



**U.S. Small Business Administration (SBA)
Targeted Hispanic Research Services
DYADS/TRIADS WITH SPANISH-SPEAKING HISPANIC BUSINESS OWNERS AND ENTREPRENEURS**

DYAD/TRIAD INTERVIEWER GUIDE

(45-minute interview)

As of July 29, 2020

I. INTERVIEW BACKGROUND/CONVERSATION GUIDELINES [2-3 minutes]

- a) Thank you for taking time out of your busy day and agreeing to participate in this approximately 45-minute interview. As mentioned when we spoke with you to determine your eligibility to participate in this project, there are [two/three] participants (aside from me) in this small group interview discussion. [Note: This discussion will be held in Spanish, and the moderator will follow this guide. The SBA will approve the Spanish-language guide prior to conducting the interviews.]
- b) The objectives of this interview are to:
 - i. Better understand the kind of support that you, as Spanish-speaking small business owners and entrepreneurs, need from the U.S. Small Business Administration (SBA); and
 - ii. Explore what business-related information you need, how best the SBA can support your small businesses, and how the SBA can best communicate and deliver important business-related information to you.
- c) There are no right or wrong answers to any of the questions I will be asking during this interview. We are looking for honest feedback, mainly in the form of your experiences and observations.
- d) What you say during this interview will be kept strictly confidential (we will not use any names in the summary report; all data will be reported in the aggregate).
- e) Your participation in this discussion is voluntary. What this means is that you are free to decline to answer any question that you do not want to answer and to end the interview at any time, without penalty.
- f) My colleague is on the line to take notes.
- g) I would like to audio-record the interview for data analysis purposes only. Do I have your permission to audio-record this interview?

PARTICIPANT INTRODUCTIONS [2-3 minutes]

When I call your first name, please introduce yourself very briefly by letting us know:

1. Your city and state;
2. The industry you work in;
3. How long your small business has been in operation; and
4. How many employees your small business has.

From now on, please state your first name out loud before making a comment so that the conversation on the audio-recording will be easy to follow.

II. PARTICIPANTS' EXPERIENCES WITH THE SBA [10-15 minutes]

One thing that you both/all have in common is that you are both/all Spanish-speaking Hispanic business owners. Another thing that you both/all have in common is that you each have contacted the U.S. Small Business Administration (SBA) at least once in the past.

1. First, in your own words, please describe what the U.S. Small Business Administration (SBA) is or does.

2. How did you *first* learn about the existence of the SBA?

[Listen for: 1) whether there were multiple sources and 2) name of resources.] [Also listen for [do NOT read list]: SBA District Office advisors; other SBA sources; Resource Partner(s); word-of-mouth from other business owners or associates/family members/friends; in-person professional workshops, training, or events; in-person cultural activities; radio; television; magazines; websites; social media; other individuals/organizations/communication channels; local community entities.]

- [ASK ONLY IF PARTICIPANTS HAVE NOT YET USED A NAME TO REFER TO THE SBA] Do you refer to the SBA by another name? If so, what name(s)?

3. Immediately before you first contacted the SBA, what did you know about the SBA?

- How did you learn this information?
- From whom/what source(s)?
- What surprised (surprises) you most about what the SBA is and what the SBA does?

4. What was the *primary* reason that you contacted the SBA when you *first* contacted them?

[Listen for:

- Access to capital (loan guarantees by partnering with local banks/how to get financing).
- Business counseling, mentoring, and training (e.g., creating a business plan).
- Disaster assistance/recovery after nationally declared disasters.
- Securing contracts from the federal government], including "set asides."
- Other [SPECIFY].]

4a. When (the approximate year is fine) did you first reach out to the SBA?

5. What other organizations do you know of that are affiliated with the SBA? [ASK and PROBE if YES]

a. Have you heard of the SBA's Resource Partner network?

i. [IF YES] Do you know any of the names of the organizations within that network?

[PROBE for each mentioned: What do you know about that organization? How is it different from the SBA?] [If no names are volunteered]:

The SBA's Resource Partners include Small Business Development Centers (SBDC), Women's Business Centers (WBC), Veterans Business Outreach Centers (VBOC), and SCORE chapters.

ii. Have you heard of any of them before? Do you know what services they offer? What is your sense of the differences between these organizations and the SBA?

- Just so I am clear, did you initially only contact an SBA office, or did you also contact an SBDC, a WBC, and/or a VBOC, or SCORE chapter? [If SBDC, WBC, VBOC, and/or SCORE:] Why did you get in contact with them?

- Did you first contact a *local* SBA office directly or did you first contact the SBA in another way? [National SBA phone number, SBA headquarters, other means of contacting the SBA.]
 - o How did you contact the SBA? [PROBE: Telephone, email, social media, in-person at an SBA or Resource Partner office, in-person at your business location, in-person at an event (if so, what event), other.]

6. **[ASK ONLY IF THERE IS TIME.]** Were you assigned an SBA business advisor/employee immediately or did some time pass between when you contacted the SBA and when you spoke with an SBA business advisor/employee about your individual needs? [If there was a delay, probe as to how long and why.] After meeting with the SBA, did your SBA contact/advisor/employee suggest that you also meet with another person or organization? If so, who or which organization? For what purpose? How helpful was the SBA's suggestion to meet with that person/organization? Why? [Listen for: Chamber of Commerce/Hispanic Chamber of Commerce/Hispano Chamber of Commerce; Resource Partners; other government agencies; other community-based entities like non-profit organizations; banks and other lending institutions; public libraries; community centers; churches; etc.]

6a. **[ASK ONLY IF THERE IS TIME.]** Beyond addressing the specific question(s) you had when you first connected with the SBA, did the SBA offer proactive suggestions for small business issues you may not have considered? If yes, what were these suggestions?

III. PARTICIPANTS' SATISFACTION INTERACTING WITH THE SBA [5-10 minutes]

7. **How satisfied are you with your experience interacting with the SBA? [Use: On a scale of 0 to 10 where 0 is Not at all satisfied and 10 is Extremely satisfied.]**
- How helpful was the information (how helpful were the services) that the SBA provided you? Did the SBA have the information you were initially seeking? Was the information:
 - o Timely?
 - o Communicated to you in an easy-to-understand manner?
 - o Helpful in addressing your specific questions/interests/needs?
8. **From your perspective as a Spanish-speaking small business owner, how welcomed (comfortable) did you feel with the SBA office? With the advisor(s) with whom you spoke?**
- 8a. How was their Spanish? Were they fluent?
- How well did they respond/interact with you in a culturally sensitive manner?
 - How well staffed was/is your closest SBA office with Spanish-speaking professionals who also understand the Hispanic/Latino culture?
9. **With the benefit of hindsight and the wisdom you have acquired since your first contact with SBA, knowing what you know now, do you think you would have...**
- Initially contacted the SBA at a different stage/cycle of your business?
 - Asked them different questions?
 - Asked for different type of assistance/information?
10. **Are there any areas where your expectations of what the SBA does did not match the reality of the services that the SBA actually provides? If yes, which ones?**
11. **[ASK ONLY IF THERE IS TIME.] [AS APPLICABLE]** How, if at all, did the SBA help you finance your small business? What, if anything, have you heard about SBA helping small business owners with

financing at different points in the business life cycle (e.g., start-ups, more established businesses, etc.,)?

12. **[ASK ONLY IF THERE IS TIME.]** In what circumstances would you reach back out to the SBA in the future?

IV. SBA MATERIALS/RESOURCES (2-3 minutes)

13. **Have you ever read, watched, listened to, or used any materials or other resources in Spanish that introduced and discussed SBA programs and SBA services? Which materials/resources?**

- The SBA's website (sba.gov) [Specify what information/documents were read].
- On another website (not the SBA's) [Specify which one(s)].
- Information found on social media [Specify platform(s) used].
- Brochures or pamphlets [Determine where these were found/who provided them—SBA office or other source].
- A television news program [Specify].
- A radio station [Specify].
- Information distributed at a local/community event.
- Other material/resource [Specify].

13a. How useful was the information you obtained from that source/those sources? [Use: On a scale of 1 to 10 where 1 is Not at all useful and 10 is Extremely useful.] Why?

14. **If the SBA could create one new Spanish-language resource or material to help meet the needs of Spanish-speaking small businesses like yours, what would you create?**

[Listen for format(s) chosen, probe on attributes such as length and where it could be placed.]

- What subject(s)/topic(s) would it include?
- How would you recommend that this material/resource be distributed, marketed/promoted, and/or made easy-to-locate to help ensure that it gets in the hands of Spanish-speaking business owners and entrepreneurs?

V. SPANISH-LANGUAGE SBA MATERIALS (5 minutes)

I am going to put on the shared screen some sample Spanish-language SBA materials that are currently available on the SBA website. [Interviewer to display and scroll down and scan two of the following SBA materials in Spanish: a page/pages from the Resource Guide, and one of the following factsheets: Funding 101 fact sheet, Counseling fact sheet, Government contracting fact sheet.]

- Has anyone seen any of these materials? If so, which ones? Did you/how did you use them?
- How useful would these materials be to you? Why?
- Would you use this information online or would you prefer this information in print form?

VI. COMMUNICATIONS CHANNELS (2-3 minutes)

15. What is the best way for the SBA to communicate with Spanish-speaking small businesses, including yours? [DOCUMENT THE SPECIFIC NAME OF EACH INFORMATION SOURCE/OUTLET WITHIN THE BROADER CATEGORY FOR EACH RESPONSE VOLUNTEERED.] [PROMPT ONLY IF NECESSARY.]

COMMUNICATION CHANNELS

- Apps (e.g., WhatsApp).
- Churches.
- Email.
- In-person meetings/conferences.
- Magazines.
- National / local organizations.
- Neighborhood cultural events/festivals.
- Newspapers.
- Regular mail.
- Social media.
- Sports events.
- Telephone.
- Television.
- Text.
- Websites.

FORMATS

- Audio-recordings/podcasts.
- Brochures.
- Data visualizations such as bar charts, pie charts.
- Factsheets.
- Guides.
- Infographics.
- Videos.
- Webinars.

16. What other organizations or individuals/influencers, at the national, state, or local level, would you trust to provide you (and other Spanish-speaking small businesses) with useful information on the SBA?

16a. On what platforms/communication channels would these individuals get the most exposure among Spanish-speaking small businesses?

VII. CLOSING: CURRENT SITUATION/LOOKING AHEAD (2-3 minutes)

17. Briefly, what is the most important challenge that *your* small business is currently facing?

- How does being a *Spanish-speaking* small business contribute to this (or other) challenge(s)?
- What kind of support would you need to surmount this challenge(s)?
- How has the COVID-19 pandemic affected your business?
- How could the SBA help you with this challenge(s)?

Thank you very much for your time and participation. The information you provided will help the SBA improve the resources and services it develops for Spanish-speaking small businesses.