

## **U.S. Small Business Administration 8(a) Business Development (BD) Program Web Survey Instrument**

An invitation to participate in the Web survey will be sent to a randomly selected sample of 1,000 current and previous Participant firms that were certified for the SBA 8(a) BD program between 1998 and 2009. A facsimile of the Web survey instrument and the relevant material that will precede or accompany the survey are provided below.

### **1. Proposed Pre-Survey Procedures**

For the Web survey, it will be necessary to identify a respondent for each Participant firm selected randomly from a list of firms that were certified SBA 8(a) BD program from 1998 through 2009. For this survey, the respondent is referred to as a "Participant firm respondent." To obtain the information, Econometrica will rely on SBA's COTR, who will provide Econometrica a list of all Participant firms that were certified for the program from 1998 through 2009. Econometrica will select the random sample from that list. SBA will also provide the Participant firm's respondent name, phone number, and e-mail address for each firm selected for the survey, as well as any other information deemed useful for the survey.

Approximately five business days before launching the survey, SBA will send a brief pre-survey e-mail message to each firm in the sample, encouraging the respondents to participate in the survey when it arrives. This message will also serve to alert the Participant firms that an e-mail invitation to participate in the SBA Web survey will arrive shortly with the survey. Although this is a voluntary survey, the message will encourage the recipient to place a high priority on reviewing the contents of the invitation and to participate in the survey.

### **2. Proposed Survey E-mail Invitation**

The proposed survey e-mail invitation is presented on the following page.



Dear (name of the SBA 8(a) BD program Participant firm's respondent will be inserted here):

The U.S. Small Business Administration (SBA) requests your participation in an 8(a) Business Development (BD) program Web survey. SBA's Office of Government Contracting & Business Development has contracted with Econometrica, Inc., a research and management consulting firm in Bethesda, Maryland, to conduct an independent Web survey for the 8(a) BD program. The primary objective of the Web survey is to provide information that will broaden the Agency's framework for monitoring participation in the 8(a) BD program in light of the goals and criteria set forth by the statute and regulatory authority.

Information obtained from the survey will help SBA to develop performance measures and implement procedures to collect accomplishment data directly from those firms that received 8(a) certification. Both firms currently in the program and firms that have exited are being contacted.

You have been randomly selected to participate in this Web survey from the thousands of Participant firms that entered the program between 1998 and 2009. While your participation in this survey is **voluntary**, it is very important to SBA and the 8(a) BD program that you respond to the survey.

Each Web survey applies to a particular Participant firm. This survey is for: *<the Participant firm's name and year that the firm entered the program will be listed here>*; your password is as follows: *<a password will be entered here.>* If you are not the correct contact for this Web survey, please access the Web survey by clicking on the link below and provide the correct contact name and e-mail address in question #2 of the survey.

Before you begin, you might want to view or print the entire survey, which is provided as a PDF file:

*<Link to view the PDF file will be provided here.>*

You may also want to view or print the Special Instructions:

*<Link to the survey instructions will be provided here.>*

When you are ready to begin the survey, please use the link, below:

<Link to the survey will be provided here.>

**This survey is confidential.** Your answers will never be associated with your name or e-mail address. This survey should take about 30 minutes to complete. If you need technical assistance beyond the assistance provided online, please call Priscila Prunella of Econometrica at 240-333-0243.

Your responses should be transmitted within the next two weeks.

Thank you in advance for your assistance.

Sincerely,

Darryl K. Hairston  
Associate Administrator, Office of Business Development  
U.S. Small Business Administration

### **3. Special Instructions**

#### **Before you begin answering survey questions:**

- 1) The Web survey asks questions about your firm. In order to respond to the survey questions, you may find that another person in your firm may need to be consulted. It may be easier to complete the survey if you first print a copy (in PDF format) before answering any survey questions. The PDF file contains a facsimile of the survey instrument. Some questions have prefilled information from the program files. The prefilled information can only be seen on the Web version of the instrument.
- 2) To print a PDF file with all the survey questions included in the Web version of the survey, return to the e-mail invitation and click on the link, "View PDF file." You can print the survey or save it to your computer for viewing later. For example, while taking the survey, you might want to review the content of questions that you have already answered.

#### **When you are ready to begin answering survey questions:**

- 1) Click on the link provided in the e-mail invitation, enter your e-mail address and password, and follow the instructions on the screen.

- 2) You do not need to complete the entire survey in one session. At the **end of each section or page of the survey**, you will be able to save your results and continue later. If you chose to “save page and continue later,” you will receive a follow-up e-mail with a link provided that will allow you to re-enter the survey where you left off.

## 4. Survey Instrument

OMB APPROVAL NO:

Expiration Date:

Under the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995 you are not required to respond to this survey unless it displays a currently valid OMB Control Number. The estimated burden for completing this survey, including the time for reviewing instructions, gathering and compiling information is 30 minutes. You may direct comments regarding the burden estimate U.S. Small Business Administration, Chief, AIB, 409 3rd St., S.W., Washington D.C. 20416 and Desk Officer for the Small Business Administration, Office of Management and Budget, New Executive Office Building, Room 10202, Washington, D.C. 20503.

## ***8(a) BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM ACTIVITIES AND OUTCOMES SURVEY***

### **Organization of the Survey**

- A. General Information
- B. Pre-Program Expectations
- C. Program Experience, Outcomes, and Impact
- D. Conclusion

### **A. General Information**

1. This survey concerns the U.S. Small Business Administration (SBA) 8(a) Business Development (BD) program. SBA has identified your firm as a current or past 8(a) BD program Participant. Is this correct?  
 Yes  
 No
2. SBA has identified you, <insert owner name>, as the principal current or past owner or a current or past owner of (insert business name). Is this correct?

- Yes  
 No

2a. If you answered "no" to question # 2, please provide the name, e-mail address, and contact information for the current or past owner (or principal owner) of <insert business name> who is familiar with the firm and its operation and would be able to answer the survey questions. Note: If you need to see what questions are included in the survey to be able to make a determination, you can print out the PDF file included in your e-mail invitation.)

3. What is the current status of your participation in the 8(a) BD program?
- In developmental phase (enrolled in program for less than 4 years)
  - In transitional phase (enrolled in program for more than 4 years)
  - Exited the program (met program objective and goals at the end of 9 years)
  - Early Graduated (explain)
  - Suspended
  - Terminated
  - Voluntarily withdrew (explain)
  - Other (explain)
4. As an 8(a) BD program participant your primary NAICS code is/was < primary NAICS code from the SBA data base will be inserted here>. Is/was that correct?
- Yes
  - No

4a. If you answered "no" to question #4, please supply the correct NAICS code.

5. What is the highest level of education you have completed?
- Less than high school diploma (grade 11 or less)
  - High school graduate or equivalent (GED)
  - Some college but no degree granted
  - Associate degree (occupational/academic program)
  - Trade school/vocational program

- College degree (BA, BS, AB, etc.)
- Some graduate courses but no advanced degree
- Post-graduate degree (MBA, MS, MA, PhD, JD, MD, DDS, etc.)

6. While an 8(a) BD program Participant is/was this business a:

- Sole proprietorship (owned by only one person)
- Partnership (owned by two or more people)
- LLC (Limited Liability Corporation) sole member
- LLC (Limited Liability Corporation) more than one member
- S Corporation (business income is reported on personal tax return)
- C Corporation (business income is reported on company tax return)
- Other (explain)

7. While an 8(a) BD program Participant is/was this business (*check all that apply*):

- Franchise
- A successor to another firm you owned
- Purchased from a previous owner
- Inherited or acquired as a gift
- Newly started by you
- Other (explain):

8. While an 8(a) BD program Participant, how long were you in business before entering the 8(a) BD program?

- Less than 1 year
- 1 to 2 years
- 2 to 4 years
- More than 4 years
- Other (explain)

9. While an 8(a) BD program Participant who is/was responsible for the day-to-day management of the business?

- Self
- Self and other owners
- Other owners only
- Non-owner managers
- Other (explain)

10. While an 8(a) BD program Participant about how many hours a week do/did you personally work for this firm?

- Less than 20
- Between 20 and 29
- Between 30 and 39
- Between 40 and 49

- More than 50
- Equal to or Greater than 100
- Other (explain)

11. While an 8(a) BD program Participant, in addition to you, how many other employees work/worked for this firm?

- Less than 5
- 5-19
- 20-99
- 100-499
- 500-1,499
- Over 1,500

12. Did the number of employees increase since your firm first entered the 8(a) BD program?

- Yes
- No

12 a. If you answered "yes" to question #12, please tell us how many employees you added since the firm entered the 8(a) BD program.

13. Are you facing/did you face any of the following obstacles? (Check all that apply)

Overall economic climate	<input type="checkbox"/>
Lack of sales	<input type="checkbox"/>
Credit/financing	<input type="checkbox"/>
Finding qualified employees	<input type="checkbox"/>
Taxes	<input type="checkbox"/>
Competition	<input type="checkbox"/>
No longer in business (explain)	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other (explain)	<input type="checkbox"/>

13a. If you checked any of the choices in question #13, which do you consider most important and why?

## B. Pre-Program Expectations

14. How did you learn about the 8(a) BD program? (Check all that apply)

Headquarters (HQ) Small Business Administration Web site, seminar, presentation, or publication	<input type="checkbox"/>
District Office SBA Web sites, seminar, presentation, or publications	<input type="checkbox"/>
District Office publications, press releases or plans that promote the 8(a) BD program	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other Web site or publication	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other business development program promotion	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other Federal Government agencies or departments	<input type="checkbox"/>
Recommended by a firm or firms in the 8(a) BD program	<input type="checkbox"/>
Recommended by other business contact, family member, or friend	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other (explain)	<input type="checkbox"/>

14a. If you checked more than one answer to question #14, which of these was the most important in motivating you to learn more about the 8(a) BD program and why?

15. Why did you apply to participate in the 8(a) BD program? (Check all that apply)

Obtain 8(a) sole source contracts	<input type="checkbox"/>
Obtain competitive 8(a) contracts	<input type="checkbox"/>
Get access to information on credit or loan guarantees	<input type="checkbox"/>
Get access to financing as a result of participating in an 8(a) SBA sponsored program.	<input type="checkbox"/>
Get help from SBA with business development	<input type="checkbox"/>
Obtain technical and management training assistance	<input type="checkbox"/>
Obtain mentor-protégé program assistance	<input type="checkbox"/>
Qualify for subcontracting opportunities	<input type="checkbox"/>
Become eligible for technology transfer or surplus government property	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other (explain)	<input type="checkbox"/>



15a. If you checked more than one item in question #15, which of these is/was the most important in your decision to apply to the program and why?

16. Prior to applying for the 8(a) BD program, did you participate in an SBA information session or assessment activity to determine whether your firm qualified for 8(a) and/or whether 8(a) was an appropriate program for your business?

- Yes  
 No

16a. If you answered “yes” to question #16, please note which information sessions or assessment activities in which you participated.

17. At the time you applied for the 8(a) BD program, did you consider applying for any other Federal or non-Federal small business assistance program?

- Yes  
 No

17a. If you answered “yes” to question #17, please tell us which program(s) you considered entering other than the 8(a) BD program?

18. At the time you were accepted into the program, what were you hoping to accomplish by participating? (*Check all that apply*)

Expand revenues from existing clients	<input type="checkbox"/>
Gain new clients in existing lines of business	<input type="checkbox"/>
Diversify existing lines of business	<input type="checkbox"/>
Make existing business more profitable	<input type="checkbox"/>
Gain access to <i>Federal</i> Government contracting	<input type="checkbox"/>
Build capacity	<input type="checkbox"/>
Gain access to capital	<input type="checkbox"/>

Receive business development assistance	<input type="checkbox"/>
Position business for future sale	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other (explain)	<input type="checkbox"/>

19. In your opinion, how difficult was it for your firm to prepare and submit the 8(a) BD program application?

- Not very difficult  
 Moderately difficult  
 Very difficult  
 Other (explain)

19a. If you thought preparing the 8(a) BD program application was difficult, please tell us what was most difficult about it?

20. Did any of the following assist you in completing the 8(a) BD program application?

- Attorney  
 Accountant  
 Private Certifier  
 Minority Business Development Center  
 Small Business Development Center  
 Other consultants

20a. If you received assistance in completing the 8(a) BD program application, how much did the assistance cost?

- Less than \$500  
 \$500 to \$999  
 \$1,000 to \$4,999  
 Over \$5,000

### C. 8(a) BD program Experience, Outcomes, and Impact

21. How long did it take for SBA to approve your application?

- Less than 2 months  
 2-3 months  
 More than 3 months  
 Other (explain)

22. Which of the following parts of the 8(a) BD program are you currently participating in? (Check all that apply)

8(a) sole source contracts	<input type="checkbox"/>
8(a) competitive contracts	<input type="checkbox"/>
SBA mentor-protégé program	<input type="checkbox"/>
Subcontracting opportunities	<input type="checkbox"/>
Training and technical assistance	<input type="checkbox"/>
Assistance with obtaining credit or bonding	<input type="checkbox"/>
Have not participated in any 8(a) BD program activities	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other (explain)	<input type="checkbox"/>
N/A, no longer in 8(a) BD program.	<input type="checkbox"/>

Section 8(a) of the Small Business Act (15 U.S.C. 637) authorizes the Small Business Administration (SBA) to enter into all types of contracts with other agencies and to let subcontracts for performing those contracts to firms eligible for program participation. The SBA’s subcontractors are referred to as “8(a) contractors.” Questions #23 though #27 relate to this provision.

23. As a current program participant, how many unsuccessful proposals for 8(a) contracts did you prepare during the past 12 months?

- Zero
- One to 5
- 6 to 10
- More than 10
- Other (explain)

24. As a current program participant, how many unsuccessful proposals for unrestricted contracts did you prepare during the past 12 months?

- Zero
- One to 5
- 6 to 10
- More than 10
- Other (explain)

25. As a current 8(a) program participant, has your firm obtained any 8(a) sole source contracts since you enrolled in the program?

- Yes

No

25a. If you answered "yes" to question #25, please provide an estimate of how much (in contract dollars) you received from these 8(a) sole source contracts.

25b. How many new 8(a) sole source contracts or contract modifications for 8(a) sole source contracts were you awarded during the past 12 months?

- Zero
- One
- 2 to 5
- More than 5
- Other (explain)

25c. Are/were any of the 8(a) sole source contracts awarded by Agencies you had already done business with?

- Yes
- No, new Agencies

26. As a current 8(a) program participant, has your firm submitted a proposal for any competitive 8(a) contracts since you enrolled in the 8(a) BD program?

- Yes
- No

27. As a current 8(a) participant, has your firm obtained any competitive 8(a) contracts since you enrolled in the program?

- Yes
- No

27a. If you answered "yes" to question #27, please provide an estimate of how much (in contract dollars) you received from these 8(a) competitive contract awards?

27b. How many new competitive 8(a) contracts or contract modifications for 8(a) competitive contracts were you awarded during the last 12 months?

- Zero
- One
- 2 to 5
- More than 5
- Other (explain)

27c. Were any of the competitive 8(a) contracts awarded in the past 12 months with Agencies that you had an existing business relationship with?

- Yes
- No, new Agencies

28. As a current 8(a) contractor, what other types of contracts has your firm obtained during your participation in the 8(a) BD program? *(Check all that apply)*

Non-8(a) Federal Government contract(s) for small disadvantaged businesses (e.g., DOD and Commerce)	<input type="checkbox"/>
Small business set-asides or competitive award(s) not restricted to disadvantaged businesses	<input type="checkbox"/>
Openly competed Federal Government contract(s)	<input type="checkbox"/>
State/local government contract(s) for small and/or small disadvantaged businesses	<input type="checkbox"/>
Openly competed State/local government contract(s)	<input type="checkbox"/>
Private-sector contract(s) for small and/or small disadvantaged businesses	<input type="checkbox"/>

28a. Please provide an estimate of the total value (in contract dollars) of the contract awards?

29

- Yes
- No

29a. If you answered “yes” to question # 29, which of the following activities have been conducted under your SBA mentor-protégé agreement? *(Check all that apply)*

	Yes
Joint venture arrangements	<input type="checkbox"/>
Subcontracting	<input type="checkbox"/>

Equity, loans, bonding, or other financial assistance	<input type="checkbox"/>
Management and technical assistance	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other (explain)	<input type="checkbox"/>

29b. Do/did your mentor-protégé agreement: *(Check all that apply)*

	Yes
Help you win additional contracts/identify potential business?	<input type="checkbox"/>
Initiate/support other marketing activities?	<input type="checkbox"/>
Enhance ability to fulfill contracts/satisfy clients?	<input type="checkbox"/>
Improve cash flow/financial management?	<input type="checkbox"/>
Expand or create more stable funding for operations and expansion?	<input type="checkbox"/>
Create support for hiring or improve human resources issues?	<input type="checkbox"/>
Provide other operations and management improvements?	<input type="checkbox"/>
Increase bonding capacity?	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other (explain)	<input type="checkbox"/>

30. Do/did you work with any of the following types of advisors while participating in the 8(a) BD program? *(Check all that apply)*

	Yes
SBA Business Development Specialist (BDS)	<input type="checkbox"/>
7(J)	<input type="checkbox"/>
Small Business Development Center (SBDC)	<input type="checkbox"/>
SCORE program	<input type="checkbox"/>
Women's Business Center	<input type="checkbox"/>
Minority Business Development Center (Dept of Commerce)	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other (explain)	<input type="checkbox"/>

30a. If you checked any of the choices in question #30, do/did your advisors provide any of the following forms of BD assistance? *(Check all that apply)*

	Yes	Indicate all the advisors that provided assistance in each of the areas for which you answered "yes"
Identification and response to market/contract opportunities	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Information on SBA guaranteed loans or any other SBA financial assistance	<input type="checkbox"/>	

programs that provide access to debt and equity primarily from banks or other private sources		
Management and technical assistance	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Compliance with 8(a) program regulations and requirements	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Compliance with other government regulatory requirements	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Advisor did not provide business development assistance	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Other (explain)	<input type="checkbox"/>	

30b. Do/did the assistance provided by these advisors: *(Check all that apply)*

	Yes	Indicate all the advisors that provided assistance in each of the areas for which you answered "yes"
Help to win additional contracts?	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Help identify potential business?	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Initiate/support other marketing activities?	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Enhance ability to fulfill contracts/satisfy clients?	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Improve cash flow/financial management?	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Create more stable funding for operations and expansion?	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Support hiring/human resources activities?	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Improved other business operations?	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Other (explain)	<input type="checkbox"/>	

31. During your participation in the program, for your awarded Federal contracts, please choose all that apply in regards to subcontracting:

	Yes
You have been a prime contractor with an 8(a) firm as a subcontractor	<input type="checkbox"/>
You have been a prime contractor with a non-8(a) firm as a subcontractor	<input type="checkbox"/>
You have been a subcontractor to an 8(a) firm	<input type="checkbox"/>
You have been a subcontractor to a non-8(a) firm	<input type="checkbox"/>

32. Please choose one of the following that best describes (or described) your approach to the majority of your Federal proposals and bids in regards to subcontracting:

	Yes
You rarely partner with other firms	<input type="checkbox"/>
You are the prime contractor and regularly partner with the same one or two firms	<input type="checkbox"/>
You are the prime contractor and partner with many different firms	<input type="checkbox"/>
You are a subcontractor to the same one or two firms	<input type="checkbox"/>
You are a subcontractor to many different firms	<input type="checkbox"/>

33. Did you conduct any business with the Federal government before you entered the 8(a) BD program?

- Yes  
 No

34. Has participating in the 8(a) BD program helped you obtain credit assistance or loans from government agencies?

- Yes  
 No

34a. If you answered “yes” to question #34, describe in what ways the financing sources are/were better than you could have obtained without SBA assistance?  
*(Check all that apply)*

Could not get access to credit otherwise	<input type="checkbox"/>
Increased level of funding for business operations and expansion	<input type="checkbox"/>
Obtained better rates or terms than were otherwise offered	<input type="checkbox"/>
Increased client, partner, and/or supplier confidence in business	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other (explain)	<input type="checkbox"/>

35. In your opinion, how difficult is it to prepare and submit annual update of forms, including annual update of the Business Plan, to SBA?

- Not very difficult  
 Moderately difficult  
 Very difficult  
 Other (explain)



35a. If you thought preparing the 8(a) BD program annual update forms was difficult, please tell us what was most difficult about it?

36. Do/did you have an exit strategy for when your firm leaves/left the program?

- Yes  
 No  
 Other (explain)

36a. If you answered “yes” to question #36, please summarize your exit strategy.

37. Since you were accepted into the 8(a) BD program, has your business: *(Check all that apply)*

	Yes
Expanded its revenues?	<input type="checkbox"/>
Increased the number of employees?	<input type="checkbox"/>
Increased the amount of taxes paid?	<input type="checkbox"/>
Improved its ability to compete for contracts?	<input type="checkbox"/>
Expanded into new lines of business?	<input type="checkbox"/>
Secured expanded or more stable financing?	<input type="checkbox"/>
Improved its management and administrative operations?	<input type="checkbox"/>
Increased its support of charities and community organizations?	<input type="checkbox"/>
Gained access to capital?	<input type="checkbox"/>
Stayed relatively the same?	<input type="checkbox"/>
Experienced declining sales and/or employment?	<input type="checkbox"/>
Ceased operations?	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other (explain)	<input type="checkbox"/>

#### D. Conclusion

Questions #38 through #46 are open-ended questions. Please limit your answers to 1,024 characters.

38. What is/was the biggest challenge your firm has faced while enrolled in the 8(a) BD program?

39. In what ways do you think the 8(a) BD program helped your firm?

40. In your opinion, are there changes to the 8(a) BD program that would help to make Participant firms more successful?

41. Overall, do you feel that participating in the 8(a) BD program helped your business reach its goals?

Yes

No

41a. Please explain how it helped or did not help your business.

42. Which business goals did participating in the 8(a) BD program most help you to achieve?

43. From your experience, what do you think are the best features of the 8(a) BD

program?

44. From your experience, what parts of the 8(a) BD program need to be improved?

45. In your opinion, what likely would or would not have happened, had you not been selected for the 8(a) BD program? And, why do you believe that to be the case?

46. In your opinion, what constitutes success in the 8(a) BD program?

Click on "**Continue**" to submit your survey. Thank you for completing the survey