

HUBZone Program Contracting Best Practices

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Early Applicant Engagement Initiative – Foundational Principles

Program integrity is unequivocally paramount in processing applications for HUBZone certification.

In processing a HUBZone application, at all levels, we seek, and must find, absolute consistency among:

- 1. *The business reality*** (e.g., an entity is small (based on its actual average revenues or number of employees, as appropriate); its principal office is physically located in a qualified HUBZone; at least 35% of its employees physically reside in qualified HUBZones; and, at least 51% of its owners are U.S. citizens.)
- 2. *The virtual representation of the business reality*** in a submitted on-line HUBZone Application.
- 3. *The analog representation of the business reality*** in corroborative documents submitted in support of an on-line HUBZone Application.

Objective

- Increase the likelihood that firms applying for HUBZone certification are substantially procurement-ready.
- Improve the quality of applications so that they can be correctly and quickly processed ... by early engagement of applicants with the client-facing resources:
 - SBA’s Office of Field Operations and its District Offices,
 - SBA’s District Office Resource Partners (e.g. Procurement Technical Assistance Centers, Small Business Development Centers, economic development authorities, chambers of commerce, etc.), and,
 - Office of Government Contracting (i.e., Procurement Center Representatives).

- This initiative involves the following components.
 - A local resource (e.g., PTAC, SBDC, District Office, etc.) that provides a local counselor who,
 - Receives training directly from a designated HUBZone office POC
 - Consults with firms to assess readiness for Federal contracting, and counsels them as appropriate.
 - Consults with firms to assess compliance HUBZone eligibility requirements for certification, and the likelihood of their remaining in compliance thereafter, and counsels them, as appropriate.
 - Assists firms in submitting on-line HUBZone applications, and in screening required supporting documentation.

Design (cont'd)

- The HUBZone office designates a POC for the initiative*, who:
 - Provides training to local counselors in screening applications and supporting documents.
 - Provides technical, policy, and regulatory support throughout the application process.
 - Provides a streamlined application process.

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Expected Outcomes

- Significantly reduced application processing times, rates of withdrawal, and rates of decline.
- Greater program success (i.e., award of HUBZone contracts) based on procurement readiness.
- Greater long-term program compliance because of certified firms' better Program understanding.