



DEFENSE LOGISTICS AGENCY

SMALL DISADVANTAGED BUSINESS 8(a) BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM

WHAT IS THE 8(a) PROGRAM

Sections 7(j)(10) and 8(a) of the Small Business Act (15 U.S.C. §§ 636(j)(10) and 637(a)) authorizes the U.S. Small Business Administration (SBA) to establish a business development program, which is known as the [8\(a\) Business Development program](#). The 8(a) program is a robust nine-year program created to help firms owned and controlled by [socially and economically disadvantaged individuals](#).

Businesses that participate in the program receive training and technical assistance designed to strengthen their ability to compete effectively in the American economy. Also eligible to participate in the 8(a) program are small businesses owned by Alaska Native corporations, Community Development Corporations, Indian tribes, and Native Hawaiian organizations.

PROGRAM QUALIFICATIONS

To qualify for the 8(a) program, businesses must meet the following eligibility criteria:

- Be a [small business](#);
- Not have previously participated in the 8(a) program;
- Be at least 51% owned and controlled by U.S. citizens who are socially and economically disadvantaged;
- Have a personal net worth of \$850 thousand or less, adjusted gross income of \$400 thousand or less, and assets totaling \$6.5 million or less;
- Demonstrate good character; and
- Demonstrate the potential for success such as having been in business for two years

8(a) certification lasts for a maximum of nine years. The first four years are considered a development stage and the last five years are considered a transitional stage. Continuation in the program is dependent on staying in compliance with program requirements.

The federal government fully defines who qualifies for the 8(a) program — including what counts as being socially and economically disadvantaged — in [Title 13 Part 124 of the Code of Federal Regulations](#).

CERTIFICATION FOR SDBs AND THE 8(a) PROGRAM

Self-certification for Small Disadvantaged Business (SDB). If you are an SDB, you should self-certify as part of your registration in the [System for Award Management \(SAM.gov\)](#). Although you generally will not receive any special preference as an SDB competing for prime contracts (outside of the 8(a) Program), agencies have an interest in supporting SDBs because the federal government's goal is to award a certain percentage of all contract dollars to SDBs.

SBA Certified 8(a) Program Participant. When SBA approves you as an [8\(a\) Program participant](#), they will enter this information in the DSBS, which will interface with your SAM profile. This is not a self-certification, and you cannot enter the information yourself; however, you should check to ensure that your SAM.gov profile accurately reflects the SBA-certification for the [8\(a\) Program](#) after you have been approved to participate.

APPLY TO SBA FOR THE 8(a) PROGRAM

First, you will need to have or establish a profile at [SAM.gov](#).

Next, use <https://certify.sba.gov/> to apply for the 8(a) Program. The information you will need to provide will vary based on your business structure and whether you are already participating in other SBA programs.

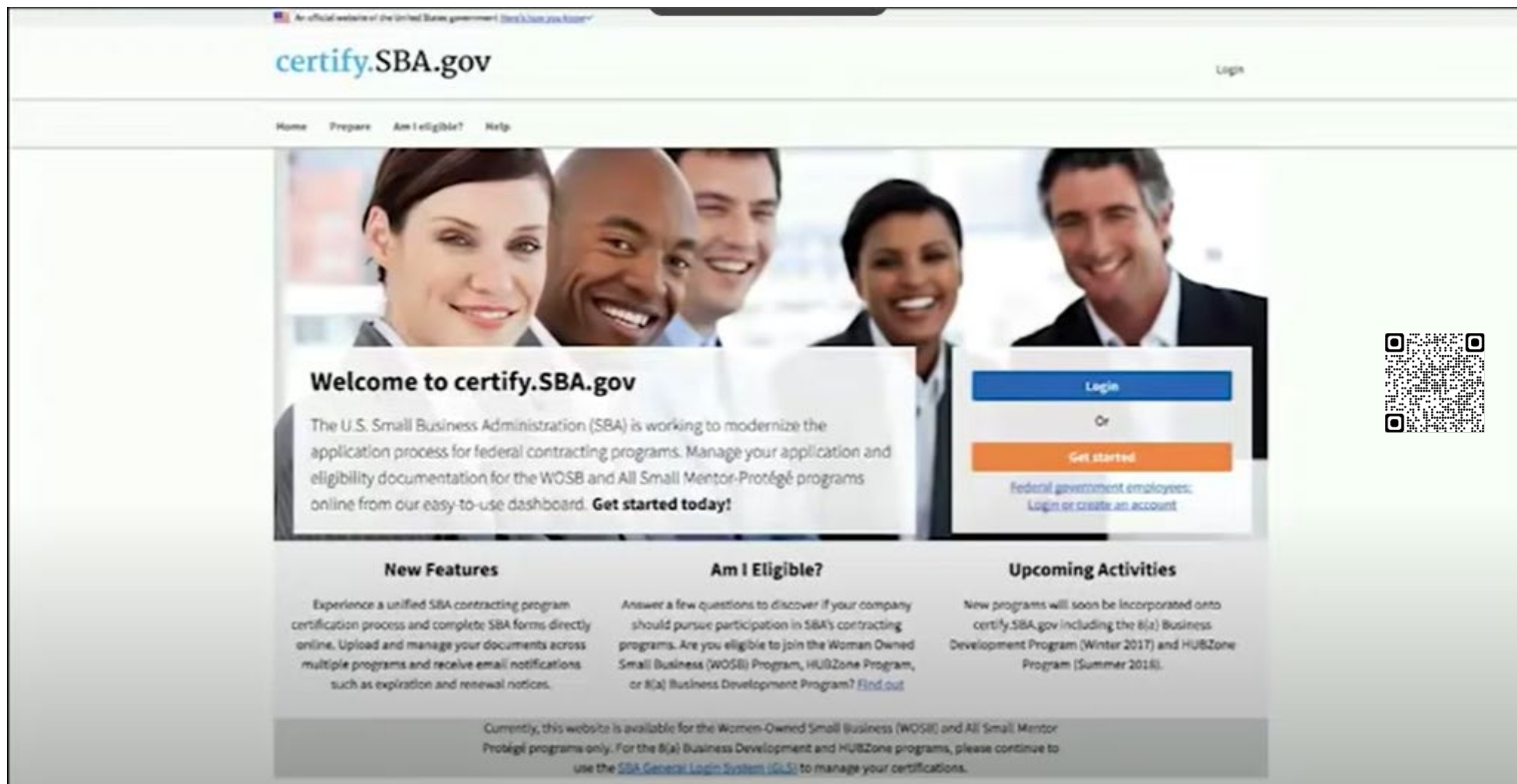
The screenshot shows the 'certify.sba.gov' website. At the top, there's a navigation bar with links for 'Knowledge Base', 'Help', and 'Login'. Below this is a header with the SBA logo and the text 'certify.sba.gov'. A secondary navigation bar lists four categories: 'HUBZone', 'Veterans', 'Mentor-Protege Program', and 'WOSB Program'. The main content area features a four-step process: 1. Discover 8(a) (highlighted in red), 2. Should I Apply?, 3. Apply, and 4. Existing 8(a)s. Under the 'Discover 8(a)' step, there's a message: 'Small businesses are vital to the U.S. economy - the Federal Government needs your partnership!'. Below this, a list of benefits for the 8(a) Business Development Program is provided, including access to sole-source and competitive set-aside contracts, business development assistance from dedicated Business Opportunity Specialists, assistance from federal procurement experts, opportunities to create joint ventures with established businesses, and priority access to federal surplus property. To the right of the text is an image of the U.S. Capitol building.



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APPLY TO SBA FOR THE 8(a) PROGRAM – CONTINUED -

Watch this [video](#) SBA posted about the 8(a) Program application process: <https://youtu.be/Z2eq7R3nj7M>



NOTE: Both SAM.gov and 8(a) Program applications are **FREE** registrations. There may be 3rd party vendors that offer to provide this service for a fee, which is usually not necessary.

FOR ADDITIONAL INFORMATION AND RESOURCES

Refer to SBA's website, which provides more information about the 8(a) Program:

www.sba.gov/federal-contracting/contracting-assistance-programs/8a-business-development-program

Contact your local APEX Accelerators which can assist you completing your SAM profile and applying to SBA for the 8(a) Program. The APEX Accelerators operate under a DoD assistance program and will provide this service for free: www.apexaccelerators.us/#

Read Subparts 19.8 and 219.8 of the Federal Acquisition Regulation (FAR) and Defense Federal Acquisition Regulation Supplement (DFARS), respectively: www.acquisition.gov

The [SBA Dynamic Small Business Search \(DSBS\)](#) is a database that government agencies use to find small business contractors for upcoming contracts. Small businesses can also use DSBS to find other small businesses to work with and large prime contractors can use the database to find small business subcontractors. The information you provide when you register your business at SAM.gov is used to populate DSBS, so you should create a comprehensive business profile.