



**U.S. Small Business Administration (SBA)
Hispanic-Spanish Research Services
In-Depth Interviews (IDIs) with RESOURCE PARTNERS (60 minutes)
January 27, 2020**

Purpose of the interviews:

- To explore how Spanish-dominant and bilingual (Spanish/English) business owners and entrepreneurs seek assistance from the U.S. Small Business Administration's (SBA's) Resource Partners (SCORE, Small Business Development Centers, Women's Business Centers, Veterans Business Outreach Centers)
- To determine what information Spanish-speaking business owners are seeking when they reach out to the Resource Partners
- To ascertain the frequency with which/occasions when clients are referred *to and from* SBA District Offices
- To assess whether this population thinks that the SBA has the information for which they seek. If yes, to understand what information. If no, to uncover a) what is lacking and b) how are clients currently meeting those needs.

PRE-INTERVIEW DEMOGRAPHIC QUESTIONS [SCREENING GUIDE]

[We will send each interviewee the following questions via EMAIL for them to review and submit via email, *before* the interview.]

Identifying the Needs of Spanish-Speaking Businesses and Entrepreneurs that Seek the Assistance of SBA Resource Partners

Thank you for agreeing to participate in an interview to help us identify the needs of Spanish speakers who request [insert name of appropriate Resource Partner organization]'s assistance.

Prior to the interview, we invite you to answer the questions below about yourself. The purpose of these questions is to summarize the interviewee sample's demographic characteristics for our report summarizing the findings. All information will be kept strictly confidential. We will never connect an individual interviewee's name with answers to the below questions or with comments made during the interview in the summary report. All information will be reported in the aggregate. If you do not want to answer a question, feel free to not answer that question and skip to the next question.

1. Are you Hispanic/Latino?

- a) Yes
 - b) No
2. I identify my race as ...?
- a) American Indian or Alaska Native
 - b) Asian
 - c) Black or African American
 - d) Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
 - e) White
 - f) Other _____ (Specify)
3. What is your/your family's country of origin? [SELECT ALL THAT APPLY]
- a) Mexico
 - b) Puerto Rico
 - c) Cuba
 - d) Argentina
 - e) Bolivia
 - f) Chile
 - g) Colombia
 - h) Costa Rica
 - i) The Dominican Republic
 - j) Ecuador
 - k) El Salvador
 - l) Guatemala
 - m) Honduras
 - n) Nicaragua
 - o) Panama
 - p) Paraguay
 - q) Peru
 - r) Spain
 - s) Uruguay
 - t) Venezuela
 - u) United States
 - v) Other _____ (Specify)
4. With respect to fluency in Spanish, are you...?
- a) Fluent (e.g., native speaker / Spanish is first language/mother tongue, learned in school)
 - b) Proficient
 - c) Beginner
 - d) Non-Spanish speaker
5. How often do you speak Spanish in your professional capacity at [insert name of appropriate Resource Partner organization]? Would you say you speak Spanish approximately...?
- a) 100% of the time
 - b) 75% of the time
 - c) 50% of the time
 - d) 25% of the time

- e) 10% of the time
 - f) 0% of the time
6. In what city/state do you work? _____
7. What is the full name of the organization for which you work? _____
8. What is your professional title at [insert name of appropriate Resource Partner organization]?

9. How long have you worked at [insert name of appropriate Resource Partner organization]?
a) 0-2 years
b) 3-5 years
c) 6-10 years
d) 11-15 years
e) 16-19 years
f) 20-25 years
g) 26 years or longer
10. Would you describe the geographic setting where you, primarily, do your work as...?
a) Rural
b) Suburban
c) Urban
d) Other _____(Specify)
11. Do you work closely with an SBA District Office? If yes, which one?
a) Yes _____(Specify)
b) No

RESOURCE PARTNER IN-DEPTH INTERVIEW GUIDE

I. Interview Background/Conversation Guidelines [5 minutes]

- a) You were selected by the SBA to participate.
- b) Thank you for agreeing to participate.
- c) The overall objectives of this research are to:
 - i. Gain a better understanding of Spanish-speaking business owners and entrepreneurs that seek support from SBA District Offices and SBA Resource Partners such as yours (insert name of appropriate Resource Partner organization); and
 - ii. Explore whether you have what you need to optimally support these Spanish-speaking business owners.
- d) We are audio-recording the interview for data analysis purposes only.
- e) 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.
- f) 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).
- g) Your participation in this interview 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.
- h) **SBA is required to obtain approval from OMB before conducting the interview; approval has been obtained under OMB Approval number 3245-0398. You may submit comments on the estimated 60 minutes to participate or other aspects of the interview to Victor Sierra at victor.sierra@sba.gov and SBA Desk Officer, Office of Management and Budget, New Executive Office Building, Washington, DC 20503.**
- i) For our entire interview, we will focus only on the support that your organization (insert name of appropriate Resource Partner organization) provides to Spanish-dominant and bilingual (Spanish/English) Hispanic business owners and entrepreneurs.

[FOR THE INTERVIEWER: THROUGHOUT THE INTERVIEW, **LISTEN FOR:**

- How the interviewee engages with Spanish-speaking business owners and entrepreneurs.
- What services the interviewee provides for this Spanish-speaking population.
- Whether the Spanish-speaking businesses and entrepreneurs with which the interviewee supports tend to be start-ups or more established (or somewhere in the middle).
- The types of *assistance* that these Spanish-speaking business owners and entrepreneurs seek.
- How well (insert name of appropriate Resource Partner organization) is generally able to help with requests from this Spanish-speaking population.
- The types of *information* this Spanish-speaking population seeks.
- How (insert name of appropriate Resource Partner organization) currently meets that need and whether there are appropriate SBA resources available. If no such SBA resources are available, what recommendations do they have for new resource development.]

II. Perceptions of/Experiences with Spanish-Dominant/Bilingual (Spanish/English) Hispanic Small Business Owners and Entrepreneurs (40 minutes)

1. What has been your experience, in your current capacity, working with Spanish-speaking business owners and entrepreneurs?

- a. What percentage of your work time is spent supporting this Spanish-speaking population?
- b. What is the most common country(ies) of origin represented by your Spanish-speaking clients?
- c. What is the general level of U.S. acculturation of the typical Spanish-speaking clients with whom you offer support?

2. How often, and in what capacity, do you collaborate with the SBA to meet the needs of Spanish-speaking business owners? With other SBA Resource Partners?

[Moderator's note: confirm when the interviewee is speaking about the SBA and when they are speaking about Resource Partners. Also confirm office/geography being discussed (for example: local District Office as opposed to National HQ).]

- a. Focusing on the SBA, what do Spanish-speaking business owners and entrepreneurs know about the SBA when they first reach out to you?
- b. Based on your experiences, what is the SBA doing well in terms of meeting the needs of these businesses and are there areas where the SBA could improve how they serve these businesses?
- c. Based on your experiences, what (if anything) do Spanish-speaking business owners say about SBA's marketing materials? What do they say about the quality of SBA materials? Do you use the SBA's materials in your work? If so, which materials do you use? For what population(s)? For what purpose?

3. What do Spanish-speaking business owners and entrepreneurs ask from/know about your organization (insert name of appropriate Resource Partner organization) when they first reach out to you? What do Spanish-speaking business owners and entrepreneurs ask from/know about the SBA when they first reach out to you?

[Moderator's note: make sure to split this into two distinct questions: "ask from" and "know about..."]

- a. What differences, if any, do they perceive between your organization and the SBA?
- b. When they reach out to you for assistance, what information or services do Spanish-speaking businesses tend to seek/request from your organization (insert name of appropriate Resource Partner organization)?

[Listen for/Determine priority order of the following based on Spanish-speaking businesses and entrepreneurs requests]:

- i. Access to **capital** (loan guarantees by partnering with local banks/how to get financing)
- ii. Business **counseling**, mentoring, and training (e.g., creating a business plan)

- iii. Disaster assistance/recovery after nationally declared disasters
 - iv. Securing **contracts** from the federal government], “set asides”
 - v. Other [interviewer note: have the respondent provide more info on this]
1. Do you possess the information or provide the services they are requesting from you?
 - a. If not, what do you do/provide them with?

[Listen for: Refer to the SBA, refer to other organizations, provide them with external resources/materials from the community – e.g., Chamber of Commerce/Hispanic Chamber of Commerce/Hispano Chamber of Commerce, other government agencies, other community-based entities like local banks, public libraries, community centers, churches....]

4. How do Spanish-speaking business owners and entrepreneurs tend to learn about your organization (insert name of appropriate Resource Partner organization)?

[Listen for/determine priority/frequency order of the following: SBA District Offices, other SBA sources, word-of-mouth from other business owners or associates/family members/friends, radio, television, magazines, resource partners, websites, social media, other individuals/organizations/communication channels, local community entities.]

5. In what stage(s) of the business cycle do most Spanish-speaking businesses tend to be in when they first reach out to your organization (insert name of appropriate Resource Partner organization)?

[Listen for/determine priority/frequency order of the following based on Spanish-speaking business and entrepreneur requests: Business concept phase, start-up, small business owner trying to expand, established, franchising/selling/exit strategy phase, recovering.]

- a. What do you do for such Spanish-speaking entrepreneurs?
 - i. Do you have the information for which they are seeking?
 - ii. How often do you suggest that they seek another organization(s) for support?
 1. If so, what organization(s) and for what purpose(s)?
 2. Does the *SBA District Office* refer Spanish-speaking businesses to you?
 - a. How often? For what reason(s)?
 - b. For businesses **most frequently** at what stage?
 3. Do you refer Spanish-speaking businesses to the *SBA*?
 - a. How often? For what reason(s)?
 - b. For businesses **most frequently** at what stage?
 - c. In what instances do you refer them (or refer them back) to the SBA District Offices?

4. What other organizations or individuals in their communities have *Spanish-speaking businesses* mentioned that they also turn to or partner with?
 - b. How, if at all, have changes in the composition of the Hispanic population in your geographic area affected the stage of business cycle that the majority of Spanish-speaking entrepreneurs are in when they seek assistance? For example, consider changes in the level of acculturation, countries of origin represented, and average age of the entrepreneurs/business owners in your geographic area.

6. What kinds of unique needs or challenges do Spanish-speaking businesses face (compared with those for other small business populations)?

- a. Based on your experiences, how could the SBA improve its offerings to assist Spanish-speaking businesses with their unique needs/challenges?

7. If you had to prioritize one new SBA resource/material to develop to meet current unmet needs of Spanish-speaking businesses, what would that be? [interviewer note: limit to no more than two if the respondent offers more than one.]

- a. Knowing that this resource will be distributed to all SBA District Offices across the country, if you had to prioritize one new *SBA resource/marketing material for SBA* to develop to help your organization meet current unmet needs of Spanish-speaking businesses, what would that be and why? [interviewer note: limit to no more than two if the respondent offers more than one.]

III. Communications Channels (15 minutes)

8. What, if anything, are you hearing from Spanish-speaking businesses about their needs and preferences related to audio-visual resources such as websites, social media, videos, audio-recordings, podcasts, webinars, and similar communication platforms and channels?
9. Are there *any* other types of resources/formats (e.g., brochures, factsheets, guides, infographics, visuals [bar charts, pie charts]) that you would recommend developing for Spanish-speaking businesses?
10. What other information exchange venues would you recommend that SBA consider to more effectively engage with Spanish-speaking businesses (e.g., in-person meetings/conferences, online forums, neighborhood cultural or sports events/festivals)?
11. Other than the ones you may have mentioned already, which trusted individuals/influencers/opinion leaders or groups/sources could be effective SBA champions/partners/information validators?
12. When we do focus groups and/or interviews in the future, is there anything that you would like us to ask specifically of Spanish-speaking business owners/entrepreneurs that you do not currently know or think SBA needs to know?

Thank you very much for your time and participation.