



Small Business Administration

# Office of Field Operations

2020 Action Plan

Federal Customer Experience

**US** BY THE PEOPLE  
FOR THE PEOPLE  
WITH THE PEOPLE

# How do we deliver value to the public?

## Occasion

A person has an idea to start a small business and sees a need for access to capital in order to start the business and does not know what their options are.

A small business wants to grow or expand their business and needs access to capital to achieve that goal. They want to know what their options are and how to best position themselves for success.

A self-described socially and economically disadvantaged-owned small business wants to get into SBA's 8(a) program but need more information about the process, qualifications and commitment surrounding the program.

## High-Impact Service

The person calls the SBA District Office to learn more. They could be helped over the phone, via the website, or in a training co/sponsored by a resource partner. Options will be discussed and needs assessed. Often additional steps need to be taken before they are ready for a capital infusion.

The small business calls the SBA District Office to learn more about lending options. They might know exactly what they need; they might have no idea what the options are. They could be helped over the phone, via the website, or in a training co/sponsored by a resource partner. Depending on many factors that impact options, current situation and end goal will be discussed.

A small business owner or their representative contacts an SBA District Office to learn more about the 8(a) program. They could be helped over the phone, via the website, or in a training delivered by a district office or sponsored by a resource partner. Qualifications and program requirements will be discussed, as well as the goal of the program and how that might match with the goal of that small business.

## Offering

Counselling, training and mentoring opportunities with SBA and its resource partners will be discussed as well as other offerings that might help a prospective small business get ready for applying for capital. Options for access to capital will also be discussed, such as SBA guaranteed loans and their requirements.

Options for access to capital will also be discussed. Various resources such as loans from different types lenders might be discussed in the context of SBA guaranteed loan products as well as other options. Counselling, training and mentoring opportunities with SBA and its resource partners will be discussed as well as other offerings that might help a small business get ready for applying for capital.

8(a) program qualifications will be discussed as well as how to apply for the 8(a) program. Requirements of the program will be discussed as well as how to find out more information about the 8(a) program. Other SBA government contracting supports for small business may be discussed. If the small business feels that they are not eligible for 8(a) but wants to learn more about other SBA government contracting supports for small business, they will be discussed.

# Where could we improve?

## Steps

### Customer Steps

Name and describe the main steps that a person takes to use the service, left to right, start to finish.

### Service System

Describe the channels, roles, and tools from your agency or partners.

	1: Before Service Interaction	2: First Service Interaction	3: Secondary Service Interaction
Customer Steps	<p>Small Biz</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-is established</li> <li>-learns about gov't contracting</li> <li>-wants to learn if the 8(a) program is right for them</li> <li>-might have heard accurate or inaccurate information about 8(a) program requirements and qualifications.</li> <li>-decides to learn more</li> </ul>	<p>Small Biz</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-looks at SBA website for government contracting (GC)</li> <li>-learns about GC and 8(a) via website</li> <li>-contacts SBA or a resource partner</li> <li>-learns about program requirements and qualifications (that may be different from what they thought they knew) via phone/class/email</li> <li>-assesses whether 8(a) is a good fit for them</li> <li>-learns how to apply</li> <li>-learns about other SBA GC support/programs</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Applies for 8(a) program</li> <li>Applies for other SBA GC programs</li> <li>Attends GC related class presented by SBA or a Resource partner.</li> <li>Requests assistance from SBA</li> </ul>
Service System	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Website</li> <li>Outreach</li> <li>Collateral</li> <li>Press Release</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Email</li> <li>Phone</li> <li>Training</li> <li>Counselling</li> <li>Website</li> <li>Collateral</li> <li>Resource Partners</li> <li>Press Release</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Email</li> <li>Phone</li> <li>Training</li> <li>Counselling</li> <li>Website</li> <li>Collateral</li> <li>Assigned Business Opportunity Specialist</li> <li>Resource Partners</li> <li>Press Release</li> </ul>

# Where could we improve?

## Steps →

### Pain Points

Describe the highest priority problems to solve

1: Before Service Interaction	2: First Service Interaction	3: Secondary Service Interaction
<p>Small Business</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-does not know about programs</li> <li>-learns incorrect information about SBA programs</li> </ul> <p>SBA OFO</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-ensure information about programs are easily accessible</li> <li>-ensure information is conveyed in a way that is easy to understand</li> <li>-have GC information available in multiple languages</li> </ul>	<p>Small Business</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-does not meet one or more of 8(a) qualifications</li> <li>-company feels they are not ready to be competitive for a GC</li> </ul> <p>SBA OFO</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-have alternative paths forward ready to present for those not qualified for 8(a)</li> <li>-have steps laid out to ready a small business for GC</li> </ul>	<p>Small Business</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-does not do the work to enroll in the right program(s)</li> <li>-does not do the right work to win government contracts</li> <li>-does not meet the annual requirements to stay in the program</li> <li>-has trouble figuring out how to start</li> </ul> <p>SBA OFO</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-appropriately encourage small businesses about the programs available and their benefits</li> <li>-have a standardized process for follow up to small businesses that expressed interest in GC to determine if SBA assistance would help</li> <li>-ensure the right communication is done ahead of time to help small businesses meet compliance step(s)</li> <li>-for companies that are demonstrating trouble starting the GC process, have cadre' of expertise available as a catalyst.</li> </ul>

# What will we do?

## Purpose

*Why did your agency undertake this project?  
What does it hope to achieve, in specific performance indicators, if possible.*

*What is the problem?*

Contracting language can be difficult to understand as presented.

*Desired future state?*

Have information presented in a way that is easily understandable in multiple languages for customers.

*Any measurable indicators and targets?*

Customer feedback via survey follow up indicates ease of accessibility to easy to understand information regarding government contracting.

## Approach

*Describe the timeline and work plan to achieve that purpose. If this is an ongoing initiative, describe your progress.*

*Process, methods, and expertise?*

Establish specific needs via interviews with customers in FY20

*Timeline, stage gates and dates?*

Collect feedback from customers FY20/21  
Socialize with a working group across program offices to develop opportunities for improvement in FY21.  
Establish a feedback mechanism and tweak as necessary to meet customer needs FY 21.  
Identify proposed solutions and feedback loop in FY22.  
Leadership approval of proposed solutions in FY22  
Implement approved solutions in FY22

*Deliverables being produced?*

Customer Journey Map.  
Working group.  
Targeted areas for improvement.  
Feasibility Analysis.  
Action plan.  
Plan review by leadership.  
Product development.  
Implementation Plan.

## Resources

*Describe the stakeholders involved, financial and human capital dedicated to the work, and any partners contributing to the work.*

*Who is responsible?*

OFO Leadership.

*Who is contributing to the project?*

OFO and other program offices such as the Office of Government Contracting and Business Development (GCBD), Office of the Chief Information Officer (OCIO), Office of Veterans Business Development (OVBD) and the Office of Entrepreneurial Development (OED)

# What will we do?

## Purpose

*Why did your agency undertake this project?  
What does it hope to achieve, in specific performance indicators, if possible.*

*What is the problem?*

Companies who are eligible and could benefit, do not participate in SBA GC programs because of readiness barriers.

*Desired future state?*

All companies that have a desire and are qualified have the opportunity to take advantage of SBA GC Programs

*Any measurable indicators and targets?*

Customers who come to SBA for government contracting support have greater rates of satisfaction, ease of understanding materials, and potentially even outcomes such as getting on schedule / contracting work.

## Approach

*Describe the timeline and work plan to achieve that purpose. If this is an ongoing initiative, describe your progress.*

*Process, methods, and expertise?*

Conduct qualitative customer research to better understand pain points and intervention points that could improve experience.

*Timeline, stage gates and dates?*

Identify opportunities for improvement in FY20/21  
Establish working group in FY21.  
Work across program offices to identify solutions. FY21  
Identify proposed solutions and feedback loop in FY22.  
Leadership approval if proposed solutions in FY22  
Implement approved solutions in FY22

*Deliverables being produced?*

Survey of customers.  
Development of journey map.  
Identification of areas.  
Solution identification with feedback mechanism.  
Review by leadership of proposed solution.  
Implementation plan.

## Resources

*Describe the stakeholders involved, financial and human capital dedicated to the work, and any partners contributing to the work.*

*Who is responsible?*

Office of Field Operations

*Who is contributing to the project?*

GCBD  
OFO

# What will we do?

## Purpose

*Why did your agency undertake this project?  
What does it hope to achieve, in specific performance indicators, if possible.*

*What is the problem?*

Customer frustrated because of lack of access to capital.

*Desired future state?*

Customers understand requirements and resources for access to capital and have realistic expectations, know to apply for the programs that are right for them.

*Any measurable indicators and targets?*

Customers who come to SBA for Access to Capital have greater satisfaction rates, as well as increased business outcomes through program participation.

## Approach

*Describe the timeline and work plan to achieve that purpose. If this is an ongoing initiative, describe your progress.*

*Process, methods, and expertise?*

Understand customer frustrations via customer survey and interviews.

*Timeline, stage gates and dates?*

Request additional funding.

Understand customer frustrations via customer survey and interviews in FY20/FY21

Establish working group in FY21.

Identify proposed solutions and feedback loop in FY22.

Leadership approval if proposed solutions in FY22

Implement approved solutions in FY22

*Deliverables being produced?*

Survey of customers.

Development of journey map.

Identification of areas for improvement.

Solution identification with feedback mechanism.

Review by leadership of proposed solution.

Implementation plan.

## Resources

*Describe the stakeholders involved, financial and human capital dedicated to the work, and any partners contributing to the work.*

*Who is responsible?*

Office of Field Operations.

*Who is contributing to the project?*

Office of Cap Access.

ODA / OIT / OII

# What are we proud of this year?

## Service Improvement

*Who is the user and what was the problem?*

The SBA Houston District Office (HDO) rallied together in March 2020 and developed an aggressive plan for assisting their 620,000+ local small businesses as they faced the economic impact of the COVID-19 pandemic.

*What did you build / improve? What does it do for the public or how you deliver your mission?*

*What was the resulting impact?*

The HDO took immediate action to meet their customers' needs. The office hosted webinars for direct resource partners and lenders the very next day (March 16), so all of SBA's network representatives could hit the ground running. On March 17, the office hosted webinars for extended partners and stakeholders, followed by their first public webinar related to COVID-19 on March 18. Since then, the 14 members of the HDO have conducted nearly 300 webinars/town halls/telecons with Chambers, Economic Development Organizations, U.S. Congressional Offices, other partner organizations, and SBA Resource Partners.

Several outreach events were offered in Spanish to meet customer needs. As a result of these efforts, the HDO reached more than 37,000 webinar attendees and thousands more from several recorded webinars posted on social media and websites, helping small business navigate the financial challenges during COVID.

The initial outreach focus was to share information on the Economic Injury Disaster Loan program and the Paycheck Protection Program (PPP). However, as the bulk of customer questions changed, the HDO pivoted its outreach. First, customer demand inspired them to deliver information and resources on the PPP. Then in May, the offerings were broadened even further to include events focusing on economic resiliency and recovery, such as:

- Twice daily interactive Q&A webinars for the public with SBA District Leadership;
- How to Pivot Your Business During COVID-19* training;
- Tax Credits due to CARES Act* training;
- Bringing your Employees Back to Work (with employment lawyers from SCORE)* training; and
- Specialized training on SBA's Capital Access and Government Contracting programs

*Any lessons for other agencies emulating this work?*

Pivot as necessary to meet the needs of customers, especially during times of crisis, find ways to leverage existing tools in new ways.