

SBA Direct and Community Questionnaire:

Upon launch of the new SBA.gov in 2010, two new features were introduced and will continue to be a part of SBA.gov: SBA Direct and SBA Community. Additionally, a new business plan tool will be available as an option for users registering via the community registration process.

SBA Direct is an optional feature of SBA.gov that helps bring customized, relevant SBA.gov information directly to the user. SBA uses persistent cookies, and the collection is considered Tier 2 usage, since we are utilizing multi-session web measurement technology that does not collect any personally identifiable information (PII). The usage of this technology is in-line with the OMB M-10-22 guidance, including disclosure in the SBA.gov Privacy Policy, and access to information that is comparable to users with cookies disabled.

From the main SBA Direct page, the user is asked to select which Business Topics he or she is interested in. The system then directs them to the SBA Direct results page, which displays the top 6 results based on which checkboxes the user selected, and the user is given the option to narrow the choices further using filters on the right hand side including the Business Topics, whether they fall into a particular audience (Woman, Minority, etc.), and Kind of Business (Online, Home Based, etc.). SBA Direct does not provide different information than what is already available on the SBA.gov website; it simply brings relevant information to the user in a customized interface. SBA Direct uses persistent cookie technology so that they do not have to re-enter the answers to questions every time they log onto SBA.gov.

SBA intends to collect the following specific information from SBA Direct users:

1. Relevant Business Topics – *From the main SBA Direct page, the user selects which business topics they are interested in by selecting the checkboxes next to the available options. The options they may select from include:*

- Starting a business
- Getting a loan
- Government contracts
- Disaster assistance
- Online training
- Laws & regulations
- Marketing your business
- Exporting & importing

In addition, once they reach the SBA Direct results page, the users can select from the following options and sub-options in response to the question 'What Business Topics Are You Interested In?':

- Starting a Business
 - o Thinking About Starting
 - o Create Your Business Plan
 - o Preparing Your Financing
- Loans, Grants & Funding
 - o Small Business Loans
 - o Grants
 - o Disaster Loans
 - o Venture Capital
 - o Surety Bonds
- Mentoring & Training

- o Small Business Learning Center
- o Finding a Mentor
- o Local Assistance
- Contracting
 - o Getting Started
 - o Size Standards
 - o Contracting Opportunities
 - o Contracting Officials
- Business Laws & Regulations
 - o Registering Your Business
 - o Taxes & Finance Law
 - o Employment & Labor Law
- Running a Business
 - o Leading Your Company
 - o Growing Your Business
 - o Marketing
 - o Insurance
 - o Disaster Planning
 - o Exiting Your Business
- Exporting & Importing

2. Tell Us About Yourself (Check all that apply) – *The user provides this information by selecting checkboxes next to the available options. For this information request, the user is selecting the categories that best suit their position as a small business owner. This information is collected so that SBA can provide information to the user that is specific to the user's attributes.*

- Woman
- Minority
- Veteran
- Native American
- Service Disabled Veteran
- Potential Business Owner
- Established Business Owner
- Senior (50+)

3. What Kind of Business Do You Have? (Check all that apply) – *The user provides this information by selecting checkboxes next to the available options. For this information request, the user is selecting the categories that best suit their position as a small business owner. This information is collected so that SBA can provide information to the user that is specific to the user's attributes.*

- Online Business
- Self-Employed
- Home Based
- Franchise Business
- Rural Business Owner
- Technology Start Up
- Green Business
- Non-Profit Organization

SBA Community is also an optional feature of SBA.gov which allows users to contribute to SBA.gov by posting success stories, comments, or questions in an online forum interface by creating an online account via a Universal Login System (ULS) on SBA.gov. Users can choose to create customized profiles, so that other users can see their

location, industry, etc. All SBA.gov users have the ability to view SBA Community content without creating an online user account; however they are not able to create or respond to postings. SBA.gov will be collecting aggregate information from the information collected from the user account creation process. However, the information will be collected in a manner so that it will not be tied back to an individual.

To sign up for the optional SBA.gov Community user account via the ULS, users must supply the following non-sensitive personally identifiable information:

1. Username *(A username is necessary to maintain a unique identity within the SBA Community)*
2. Password *(A password is necessary to ensure that the user has control over their unique account)*
3. E-mail Address *(An e-mail address is necessary to verify the user during the account creation process, and to allow for direct e-mail communication with the user from system administrators for password resets, alerts, and other notifications. They may also choose whether to have their email visible to everyone, to logged-in users, or only to administrators.)*

The user is also asked to supply the following information, but it is not necessary to create an account:

1. Name *(The user's name)*
2. Title *(The user's job title)*
3. Location *(The user's location)*
4. Professional Web Site URL *(The user's professional website address)*
5. Professional Web Site Title *(The title for the user's professional website)*
6. About Me *(Other miscellaneous information about the user)*

This information is provided voluntarily by the user, and is not required for use of SBA.gov Community or to create a SBA Community user account. It allows other members of the SBA Community to have a better understanding of the user's small business background, region, and other provided information. The user also has the option of providing a Signature and a Picture:

1. Signature *(This section is a freeform area, where the user can include any information such as name, industry, etc. to be a "signature" at the bottom of their forum posts)*
2. Picture *(The user's virtual face or picture, to be displayed alongside their posts)*

Users registering/logging into the SBA.gov site will also be able to use the optional business plan tool which allows them to create an online business plan. The business plan tool provides users the ability to save their work and return to their online business plan whenever they would like to make updates to it.

None of the information entered by users is used by SBA. It's a free tool we make available to users who signup via the community registration process. In addition, site visitors do not have access to view or create a business plan without creating an online account via the community. Upon login, users can only view their own business plan.

As opposed to having to log in multiple times to use SBA.gov's online tools, a ULS streamlines the process so a user only has to login one time per session to use both the community and business plan tool, saving time and reducing internal technical resources.