

## § 103.2

SBA, or assistance in procurement and technical matters;

(2) Preparing or processing on behalf of a lender or a participant in any of SBA's programs an application for federal financial assistance;

(3) Participating with or communicating in any way with officers or employees of SBA on an applicant's, participant's, or lender's behalf;

(4) Acting as a lender service provider; and

(5) Such other activity as SBA reasonably shall determine.

(c) *Applicant* means any person, firm, concern, corporation, partnership, cooperative or other business enterprise applying for any type of assistance from SBA.

(d) *Lender Service Provider* means an Agent who carries out lender functions in originating, disbursing, servicing, or liquidating a specific SBA business loan or loan portfolio for compensation from the lender. SBA determines whether or not one is a "Lender Service Provider" on a loan-by-loan basis.

(e) *Packager* means an Agent who is employed and compensated by an Applicant or lender to prepare the Applicant's application for financial assistance from SBA. SBA determines whether or not one is a "Packager" on a loan-by-loan basis.

(f) *Referral Agent* means a person or entity who identifies and refers an Applicant to a lender or a lender to an Applicant. The Referral Agent may be employed and compensated by either an Applicant or a lender.

(g) *Participant* means a person or entity that is participating in any of the financial, investment, or business development programs authorized by the Small Business Act or Small Business Investment Act of 1958.

## § 103.2 Who may conduct business with SBA?

(a) If you are an Applicant, a Participant, a partner of an Applicant or Participant partnership, or serve as an officer of an Applicant, Participant corporation, or limited liability company, you may conduct business with SBA without a representative.

(b) If you are an Agent, you may conduct business with SBA on behalf of an Applicant, Participant or lender, un-

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less representation is otherwise prohibited by law or the regulations in this part or any other part in this chapter. For example, persons debarred under the SBA or Government-wide debarment regulations may not conduct business with SBA. SBA may request that any Agent supply written evidence of his or her authority to act on behalf of an Applicant, Participant, or lender as a condition of revealing any information about the Applicant's, Participant's, or lender's current or prior dealings with SBA.

## § 103.3 May SBA suspend or revoke an Agent's privilege?

The Administrator of SBA or designee may, for good cause, suspend or revoke the privilege of any Agent to conduct business with SBA. Part 134 of this chapter states the procedures for appealing the decision to suspend or revoke the privilege. The suspension or revocation remains in effect during the pendency of any administrative proceedings under part 134 of this chapter.

## § 103.4 What is "good cause" for suspension or revocation?

Any unlawful or unethical activity is good cause for suspension or revocation of the privilege to conduct business. This includes:

(a) Attempting to influence any employee of SBA or a lender, by gifts, bribes or other unlawful or unethical activity, with respect to any matter involving SBA assistance.

(b) Soliciting for the provision of services to an Applicant by another entity when there is an undisclosed business relationship between the two parties.

(c) Violating ethical guidelines which govern the profession or business of the Agent or which are published at any time by SBA.

(d) Implying or stating that the work to be performed for an Applicant will include use of political or other special influence with SBA. Examples include indicating that the entity is affiliated with or paid, endorsed or employed by SBA, advertising using the words *Small Business Administration* or *SBA* in a manner that implies SBA's endorsement or sponsorship, use of SBA's seal or symbol, and giving a "guaranty" to

an Applicant that the application will be approved.

(e) Charging or proposing to charge any fee that does not bear a necessary and reasonable relationship to the services actually rendered or expenses actually incurred in connection with a matter before SBA or which is materially inconsistent with the provisions of an applicable compensation agreement or Lender Service Provider agreement. A fee based solely on a percentage of a loan or guarantee amount can be reasonable, depending on the circumstances of a case and the services actually rendered.

(f) Engaging in any conduct indicating a lack of business integrity or business honesty, including debarment, criminal conviction, or civil judgment within the last seven years for fraud, embezzlement, theft, forgery, bribery, falsification or destruction of records, false statements, conspiracy, receiving stolen property, false claims, or obstruction of justice.

(g) Acting as both a Lender Service Provider or Referral Agent and a Packager for an Applicant on the same SBA business loan and receiving compensation for such activity from both the Applicant and lender. A limited exception to this "two master" prohibition exists when an Agent acts as a Packager and is compensated by the Applicant for packaging services; also acts as a Referral Agent and is compensated by the lender for those activities; discloses the referral activities to the Applicant; and discloses the packaging activities to the lender.

(h) Violating materially the terms of any compensation agreement or Lender Service Provider agreement provided for in §103.5.

(i) Violating or assisting in the violation of any SBA regulations, policies, or procedures of which the Applicant has been made aware.

**§103.5 How does SBA regulate an Agent's fees and provision of service?**

(a) Any Applicant, Agent, or Packager must execute and provide to SBA a compensation agreement, and any Lender Service Provider must execute and provide to SBA a Lender Service Provider agreement. Each agreement

governs the compensation charged for services rendered or to be rendered to the Applicant or lender in any matter involving SBA assistance. SBA provides the form of compensation agreement and a suggested form of Lender Service Provider agreement to be used by Agents.

(b) Compensation agreements must provide that in cases where SBA deems the compensation unreasonable, the Agent or Packager must: reduce the charge to an amount SBA deems reasonable, refund any sum in excess of the amount SBA deems reasonable to the Applicant, and refrain from charging or collecting, directly or indirectly, from the Applicant an amount in excess of the amount SBA deems reasonable.

(c) Each Lender Service Provider must enter into a written agreement with each lender for whom it acts in that capacity. SBA will review all such agreements. Such agreements need not contain each and every provision found in the SBA's suggested form of agreement. However, each agreement must indicate that both parties agree not to engage in any sharing of secondary market premiums, that the services to be provided are accurately described, and that the agreement is otherwise consistent with SBA requirements. Subject to the prohibition on splitting premiums, lenders have reasonable discretion in setting compensation for Lender Service Providers. However, such compensation may not be directly charged to an Applicant or borrower.

**PART 105—STANDARDS OF CONDUCT AND EMPLOYEE RESTRICTIONS AND RESPONSIBILITIES**

STANDARDS OF CONDUCT

Sec.

105.101 Cross-reference to employee ethical conduct standards and financial disclosure regulations.

RESTRICTIONS AND RESPONSIBILITIES RELATED TO SBA EMPLOYEES AND FORMER EMPLOYEES

105.201 Definitions.

105.202 Employment of former employee by person previously the recipient of SBA Assistance.