

SBA 8(a) Application Narrative Kit

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About this Kit

This do-it-yourself narrative writing kit produced by Government Certification Specialists Inc. (GCS) of Leesburg, Virginia, will provide you with a thorough understanding of the Small Business Administration (SBA) 8(a) Business Development Program application's social and economic narrative requirements so that you can successfully author your own 8(a) narrative(s).

This kit contains invaluable guidance as well as example narratives specifically written for the Small Business Administration's 8(a) application that you can use as models for your own writing.

This kit is divided into the following four main sections:

1. Social and Economic Disadvantage Narrative Requirements
2. Brainstorming Ideas to Get You Started Writing
 - a. Social Disadvantage Examples
 - b. Economic Disadvantage Examples
3. General Writing Guidelines for the Narratives
4. Sample Narratives (5 total: 3 economic disadvantage narratives and 2 social disadvantage narratives; 1 social disadvantage narrative is for a Caucasian woman applicant)

For assistance with your 8(a) narratives or for more information about the 8(a) program, please contact GCS Inc. at:

Government Certification Specialists Inc.

Phone: 703-350-8381

Email: info@get8acertified.com

Website: <http://www.get8acertified.com>

Twitter: @8aSpecialists

Please note that this kit is designed to provide you with helpful guidance and advice only; use of this kit does not automatically guarantee you acceptance into the SBA's 8(a) program. The Small Business Administration publishes all current 8(a) program rules and regulations on its main 8(a) website, <http://www.sba.gov>, and GCS Inc. recommends that you review this SBA website before submitting your completed 8(a) application to the SBA. This kit has been updated and expanded for calendar year 2011.

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1. Social and Economic Disadvantage Narrative Requirements

If you are already familiar with the Small Business Administration’s narrative writing requirements, you may skip this introductory section and proceed directly to section two, “Brainstorming Ideas to Get You Started Writing.”

The Small Business Administration (SBA) has not publicly released specific information about how to write a social disadvantage narrative or economic disadvantage narrative. That is why Government Certification Specialists Inc. of Leesburg, Virginia—a consulting firm that specializes in helping minority-owned firms apply for and attain SBA 8(a) certification—developed this guide based upon its staff members’ multiple decades of experience with the 8(a) program.

Although this guide is intended to be informative and comprehensive, you might want additional guidance from an SBA representative as you write.

To find an SBA representative located near you, go to www.sba.gov and enter your zip code into the “SBA Direct” tool. There is a link to the SBA Direct tool on the SBA home page.

You can also submit questions and queries to GCS Inc. at info@get8acertified.com or by calling us at 703-350-8381.

Who must submit a narrative as a part of the 8(a) application?

Each disadvantaged business owner must provide the SBA with a personal narrative of economic disadvantage. (Owners who are not disadvantaged do not submit narratives at all.) The experiences of two owners cannot be combined into one document.

If a disadvantaged owner is not a member of one of the “already presumed to be socially disadvantaged” minority groups (these groups are listed in the section below), then the owner must also submit a personal narrative of social disadvantage.

All incidents of disadvantage—social and economic—discussed in your narrative(s) must have occurred in the United States.

You can certainly include some brief additional background information about your life experiences outside of the United States to provide the SBA with some context about you; however, you must primarily use your narrative to demonstrate disadvantage experienced while living and working in the United States.

Please note that each disadvantaged business owner must also be a United States citizen to qualify for 8(a) status.

How do I know if I am socially disadvantaged?

Generally speaking, if you belong to any of the following four social groups, then the Small Business Administration automatically presumes that you are a “socially disadvantaged” individual, and thus you only need to provide the SBA with an economic disadvantage narrative:

- **Black Americans**
- **Hispanic Americans** (According to its Small Business Development Program Standard Operating Procedure, the SBA has defined “Hispanic American” as an individual whose ancestry and culture are rooted in South America, Central America, Mexico, Cuba, the Dominican Republic, Puerto Rico, or the Iberian Peninsula, including Spain and Portugal.)
- **Native Americans** (American Indians, Eskimos, Aleuts, and Native Hawaiians)
- **Asian Americans** (persons with origins from Japan, China, the Philippines, Vietnam, Korea, Samoa, Guam, U.S. Trust Territory of the Pacific Islands [Republic of Palau], Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, Laos, Cambodia [Kampuchea], Taiwan; Burma, Thailand, Malaysia, Indonesia, Singapore, Brunei, Republic of the Marshall Islands, Federated States of Micronesia, Macao, Hong Kong, Fiji, Tonga, Kiribati, Tuvalu, or Nauru; and Subcontinent Asian Americans—persons with origins from India, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, Bhutan, the Maldives Islands or Nepal).

Please note that the SBA does not automatically presume women business owners to be socially disadvantaged. This is a common misperception about the 8(a) program.

Whereas many states do recognize women business owners as socially disadvantaged, at the federal level the Small Business Administration does not automatically recognize women as a socially disadvantaged group.

Instead, women applicants to the 8(a) program (who are not Black, Asian, Hispanic, or Native American) must prove to the SBA that they are socially disadvantaged; more information about how to accomplish this is provided on the next page of this kit.

Side note: Congress has asked the Small Business Administration to establish a special woman owned business contracting program for 83 industries in which women are particularly under-represented. This new SBA program, referred to as both the “Woman Owned Small Business (WOSB) Federal Contracting Program” and the “8(m) program,” officially launches on February 4, 2011. The 8(m) program has a different rule set from the 8(a) program. To determine if your company can participate in the 8(m) program, visit www.sba.gov and enter the search term “WOSB” into the Search box. You will be directed to the main website for this new program.

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END OF SAMPLE - The full version of the kit is 57 pages

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