 states, the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico, the U.S. Virgin Islands and Guam. For the office nearest you, look under "U.S. Government" in your telephone directory, or contact:

- Phone: 1-800 U ASK SBA
- Fax: 202-205-7064
- E-mail: answerdesk@sba.gov
- TDD: 704-344-6640
- OnLine Electronic Bulletin Board
(modem and computer required)
1-800-697-4636 (limited access)
1-900-463-4636 (full access)
202-401-9600 (D.C. metro area)
- Internet
Home page: www.sba.gov
Gopher: [gopher.sba.gov](gopher://www.sba.gov)
Telnet: [telnet.sba.gov](telnet://www.sba.gov)
U.S. Business Advisor: www.business.gov
- Your rights to regulatory fairness:
1-888-REG-FAIR

Inquire at your local SBA office for the location of the following resources:

- BICs — Business Information Centers
- TBICs — Tribal Business Information Centers
- OSCSs — One Stop Capital Shops
- SCORE — Service Corps of Retired Executives
- SBDCs — Small Business Development Centers
- USEACs — U.S. Export Assistance Centers
- WBCs — Women's Business Centers

SBA Publications

- The Facts About ... SBA Publications — a listing of free SBA publications

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