

# CONTRACTING OPPORTUNITIES

# FEDERAL PROCUREMENT OPPORTUNITIES

## How to Apply for Government Contracts

The federal government is the largest purchaser of goods and services in the world. However, small businesses face challenges when trying to win federal contracts. The SBA can help small businesses work through these challenges. Working closely with federal agencies and the nation's leading large contractors, the SBA works to ensure that small businesses obtain a fair share of government contracts and subcontracts. The SBA has a number of programs to help small firms do business with the federal government. For more information, visit: [www.sba.gov/gc](http://www.sba.gov/gc)

### THE PRIME CONTRACTS PROGRAM

Through the Prime Contracts Program, the SBA helps to ensure small businesses get fair opportunities to share federal government prime contracts. SBA procurement center representatives work to expand contracting opportunities for small businesses. PCRs review contracting strategies and actions, to identify contracts for which small businesses can compete.

Visit the SBA's Office of Government Contracting home page at: [www.sba.gov/gc](http://www.sba.gov/gc) for a listing of PCRs and buying installations nationwide.

### THE SUBCONTRACTING ASSISTANCE PROGRAM

The Subcontracting Assistance Program promotes maximum use of small businesses by the nation's large prime contractors. The SBA's commercial market representatives work with large businesses



to identify and expand subcontracting opportunities for small businesses. CMRs conduct compliance reviews to ensure that large businesses comply with small business subcontracting requirements. They also provide guidance to assist small businesses in identifying subcontracting opportunities and marketing their products and services to these large contractors.

CMRs also work with agencies to ensure subcontracting with small and small, disadvantaged businesses, women-owned small businesses, HUBZone firms and small businesses owned by service-disabled veterans through inclusion of subcontracting evaluation factors and sub-factors.

### THE CERTIFICATE OF COMPETENCY PROGRAM

The Certificate of Competency program allows a small business to appeal a contracting officer's determination that it is unable to fulfill the requirements of a

specific government contract on which it is the apparent successful offeror. The SBA will conduct a detailed review of the firm's technical and financial capabilities to perform on the contract. If the business demonstrates the ability to perform, the SBA issues a certificate of competency to the contracting officer, requiring award of that contract to the small business.

### SMALL BUSINESS SIZE STANDARDS

The Small Business Act states that a small business concern is "one that is independently owned and operated and which is not dominant in its field of operation." The law also states that in determining what constitutes a small business, the definition will vary from industry to industry to reflect industry differences accurately. The SBA's Small Business Size Regulations (13 CFR Part 121, [www.sba.gov/size/indexableofsize.html](http://www.sba.gov/size/indexableofsize.html))

implement the Small Business Act's mandate to the SBA.

The SBA has also established a table of size standards, matched to North American Industry Classification System industries, used to determine eligibility for SBA programs and small business preferences for federal government contracts.

See more at: <http://www.sba.gov/services/>, then click on "Size Standards" under the "Contracting Opportunities" menu across the bottom.

## Size Determination

The Size Determination Program, administered by SBA's six government contracting area offices, ensures that only small firms receive contracts and other benefits reserved exclusively for small businesses. When a firm's claim that it is small is challenged, the SBA determines if the firm, including all of its affiliates, meets established SBA size standards. Size determinations may also be made when requested in connection with other federal small business programs.

Additional information is available at the above "Size Standards" site.

## SMALL BUSINESS VENDOR DATABASE

The SBA works with the integrated acquisition community to provide a database of vendors, including small businesses. The Central Contractor Registration System is the primary gateway vendor and grantee database for the federal government. CCR collects, stores and disseminates data to support agency acquisition and grants missions. Both current and potential federal government vendors and grantees are required to register in CCR to receive federal contracts or grants. Vendors are required to complete a one-time registration to provide basic information relevant to procurement, grant and financial transactions.

Vendors must update or renew their registration at least once a year to maintain an active status. The SBA provides the CCR with authoritative source information regarding certifications under 8(a) Business Development and HUBZone programs and provides the small business size status against each North American Industry Classification code listed in a registrant's profile.

SBA maintains the Dynamic Small Business Search function of the CCR. Businesses profiled on the DSBS can be searched by NAICS codes, keywords,

location, quality certification, bonding level business type, ownership, SBA certification, and by women, minority, veteran and service-disabled veteran ownership. The DSBS serves as a marketing tool for small businesses because the business profiles in the DSBS include information from SBA's files and other available databases plus additional business and marketing information on individual firms.

To search the DSBS for small businesses, click on: <http://dsbs.sba.gov/dsbs/search/dspdsbs.cfm> or select the "Dynamic Small Business Search" at the CCR Web site at: <http://www.ccr.gov>.

Registration in the DSBS is through the CCR. For more information on CCR, or to register, click the CCR Web site. Before registering in CCR, go to the top of the Web page and download the handbook which contains data for a successful registration.

## HUBZONE PROGRAM

The Historically Underutilized Business Zone Program stimulates economic development and creates jobs in urban and rural communities by providing federal contracting assistance to small businesses.

The HUBZone program establishes preferences for award of federal contracts to small businesses located in historically underutilized business zones.

In general, small businesses may obtain HUBZone certification by employing staff who live in a HUBZone and maintaining a "principal office" in one of these specially designated areas.

### **SBA is responsible for:**

- Determining whether or not individual concerns are qualified HUBZone small business concerns, and therefore eligible to receive HUBZone contracts;
- Maintaining a list of qualified HUBZone small business concerns for use by acquisition agencies in awarding contracts under the program; and
- Adjudicating protests and appeals of eligibility to receive HUBZone contracts.

### **To qualify for the program, a business must meet the following criteria:**

- It must qualify as a small business under SBA size standards, corresponding to its primary industry classification;
- Its principal office must be located within a HUBZone, which includes lands on federally recognized Indian reservations and covered by the phrase "Indian Country";

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IS IMPORTANT BUSINESS.



Small businesses play big roles in our communities. That's why Boston Private Bank & Trust Company makes the extra effort to help small businesses borrow the money they need to get started and fund growth. Our Accessible Banking Program gives qualified small businesses access to loans available under the U.S. Small Business Administration Guaranteed Loan Program (SBA Loans). However, we provide something even more important—the expertise and advice you need to evaluate options, guide you through the application process and help you find the money you need on favorable terms. As a local bank, we make the connections that count—connections to financial expertise, and a personal commitment to helping you turn your business goals into reality.

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[www.bostonprivatebank.com](http://www.bostonprivatebank.com)



- It must be owned (at least 51 percent) by one or more U.S. citizens, Community Development Corporation, an agricultural cooperative, an Indian tribe; and
- At least 35 percent of its employees must reside in a HUBZone.

Existing businesses that choose to move to qualified areas are eligible. To fulfill the requirement that 35 percent of a HUBZone firm's employees reside in a HUBZone, employees must live in a primary residence within that area for at least 180 days or be a currently registered voter in that area.

For additional information regarding the HUBZone Program, please visit:  
<http://www.sba.gov/services/contractingopportunities/contracting/hubzone/index.html/>.

## REVITALIZING ECONOMIC GROWTH

Boston was selected to participate in SBA's Emerging 200 initiative, a jobs and growth stimulation effort targeting promising inner-city businesses. The SBA initiative focuses on small, poised-for-growth inner-city companies with a potential for job creation. The comprehensive e200 curriculum provides winning expansion strategies to help participants explore options for capital investment and take advantage of contracting opportunities. Participants have the opportunity to work with experienced mentors, attend workshops and develop connections with banks and the private equity community.

### e200 Participants

#### A.J. Cleaning

Alvera Payne  
Dorchester, MA

#### Ameri-print Network, Inc.

Vincente Lozada  
Medford, MA

#### Audissey Guides

Robert Pyles  
East Boston, MA

#### Balloon City of Boston, Inc.

Christine Bernstein  
East Boston, MA

#### Boston Green Building, Inc.

Eric Johansmeyer  
Allston, MA

#### Chan Insurance Agency, Inc.

Frank Chan  
Boston, MA

#### Cliff & Sons Electric Contractors, Inc.

Tresa Owens-Powell  
Dorchester, MA

#### Cottonfield, LLC

Yeumei Shon  
Allston, MA

#### Fire Code Design, LLC

Ronnette Taylor-Lawrence  
Boston, MA

#### Fortunato & Associates

Arlene Fortunato  
Boston, MA

#### Massachusetts Local Telephone Co., Inc.

Dexter Miller  
Dorchester, MA

#### MSS Business Management, Inc.

Pat Shelton  
Roxbury, MA

#### Onyx Spectrum Technology

Adrienne Benton  
Roxbury, MA

#### Peninsula of Boston, Inc.

Joseph O'Neill  
Boston, MA

#### Rare Find Contracting, Inc.

Becky Hobbs  
Roxbury, MA

#### Signal Graphics

Gregory Salvucci  
Allston, MA

#### tCognition

Manoj Shinde  
Boston, MA

#### Thomas Construction Company, Inc.

Frank Thomas  
Dorchester, MA

#### TummyToys

Melissa Tyler  
East Boston, MA

#### Vici Slayman Associates, LLC

Boyce Slayman  
Boston, MA

## ASSISTANCE FOR SMALL AND DISADVANTAGED BUSINESSES 8(a) Business Development Program

The SBA's Section 8(a) Business Development Program provides various forms of assistance (management and technical assistance, financial assistance, government contracting assistance and advocacy support) to foster the growth and development of businesses owned and

controlled by one or more socially and economically disadvantaged individuals. SBA assists these businesses, (during a nine-year tenure in the 8(a) Business Development Program), to gain access to the resources necessary to develop their businesses and improve their ability to compete in the mainstream of the American economy.

Business development assistance includes one-to-one counseling, training workshops, and other management and technical guidance required to expand into the federal government contracting arena.

The SBA enters into contracts with other federal agencies and subcontracts the performance of such contracts to eligible 8(a) program participants.

### Eligibility Criteria:

To participate in the 8(a) program, a business must be:

- a small business concern
- owned by one or more U.S. citizens
- at least 51 percent unconditionally owned and controlled by one or more an individual(s) who qualify as socially and economically disadvantaged
- established for two full years before applying (or qualifying for a waiver of the two-year rule)

### Social disadvantage:

Socially disadvantaged is defined as individuals who have been subjected to racial or ethnic prejudice or cultural bias because of their identity as a member of a group without regard to their individual capabilities. The following individuals are presumed to be socially disadvantaged: Black Americans, Native Americans, Hispanic Americans, Asian Pacific Americans and Subcontinent Asian Americans. An individual who is not a member of one of the groups presumed to be socially disadvantaged must establish individual social disadvantage by a preponderance of the evidence. Anyone may apply for 8(a) Program certification.

For additional information regarding evidence of social disadvantage, please visit: <http://www.sba.gov/aboutsba/sbaprograms/8abd/index.html>.

### Economic disadvantage:

Economically disadvantaged individuals are socially disadvantaged individuals whose ability to compete in the free-enterprise system has been impaired due to diminished capital and credit opportunities as compared to others in the same or similar line of business who are not socially disadvantaged.



## Net worth:

For initial 8(a) Program certification, the net worth of an individual claiming disadvantage, must be less than \$250,000. For continued 8(a) Program eligibility after admission, net worth must be less than \$750,000. In determining such net worth, SBA will exclude the ownership interest in the applicant business and the equity in the primary residence.

## Day-to-Day Management:

- Management and daily business operations must be controlled by the disadvantaged individual(s) upon whom eligibility is based.
- The individual(s) must have management or technical expertise.

For additional information on the 8(a) Business Development Program, visit: <http://www.sba.gov/aboutsba/sbaprograms/8abd/index.html>.

## Small Disadvantaged Business Certifications

To qualify as a small disadvantaged business, a firm must be owned and controlled by one or more individuals who are socially and economically disadvantaged. Congress has directed that individuals who are members of certain ethnic groups are presumed to be disadvantaged. Other persons, including women and persons of any race, can also qualify by establishing their disadvantaged status.

Firms seeking to be SDB-certified may certify themselves for federal prime contracts and federal subcontracts without submitting any application to SBA for SDB certification.

### *To self-represent as small disadvantaged businesses, firms should:*

- 1) Update their Central Contractor Registration (CCR) profile, ensuring they select they are a self-certified Small Disadvantaged Business; and
- 2) Update their company's Online Representation and Certification Application - specifically, the Federal Acquisition Regulation clause at 52.219-1(b)(2), entitled "Small disadvantaged business concern," and check the box indicating they are a self-certified SDB.

Other than its list of certified 8(a) firms, SBA will no longer maintain a list of certified SDB firms. The 8(a) Business Development Program is not affected by this rule. Firms may continue to apply on-line for 8(a) Certification.

## Applying Online For 8(a) Program Certification

Prior to applying for the 8(a) Program, each firm is urged to take an on-line training and self-evaluation course. To get to the course, click on [www.sba.gov](http://www.sba.gov), then choose the drop-down menu "Services." Click on "Contracting Opportunities For Small Business Owners," then open the "SBA Program Office" listing underneath "Local Resources" on the right-hand column. From there, click on 8(a) Business Dev. Then from the center area, click on "Apply for 8(a) Business Development Program Certification." The first section of the online course explains the 8(a) Program in detail, ending in an eligibility self-assessment test. The test consists of a series of simple yes or no questions that evaluate the degree to which your firm meets the basic qualifications for the 8(a) Program. If you meet the basic eligibility criteria, you will be allowed to apply immediately for the 8(a) Program via the electronic on-line system. If key eligibility criteria are not met, you will be directed to the SBA resource deemed most appropriate to help you at this time. If you would still prefer at this time to apply using the electronic system, please send an e-mail to [BDMIS@sba.gov](mailto:BDMIS@sba.gov) for further guidance and assistance. The average processing time for an electronic application is ninety days.

## Paper Applications for 8(a) BD Program Certification

For a paper application, simply send a written request to:

### U.S. Small Business Administration

Associate Administrator for Business Development  
Office of Business Development  
409 Third St., S.W., 8th Fl.  
Washington, DC 20416

A paper application will be forwarded to you. Please complete the paper application and return it to the above address. Data in your application will be retyped in the electronic system, printed out, and sent back to you for verification. If any errors are found, you must return the application to the SBA with the corrections. They will be entered into the on-line application, and another paper copy will be sent to you for verification. This process will continue until the application contains no errors. At that time, please sign and return the completed application to the SBA for processing within the 90-day timeframe.

## The Mentor-Protégé Program for 8(a) Participants

Through the SBA's Mentor-Protégé Program, 8(a) Program participants can receive in-depth business advice to assist them in becoming more competitive in obtaining federal government contracts. The SBA's Mentor-Protégé Program encourages private-sector relationships and broadens efforts to address the needs of clients in the 8(a) Program.

If you are an 8(a) participant, mentors can provide you with technical and management assistance, financial assistance in the form of equity investments or loans, subcontract support, and assistance in performing prime contracts through joint-venture arrangements with 8(a) businesses.

For more information, visit: <http://www.sba.gov/aboutsba/sbaprograms/8abd/mentorprogram/index.html>.

## MANAGEMENT AND TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE

SBA's Section 7(j) Management and Technical Assistance Program authorizes the SBA to enter into grants, cooperative agreements and contracts with public or private organizations to pay all or part of the cost of technical or management assistance for individuals or concerns eligible for assistance under sections: 7(a) (11), 7(j) (10), or 8(a) of the Small Business Act. Specifically, the following are eligible to receive management and technical assistance including businesses which qualify as small under 13/CFR part 121 of this title: concerns located in urban or rural areas with high proportions of unemployed or low-income individuals, or which are owned by such low-income individuals; and businesses eligible to receive 8(a) contracts.

The types of assistance available to eligible individuals through the Management and Technical Assistance Program include counseling and training in the areas of:

- Finance
- Management
- Accounting
- Bookkeeping
- Marketing and presentation analysis
- Advertising
- Loan packaging
- Proposal bid preparation
- Feasibility studies
- Industry specific technical assistance
- The identification and development of new business opportunities

More information is at:  
<http://www.sba.gov/aboutsba/sbaprograms/8abd/grantinfo/index.html>.

## SERVICE-DISABLED, VETERAN-OWNED SMALL BUSINESS

In 1999, public law established federal procurement opportunities for veterans and service-disabled veterans. In 2003, the Small Business Act established procurement vehicles for small businesses owned and controlled by service-disabled veterans.

Contracting officers may award a sole-source or set-aside contract to a small business owned by a service-disabled veteran if:

- The business is a responsible contractor able to perform the contract, and the contracting officer does not reasonably expect two or more small businesses owned and controlled by service-disabled veterans will submit offers.
- The anticipated award price of the contract (including options) won't exceed \$5.5 million in case of a contract opportunity assigned a North American Industry Classification System code for manufacturing; or
- \$3.5 million in the case of any other contract opportunity;
- In the estimation of the contracting officer, the contract award can be made at a fair and reasonable price.

Additionally, a contracting officer may set aside contracts for competition restricted to small business concerns owned and controlled by service-disabled veterans if the contracting officer reasonably expects two or more small businesses owned and controlled by service-disabled veterans will submit offers and that the award can be made at a fair market price.

Veterans and service-disabled veterans may participate in all SBA procurement programs. To determine your eligibility, contact your local veterans business development officer in your nearest SBA district office, visit the various program Web sites or contact the SBA's Office of Veterans Business Development at [www.sba.gov/vets](http://www.sba.gov/vets).

## SMALL BUSINESS INNOVATION RESEARCH PROGRAM

The SBIR Program encourages small businesses to explore their technological potential by reserving a specific percentage of federal research and development funds for small businesses. The program serves

to fund the critical startup and development stages for a technology and encourages commercialization of the technology, product or service. In turn, this stimulates the U.S. economy.

### SBIR Requirements:

Small businesses must meet the following eligibility criteria to participate in the SBIR program.

- Be 51 percent owned and controlled by one or more individuals who are U.S. citizens or permanent resident aliens in the U.S. or be a for-profit business concern that is at least 51 percent owned and controlled by another for-profit business concern that is at least 51 percent owned and controlled by one or more individuals who are citizens of, or permanent resident aliens in, the U.S.
- Be organized for profit.
- Principal researcher must be employed by small business.
- Company size cannot exceed 500 employees.

For more information on the SBIR Program visit [www.sba.gov/aboutsba/sbaprograms/sbir/index.html](http://www.sba.gov/aboutsba/sbaprograms/sbir/index.html).

### Participating Agencies:

Each year, the following 11 federal departments and agencies are required to reserve a portion of their R&D funds for award to small business: Departments of Agriculture; Commerce; Defense; Education; Energy; Health and Human Services; Homeland Security; Transportation; Environmental Protection Agency; National Aeronautics and Space Administration; and National Science Foundation.

## SMALL BUSINESS TECHNOLOGY TRANSFER PROGRAM

This STTR program reserves a specific percentage of federal R&D funding for award to small business and nonprofit research institution partners. Small business has long been where innovation and innovators thrive. But the risk and expense of conducting serious R&D efforts can be beyond the means of many small businesses. Conversely, nonprofit research laboratories are instrumental in developing high-tech innovations. But frequently, innovation is confined to the theoretical, not the practical. STTR combines the strengths of both entities by introducing entrepreneurial skills to high-tech research efforts. The technologies and products are transferred from the laboratory to the marketplace. The small business profits from the commercialization, which, in turn, stimulates the U.S. economy.

### STTR Requirements:

Small businesses must meet the following eligibility criteria to participate in the STTR Program.

- Be 51 percent owned and controlled by one or more individuals who are U.S. citizens or permanent resident aliens in the U.S.
- Be organized for profit.
- Principal researchers need not be employed by small business.
- Small business must conduct at least 40 percent of the work.
- Company size cannot exceed 500 employees. (No size limit for nonprofit research institution).

### *The nonprofit research institution partner must also meet certain eligibility criteria:*

- Be located in the United States and be one of the following:
- Nonprofit college or university.
- Domestic nonprofit research organization.
- Federally funded R&D center.
- The research institution must conduct at least 30 percent of the work.

### Participating Agencies:

Each year the following five Federal departments and agencies are required by STTR to reserve a portion of their R&D funds for award to small business/nonprofit research institution partnerships: Department of Defense; Department of Energy; Department of Health and Human Services; National Aeronautics and Space Administration; and National Science Foundation.

## TECH-NET

TECH-Net is an Internet-based database of information containing Small Business Innovation Research awards and Small Business Technology Transfer awards.

It is a search engine and electronic gateway of technology information and resources for and about small high-tech businesses. It is a tool for researchers, scientists, state, federal and local government officials, a marketing tool for small firms and a potential "link" to investment opportunities for investors and other sources of capital.

TECH-Net is a free service for those seeking small business partners, small business contractors and subcontractors, leading edge technology research, research partners, (e.g. small businesses, universities, federal labs and non-profit organizations), manufacturing centers and investment opportunities.

TECH-Net is available at:  
<http://tech-net.sba.gov/index.cfm>.