



Joint Venture / Mentor Protégé Programs

Why is this critical?

The reason the Mentor / Protege Program is so important is because an 8a certification has a life-span of nine years. Therefore it is critical that the 8a firm quickly get its "feet wet" as a government primary contractor. This builds the firms credibility for future awards to the 8a company. Most new 8a companies do not have a good understanding as to where to go about finding its first contract. These delays can waste years of 8a eligibility.

About the Mentor-Protege Program

The goal of the 8(a) Mentor-Protege program is to encourage private-sector relationships as well as increase the developmental needs of 8(a) clients. This program is offered as part of the SBA's 8(a) Business Development program that services disadvantaged firms.

The Mentor firm typically has a great deal of government contracting experience with a proven track record in the area that the 8a firm would like to gain expertise.

Key Point:

Mentors can provide 8a Protege's with the following:

Technical / Management Assistance

Equity Loans

Mentors can own an equity interest of up to 40% (to help the 8a firm raise capital)

Eligibility for the Protege Program

1. The business must be in the developmental stage (meaning the first 5 years) of the 8(a) Program.
2. Have never received an 8(a) contract.
3. Have a size of less than half the size standard for a small business based on its primary SIC code.
4. It must be in good standing in the 8(a) Business Development program and be current with all reporting requirements.
5. Proteges have only one mentor at a time.

Eligibility for the Mentor Program



1. The mentor can be any of the following: A. Graduate from the 8(a) Business Development program B. In the transitional stage of the 8(a) program C. A small or large business
2. A mentor must have the capability to assist the protege and make at least a one year commitment to the 8a firm.
3. Profitability for at least the last two years
4. Be a federal contractor in good standing with the government
5. Be able to provide valuable support to a protege through lessons learned and practical experience

An SBA-approved written agreement must be put into place outlining the protege's needs and describing the assistance the mentor has committed to providing.