

Supporting Statement for Paperwork Reduction Act Submission
Small Business Administration
Boots to Business Post Course Surveys

A: JUSTIFICATION

1. Circumstances necessitating the collection of information

SBA is requesting approval with change of a currently approved collection.

The Small Business Administration, Office of Veterans Business Development (OVBD) is authorized to formulate, execute and promote policies and programs of the Administration that provide assistance to small business concerns owned and controlled by veterans and small business concerns owned and controlled by service-disabled veterans per section 32 of the Small Business Act.

The Secretary of Labor, in conjunction with the Secretary of Defense, the Secretary of Homeland Security, and the Secretary of Veterans Affairs is required by 10 U.S.C. § 1144 (b) (5) to establish and maintain a program to, among other things, “provide information and other assistance to separating military service members in their efforts to obtain loans and grants from the Small Business Administration and other Federal, State, and local agencies.” As part of the Transition GPS Program, the Secretary of Defense is also required by 10 U.S.C. § 1142 (b) (13) to provide to such service members “information concerning veterans small business ownership and entrepreneurship programs of the Small Business Administration.”, in 2011 Congress passed the “VOW to Hire Heroes Act of 2011, Pub. L. 112-56 Title II, §§ 201-265, 125 Stat. 711, 713, which included steps to improve the existing Transition Assistance Program (renamed Transition GPS) for Service Members. Among other things, the VOW Act made participation in several components of Transition GPS mandatory for all service members.

Boots to Business is an entrepreneurial education initiative offered by the U.S. Small Business Administration (SBA) as a career track within the Department of Defense’s revised Transition GPS curriculum to comply with these statutory requirements. It is one of three optional training tracks within Transition GPS. The Boots to Business curriculum provides valuable assistance to the transitioning service members exploring self-employment opportunities by leading them through the key steps for evaluating business concepts and the foundational knowledge required for developing a business plan. Participants are also introduced to SBA resources available to help access startup capital and additional technical assistance.

During transition, transitioning service members and their spouses may select the Entrepreneurship Career track two-day workshop. Veterans who have already transitioned may attend the Boots to Business Reboot two-day workshop which covers the same material as the traditional Boots to Business course.

2. How, by whom, and for what purpose information will be used

The online post course surveys will be deployed to all Boots to Business participants via email or an anonymous URL link upon course completion. This voluntary collection enables the program office to assess both the quality of the Boots to Business courses and outcomes achieved by

participants after attending Boots to Business. The data will be used for overall program management, continuous improvement initiatives, and reporting outcomes to better serve veteran entrepreneurs. Information used for reporting will be done in the aggregate and will not include Personally Identifiable Information (PII).

3. Technological collection techniques

The post course surveys are online, web-based forms, permitting electronic responses, ultimately decreasing the burden on respondents. Respondents will receive a link to the surveys via email or an anonymous URL link upon course completion.

4. Avoidance of Duplication

Currently, Boots to Business participants are surveyed via a hardcopy DOD Transition Assistance Program evaluation. Data is provided to SBA on a quarterly basis but does not focus on Boots to Business and does not capture the data needed to report effectively on the program. OVBD receives this data because the Boots to Business “Introduction to Entrepreneurship” course is an elective track available to transitioning service members within the DOD Transition GPS Program. In order to avoid duplication, the Transition GPS Program survey data will be used in conjunction with the data collected from the post course surveys to further confirm findings related to the quality of Boots to Business. The post course surveys avoid requesting the same information as the DOD Transition GPS Program class evaluation.

5. Impact on small businesses or other small entities

Some of the respondents to this information collection, particularly the outcome assessment portion, might be small business owners. However, the de minimis time commitment for responding to the survey will not have a significant economic impact on the approximately 4,000 estimated respondents.

6. Consequences if collection of information is not conducted

The Office of Veterans Business Development is required to report outcomes of the program and the post course surveys will provide valuable data that will help satisfy this requirement. If this collection is not conducted and feedback from program participants is not solicited on course quality, SBA’s ability to understand pain points and target areas for improvement would be impaired. The data collected from these surveys will assist OVBD to understand if the program office is achieving goals as outlined for the agency. Specifically, the Course Quality Survey allows OVBD to understand the effectiveness of the course, as well as strengths and areas for improvement as it relates to trainer and course quality. These data will support continuous course quality improvement. The Outcome Assessment helps OVBD understand the long-term impact of the program and how the program may support transitioning service members in their endeavor to start a small business. Understanding what program participants go on to do after completing the course and gathering information on the percentage of course participants who start a business aligns with the overarching goals of the agency.

7. Existence of special circumstances

There are no special circumstances.

8. Solicitation of Public Comment

To obtain views of persons outside the agency, a 60-day Federal Register Notice was published on December 18, 2024, at 89 FR 103051. No comments were received.

9. Payment of gifts

None.

10. Assurance of Confidentiality

During the registration process for a Boots to Business course, registrants are asked to permit SBA to use their name and contact information for SBA surveys and information mailings as part of the Boots to Business alumni network. In addition, the *Use of Information* paragraph on the first page of the survey informs respondents that the information provided is protected to the extent permitted by law including the Privacy Act of 1974, as amended (5 U.S.C. 552a and the Freedom of Information Act (5 U.S.C. 552). That section also outlines the purpose of the surveys, why SBA needs the information and how the information is maintained in the agency's system of records, specifically SBA 5 - "Business and Entrepreneurial Initiatives for Small Businesses" and SBA 39 - "Veteran Programs Training and Counseling Records." SBA's Systems of Records Notices can be found here: <https://www.sba.gov/about-sba/open-government/privacy-act/privacy-act-system-records-notices-sorns>. A privacy impact statement has been completed and is [available here](#).

11. Questions of a sensitive nature

Information such as race, ethnicity, transition type, years of service and age range are requested so we may identify trends among veterans in various demographics who successfully started a business after completing a Boots to Business course. In addition, business information such as financing obtained, number of employees, legal entity and official designations (i.e. HUB-Zone) is requested to further understand where veterans are finding success. All requests for information on the surveys are voluntary.

12. Estimate the hourly burden of the collection of information

Based on past experience with the surveys, approximately 4,000 annual respondents are expected. The annual hour burden is determined to be 667 hours. The estimate is based upon participant data collected over the past three years, averaging 10 minutes for completion. The 4,000 respondents will spend 10 minutes completing the surveys per year.

The average total annual cost burden to the expected number of respondents is \$12,360 based on the expected value of participant pay grades. The estimate is based on the average annual salary (\$38,594.05) of transitioning service members according to DOD and the 10 minutes required to complete the surveys.

	<u>Time per Response</u>	<u>Cost per Response</u>
Reporting	<u>10 minutes</u>	<u>\$ 3.09</u>
Recording Keeping		
Third Party Disclosure		

Annual Number of Responses for this IC

4,000

<u>Annual IC Time Burden</u> <u>(Hours)</u>	<u>667</u>
<u>Annual IC Cost Burden</u> <u>(Dollars)</u>	<u>\$12,360</u>

13. The total annual cost burden

There are no additional costs as a result of this information collection.

14. Annualized Cost to the Federal Government

There is minimal cost to the Government as this form will be online where respondents will submit their information electronically.

15. Explanation of program changes in Items 13 or 14 on OMB Form 83-I

There are no program changes in Items 13 or 14 on OMB Form 83-I.

16. Collection of information whose results will be published.

Any reporting of the collected information will be at the aggregate level and not contain individual PII.

17. Expiration date for collection of information

Not applicable. The expiration date will be displayed.

18. Exceptions to certification in block 19 on OMB Form 83-I

No exceptions.

B. COLLECTION OF INFORMATION EMPLOYING STATISTICAL METHODS

1. Describe (including a numerical estimate) the potential respondent universe and any sampling or other respondent selection method to be used.

The respondents who will be selected for the post course surveys extends to all service members, veterans and dependents that have completed any of the Boots to Business courses (approximately 13,000 class attendees, annually). There is no sampling as all participants will receive the surveys after course completion. In addition, the method used to collect this information is an online survey that respondents will receive via email. The expected response rate is approximately 28% based on average data collection response rate for the past three years. The post course surveys are completely voluntary.

2. Describe the procedures for the collection of information.

The surveys are sent out to program participants who agreed to share their contact information via email. The Course Quality Survey is administered immediately after the course has occurred, so most of the respondent population will be transitioning service members and spouses. The Outcome Assessment will be administered to program participants one year after the course has occurred in which case the respondent population will be veterans who may have become small

business owners. Each program participant will receive a maximum of two surveys per year. Data are collected and stored in an online survey platform.

3. Describe methods to maximize response rates and to deal with issues of non-response.

Although the surveys are completely voluntary, email reminders will be sent to deal with issues of non-response. A maximum of two email reminders will be sent within the three-week period following the initial invitation. In addition, the value of the survey is communicated to participants throughout all the Boots to Business courses. The email sent to respondents was also modified from a text-based email to an HTML email to be more visually appealing and interesting to potential respondents.

4. Describe any tests of procedures or methods to be undertaken.

A test of procedures and methods was completed with 4 individuals to better refine the surveys language and minimize the burden. On average, the potential respondents completed each survey in 10 minutes.

5. Provide the name and telephone number of individuals consulted on statistical aspects of the design and the name of the agency unit, contractor(s), grantee(s), or other person(s) who will actually collect and/or analyze the information for the agency.

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