

Small Business Administration (SBA) Business Plan Instruction Guide for SBA Form 1010C

Detailed guidance, expert tips, and real sample business plans designed to help you quickly and correctly complete SBA Form 1010C.

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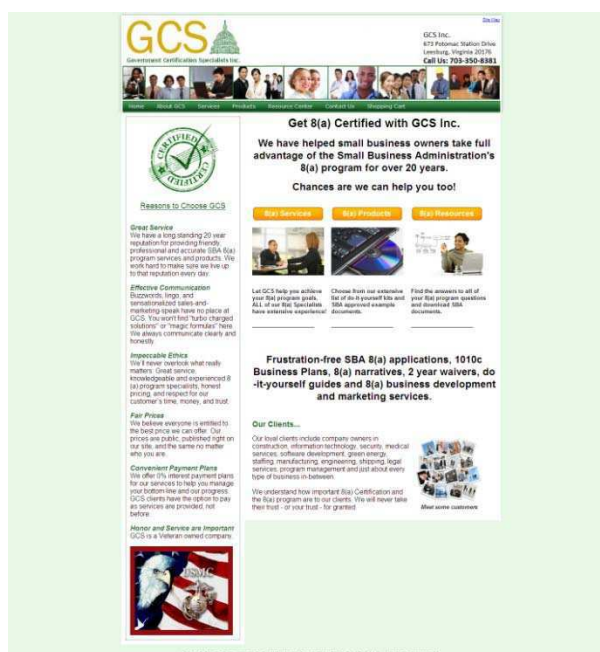
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Introduction to SBA Form 1010C and This Guide

This kit entitled the “**Small Business Administration (SBA) Business Plan Instruction Guide for SBA Form 1010C**” is authored by Government Certification Specialists Inc. (GCS) of Leesburg, Virginia, a veteran-owned consulting firm that assists small businesses—particularly woman, minority, and veteran owned small businesses—with SBA 8(a) certification, federal sales and business development, and government contracting (<http://www.get8acertified.com>).

GCS has filled this kit with expert advice, time-saving tips, practical tools and resources, and sample business plans in SBA 1010C format, all developed during our multiple years of consultation with our clients who have used this business plan format to apply for loans, attain 8(a) certification, and attract funding from angel investors, among other purposes.



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Most of this kit addresses the 1010C form from the perspective of a newly certified SBA 8(a) business; however, the guide is also written in a manner to be helpful to anyone who is completing a 1010C form for any purpose.

Our senior specialists have assisted small businesses with becoming 8(a) certified, writing 8(a) business plans, and executing 8(a) contracts since the 1980s, so if you still have questions or need additional help after using this guide, please contact us:

Start by Obtaining the Most Recent Version of SBA Form 1010C

To begin, please obtain the most recent version of SBA Form 1010C by visiting the U.S. Small Business Administration (SBA) online forms repository here:

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<http://www.sba.gov/category/navigation-structure/starting-managing-business/starting-business/forms>

If this URL has changed since the publication of this guide, please go to the Search box on www.sba.gov and enter the search term “1010C” to retrieve the form.

The Small Business Administration updates its forms annually, so it is a good idea to check their website to make sure you are using the current version of the business plan form.

Your Business Plan Must Be Completed Before Your Start 8(a) Contracting

The eligibility rules for the United States Small Business Association 8(a) Business Development program mandate that all participating firms must submit—and obtain the SBA’s formal approval of—a detailed business plan *before* they are eligible to receive 8(a) contracts.

Business plans must be submitted to the SBA for review within 30 days of the firm’s 8(a) orientation session unless an extension is formally granted by a designated SBA Business Opportunity Specialist (BOS) / Business Development Specialist (BDS). (This guide uses these two terms interchangeably.)

Other Uses for SBA Form 1010C

The Small Business Administration also requires companies to submit formal business plans when applying for particular loans. Also, the SBA-sponsored organization SCORE—formerly known as the Service Corps of Retired Executives—will often help new companies develop their initial business plans using SBA Form 1010C as a starting point (www.score.org).

Finally, many business owners use Business Plan 1010C as the format for providing data to potential investors and venture capitalists. Thus SBA Form 1010C serves many purposes and is a widely recognized, commonly used business plan format.

The SBA Form 1010C, however, is likely to be somewhat different in style and in format from other business plans you might have seen before in books or online.

SBA Form 1010C was specifically developed by the United States government to elicit information the federal government requires for the management and administration of loans and 8(a) applicants in its SBA portfolio. Thus the categories of information contained in Business Plan Form 1010C might differ from the categories of information provided in other business plan formats used for other purposes.

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Can I Use a Different Business Plan Format for the 8(a) Program?

The Small Business Administration will certainly allow you to utilize a different business plan format for the purposes of the 8(a) program; however, please note that use of a different format might introduce time delays into the processing of your business plan because the Business Opportunity Specialist will have to manually cross reference the sections of your plan with the equivalent sections in the Form 1010C.

If you wish to use your own personal business plan format, be sure to cover the same topics as in the 1010C form and aim to replicate the same general sequence of information as found in Form 1010C to make the review process faster and easier for your SBA BOS.

Another option is to include a cross reference matrix in the front of the business plan so your SBA representative can use it to quickly locate the data he or she requires.

The Form 1010C Business Plan is a substantial multi-page document that provides the Small Business Administration or your investor with the information necessary to determine your firm's current status, its business development requirements, and its capitalization needs by establishing specific financial and business development targets and objectives.

This 1010C guide is divided into five major sections to help you write your own business plan to accurately describe your market and project how much your company will realistically grow over next two-year timeframe:

1. Section One: SBA Business Plan Rules for 8(a) Firms. *You may skip this section if you are not an 8(a) company.*
2. Section Two: SBA Rules Governing Business Plan Review. This section will explain how the SBA will evaluate and assess your business plan (whether you are drafting your business plan for the purpose of 8[a] status, for the purpose of applying for a loan, or for another purpose).
3. Section Three: General Writing Guidelines for the 1010C Form.
4. Section Four: Section-by-Section Instructions for the 52 Parts of the 1010C Form.
5. Section Five: Three (3) real, complete, previously submitted and previously SBA-approved 1010C Business Plan examples you can use as models or as inspiration for your own writing.

Please note that use of this guide does not automatically guarantee SBA or bank acceptance of your business plan.

For more information about SBA business plans, the SBA 8(a) program, or any related concerns—or to have GCS Inc. help research and write your business plan for you—please contact Government Certification Specialists Inc. at:

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<http://www.form1010c.com>

We welcome your questions as well as any comments or ideas on how this 1010C Business Plan guide can be improved, clarified, or expanded in future versions.

Best wishes to you and your business as you execute your new business plan!

Section 1: SBA Business Plan Rules for 8(a) Firms

(If you are not an 8(a) certified company, or if you plan to use SBA Form 1010C to apply for an SBA-based loan or provide an investor with your company data for review, you may skip this section entirely and proceed directly to the next section entitled “Section 2: General Writing Guidelines for the 1010C Form.”)

The current U.S. Small Business Administration 8(a) Business Development program rules state that all newly certified 8(a) companies must first submit a business plan for SBA review and approval prior to engaging in any 8(a) contracting activity or receiving any 8(a) contract awards. The SBA has specifically designed SBA Form 1010C for this purpose.

You can start working on your SBA 8(a) business plan at any time before your 8(a) orientation meeting with your designated SBA Business Opportunity Specialist (BOS)—or even prior to being formally accepted into the 8(a) program—but your deadline for the business plan approval will be 30 days after your 8(a) orientation meeting date.

Because so much detailed research, planning, writing and financial analysis is required to develop a solid business plan, GCS Inc. recommends that you start working on your plan *before* acceptance into the 8(a) program.

It is occasionally possible to obtain an extension if you cannot meet the SBA's 30-day business plan deadline; however, please be advised that some Business Opportunity Specialists refuse to issue extensions at all, so by all means aim to meet your deadline.

Occasionally, a new 8(a) company receives an opportunity so important and so lucrative that this opportunity must be pursued immediately before the 1010C business plan has been finalized or approved. Don't let such a critical opportunity pass you by—politely show your BOS the opportunity in question (preferably in a tangible, verifiable document format such as an email from your client or an RFP formally posted on www.FedBizOpps.gov) and ask for an exception or for a rush on the review of your business plan.

Many times, the BOS will gladly oblige and either issue you a special letter that allows you to start your 8(a) contracting now or else expedite the review of your business plan; however, by law the SBA does not have to help you in this manner, so please be advised that the onus is on you and your company to finish your business plan quickly. This guide from GCS is designed to help you do just that, so you are on the right path.

Your Business Opportunity Specialist should be willing and able to answer your questions about the business plan, but please note that in some busy metropolitan regions with numerous 8(a) firms clustered together such as in Washington DC / Northern Virginia, it might take awhile for your BOS to respond to you due to his or her intense workload.

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You will email or mail your completed SBA Form 1010C Business Plan (or equivalent) to your designated BOS for review.

Do not submit your 8(a) business plan to the SBA until *after* you have been assigned a specific BOS by name and have his or her complete contact information (because the SBA might lose or misplace your business plan without a specific BOS designated to accept it).

Your 8(a) Program Acceptance Letter Contains the Business Plan Requirement

All 8(a) program participants are notified of the specific requirement to prepare and submit a business plan when they receive their initial 8(a) program acceptance letter. In the example acceptance letter below, please reference the third paragraph in particular (highlighted in yellow).

Please Note: The company name and owner information below have been altered to protect the company's identity in accordance with the standard nondisclosure and privacy agreement GCS Inc. signs with each customer.



U.S. SMALL BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION

WASHINGTON, D.C. 20416

July 23, 2015

Mr. Elian Fuentes, Managing Member
Your Company, LLC
555 Main Street
City, State 22222 USA

Dear Mr. Fuentes:

Congratulations! Your firm has been certified as a Participant in the U.S. Small Business Administration's (SBA) 8(a) Business Development Program. Your nine (9) year program term begins on the date of this letter.

During participation in the 8(a) Business Development Program, you will receive business development assistance from an assigned Business Development Specialist in

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the Richmond District Office located at 400 North 8th Street, Suite 1150, Richmond, VA 23240. The phone number is 804-771-2400.

Your firm will become eligible to receive 8(a) Business Development contracts after you submit a business plan using SBA Form 1010C and receive SBA's approval of the plan. We are sending a copy of this certification letter to the SBA Richmond District Office. That office will send you the business plan form.

SBA requires that the 8(a) participant's President or Chief Executive Officer sign a Participation Agreement to show that he or she understands the conditions of 8(a) program participation. Please read the Agreement carefully, sign and date one copy and return it to the SBA Richmond District Office at the address shown in the third paragraph above. The second copy is for your records.

Even though your firm's approved North American Industry Classification System (NAICS) Code is 541512 your firm may be awarded contracts under other NAICS Codes, as long as your firm is qualified to perform the required service or task. In this regard, please note that contracts awarded under 8(a) Business Development Program authority generally result from the self-marketing efforts of participating firms. While your firm's acceptance into the 8(a) Business Development program is not a guarantee of contract support, SBA will make every effort to assist you in your marketing efforts.

During your participation in the 8(a) Business Development Program, I encourage you to take advantage of the Mentor-Protégé Program, the Federal Surplus Property Program and the extensive management and technical training available to you. Your local SBA District Office can provide additional information on these programs.

You should consider setting up a merchant account with a credit card company which will give you the ability to accept credit card orders for your goods and services from over 1,000 Federal buying offices.

I welcome you as an 8(a) Business Development Program participant and wish you every possible success.

Sincerely,

Ralph Morrison
Associate Administrator
Office of Business Development

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Your SBA-assigned Business Development Specialist will invite you to a new 8(a) program participant orientation session.

Orientation sessions range from small, one-on-one consultations to auditorium-sized meetings with dozens of attendees, depending upon which region of the country you are located in and the method of orientation preferred by your BDS / BOS. Company owners in heavily populated areas like New York City should expect a larger, less personalized orientation session. Your orientation session will give you the opportunity to ask the SBA questions about Form 1010C.

The business plan must be submitted within 30 days after the firm's orientation session, according to SBA 8(a) program rules; however, your BDS may grant you one 15-day extension at his or her discretion.

GCS Inc. recommends that you take your completed 1010C to the orientation with you so that you can personally hand it to, and discuss it with, your BDS.

This shows initiative, gives you and your BDS an opportunity to get to know one another, and jumpstarts your ability to obtain 8(a) contracts. (If you cannot bring a completed business plan to orientation with you, then try to bring a draft version so that your BDS can review it with you and give you tips on changes or improvements.)

*If you are in a rush to start 8(a) contracting, use Form 1010C and do **not** use an alternative business plan format—this will speed up the approval of your plan.*

It is important to note you are allowed to submit an 8(a) business plan in any format that you choose, as long as all of the topics covered in Form 1010C are also addressed inside your alternative business plan format. (GCS Inc. recommends that you use Form 1010C, however, to expedite the processing and acceptance of your business plan.)

If you already possess an extensive and detailed business plan that you have prepared for other purposes such as obtaining bank loans or for strategic planning, you can cross reference it with Form 1010C to determine if it addresses the SBA's baseline business plan topics. (It is OK if the existing business plan addresses *additional* topics that are not found in Form 1010C.)

Please note, however, that just as this cross referencing activity takes some extra time for you, it will also add extra time to the review process conducted by your Business Development Specialist who must also cross reference the data, so if you are in a rush it is advisable to use the 1010C format.

It is important for you to take the 8(a) business plan requirement and deadline seriously. If you do not submit a detailed, substantive business plan within the 30-day time period allotted and if an extension is not formally granted, then your BDS (as directed by the SBA 8[a] Program's Standard Operating Procedure) can initiate 8(a) program termination proceedings. Don't lose out on this valuable federal government contracting vehicle! Your 8(a) status is one of your best selling points for obtaining federal government work, so make sure you turn in your business plan on time to take advantage of this benefit.

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The same general rule applies each year that you participate in the SBA 8(a) program: each 8(a) firm must submit an *updated* business plan to the SBA within 30 days after the close of each program year or else risk termination proceedings.

In recent years the SBA has begun to enforce this rule more rigorously than in the past, so as you participate in the 8(a) program, systematically track and record all of your business development and sales activity to allow you to report on your annual progress to the SBA. You can use a Customer Relationship Management (CRM) software program or even a simple spreadsheet to record your annual marketing activity.

As you develop your Form 1010C business plan, bear in mind that you will need to update it annually, so carefully write each section in a manner that allows you to make periodic adjustments and upgrades without locking you into a rigid course of action. In other words, make your business plan flexible and adaptable to changing market conditions.

SAMPLE

Section 2: General Writing Guidelines for the 1010C Form

Most of the questions in the Form 1010C require essay-style responses consisting of multiple sentences and paragraphs. There are several questions, however, that will require you to key in tables of financial data and contract status data instead.

The SBA does not publish a formal minimum or maximum length requirement for the business plan or the different sections inside the business plan. Generally speaking, however, your 1010C business plan must be detailed, comprehensive in scope, establish specific business targets, and set forth specific, measurable company objectives.

Your business plan must also be complete without any missing sections.

If a particular section of the form does not apply to your particular business situation, clearly mark it “Not applicable” or “None” so that the reviewer can see that you properly acknowledged and addressed every requirement in the business plan without skipping any sections.

Although the SBA expects detailed responses from you, writing *quality* is more important than writing *quantity* on the 1010C form, so resist any temptation to pad your responses with extraneous information added just for length. As long as your responses are thoughtful, descriptive, relevant, and to the point, it is OK if these responses are on the short side.

No one will grade you or rank your business plan based on its mechanics, word usage, punctuation, spelling, or grammar, but these elements are still important. We recommend that you proofread your business plan several times—and have another person read it over at least once also—before submitting your Form 1010C to a bank or to the Small Business Administration for review.

Small things like spelling and punctuation can create a big first impression on your reader/reviewer (especially if you are relying on the reader/reviewer for funding), and the Form 1010C is a chance to “put your best foot forward” and show your attention to detail through exemplary spelling, word usage, mechanics, and grammar.

*Your company is eligible to perform **any 8(a) contract opportunity-- regardless if the NAICS code assigned to the contract is found inside your approved business plan or not—as long as you demonstrate your capability to perform the contract and your firm still qualifies as a “small business” under the size standard for that NAICS code.***

If any of the sections on the Form 1010C provided are too short to fit in all of your information (as sometimes happens with PDF versions of the document), feel free to add attachments to the business plan. Just be sure each attachment is referenced by name or number in the core of the business plan document so that your reader knows when and where to jump to the appropriate attachment.

If you need help writing your 1010C business plan, you have several alternatives available:

1. Contact your local branch of SCORE, formerly called the Service Corps of Retired Executives, for free mentoring and guidance on business plans and other related topics: www.score.org
2. Contact your local SBA office for free one-on-one help from an SBA staff member: <http://www.sba.gov/about-offices-list/2>
3. You can email questions to Government Certification Specialists Inc. (GCS Inc.) at info@get8acertified.com
4. If you want GCS Inc. to help you research and/or write your entire SBA 1010C business plan (or just particular portions of your SBA 1010C business plan), please contact us at 703-350-8381 and mention that you are interested in our business plan writing service so we can provide you with a price quote and work out a mutually agreeable deadline. Please note that GCS Inc. personnel will ask you a number of questions about company financials and ask to see a number of your corporate documents as a routine part of this process. Also, please note that GCS Inc. will credit you the price you paid for this guide in your price quote for our writing services.

**** END of SAMPLE ****

The complete SBA 1010c Business Plan Kit provides 157 more pages of instruction, expert advice, and SBA approved business plan examples