| | |
|---|---|
| Speaker 1: | Ladies and gentlemen, welcome and thank you for joining today's web conference: training for entity-owned firms on completing 8(a) application in certify.SBA.gov. |
| | Please note that all lines will be muted for the duration of the call. You're welcome to submit written questions during the presentation and these will be addressed during Q&A. Please select the participants menu at the top of your screen and opt to send note to all presenters. |
| | If you're logged in using the web based application, use the notes tab on the right hand side of your screen and address your questions to all moderators. |
| | With that, I'll turn the call over to Francine Morris, Certify program manager. Please go ahead. |
| Francine Morris: | Thank you. Hi, everyone. This is Francine Morris, certify.SBA.gov program manager. I hope everyone's having a great afternoon, I want to thank you for taking your time to spend with us this afternoon to get an understanding of the workarounds that we have for you completing your 8(a) initial applications in the certify.sba.gov system. I have Laura Kadamus here, she's going to kick this training off and walk you through all the work arounds that we have. So thank you for you patience I want to personally thank you for that. I know there's been some difficulties in using the system and it can be frustrating with it being a new system and I want you to know we do understand that. So without further ado Laura if you can take this over I'd appreciate it. |
| Laura: | Yeah, thanks Francine. Hi everyone, my name is Laura I'm with the Certify team at SBA headquarters. So I've been working with some of you who are on the line now, to just listen to your experiences filing your 8(a) initial applications and somehow we've put together a documents that establishes some work arounds to solve some of the issues that you've been facing. So one of the big things that we've heard is that the system isn't acting for all of the documents or all of the questions aren't applicable to the entities, they're only applicable to individually owned firms. So what we've done is create a document of work arounds and that's what I'm going to go through right now. |
| | So I'm going to, on my screen you can currently see the 8(a) initial application overview. So what I'm gonna do is have the work around document, now you can see on your left side and we're going to go through the application step by step. So starting with the eligibility section. So if you see any questions in the form that don't have a corresponding question in the document, like this first one is the applicant firm a for-profit business? There are no different rules for a entity-owned firm so you can just answer those as requested in the application. |
| | So we're going to go ahead to had the firm generated any revenue? Now all entity owned firms here can select not applicable, N/A and you'll have an opportunity to waive the revenue requirement later on in the |

application so you don't need to worry about uploading anything at this point.

The next question says are all individuals claiming disadvantaged status in the applicant firm U.S. citizens. We know this is not applicable to entity owned firms but we don't give you that option yet in the form. So for now answer that question however it stands for you, whether you're a citizen or not. If you select no you'll see a warning but the warning won't prevent you from submitting your application and the analyst will know that this doesn't apply to you.

So now we're at the prior 8(a) involvement. So the one time eligibility of requirement is applicable to the entity owned firm that's applying but not to the entity itself. So we want to emphasize that these questions should be answered for the applicant firm. So was the applicant firm ever a certified 8(a) business development program participant, answer this again truthfully. If the applicant firm was a participant you're not eligible but if the entity has been a participant that is okay. Again this question, has the applicant firm ever submitted an application applies to the firm but not to the entity itself.

So do the assets of a previously certified 8(a) business development program participant constitute 50% or more of the applicant firms assets? So this question, if at least 50% of the firms assets are the same of those of the former participant the applicant firm is not eligible. So this only applies to assets held by the applicant firm. So if your firm uses assets from one of your sister subsidiaries that are actually owned by the parent company and then you use them through something like a shared service agreement that's fine, that doesn't count in this question.

Okay and did the applicant firm hire an outside consultant to assist with its 8(a) application? If somebody at the parent company that does not work for the applicant firm is filling out this application you should select yes here and then upload the applicable documentation. We have a link for that form that you need to upload in the guide that we'll send out after this call. There's no other questions that are different for entity owned firms in this section but just because of the way the system works we're going to have to go through each page, so then you can see there's a review step in the application, and then we'll get back to our application overview.

Okay. So the next question is, the next section is for business ownership. This first question you answer normally. The second question, is the applicant firm at least 51% or more unconditionally owned by another entity? All of the entity owned firms here are going to answer yes and with the add documents they are gonna add the applicant 10-10 form, so either the 10-10 AIT, the 10-10 ANC or the 10-10 CDC. For the 10-10 NHO that form is currently out of date, it doesn't reflect the new regulations so instead of filling out the 10-10 NHO we're providing you with a list of documentation that you need to upload for this question. So in addition, before the CDCs, AITs and ANCs in addition to the form upload any documentation that's requested in the form as well as some additional documentation that we are listing in this document.

So what we're doing with this question, as some of you already know there's certain things that you provide during your initial application that Certify isn't asking for, so we're using this question to provide all the extra documentation. So for example you might know that the day-to-day managers resume is not requested anywhere else in the form, you can upload that here. So, do you think I need to go through the whole list? Okay. I'm not gonna go through this whole list but if you have questions you can get back to us about that after the call.

Then there are some specific requirements for ANCs and CDCs.

For the NHOs as I mentioned you don't need to upload the 10-10 NHO form. Instead provide us with all of this information. So this list covers everything that was on the form that's still applicable and then anything extra that we left out or that has to do with the new regulation. Okay.

So that is the only question, actually let me double check. So that was the firm ownership page, now on the ownership details. There's two questions that don't apply to entity owned firms so you can select N/A. The first one is, does the applicant firm currently have ownership interest in any other firm? The second is does another firm or another organization have more than 10% ownership interest in the applicant firm? Okay. Then as you can see there's a few more pages in this section depending on the type of business you have, all of those questions are going to be the same. Okay.

The next section we'll go through is potential for success. So for taxes, if your parent company files consolidated tax returns and those tax returns include those of the applicant firm you can upload the consolidated tax returns, you don't need to break those up. And with the upload you should include all schedules as attachments, it's very important. If the firm is a new company, you just put it together for the purpose of applying to the program, so you wouldn't have three years of taxes, upload as many tax returns as you have. If you haven't filed any tax returns yet you can upload a letter explaining why. If the entity is not subject to federal income tax, so some of the AITs are not subject to federal income tax, you can just upload a letter stating that and then the analyst will know.

Okay, so in the revenue section. So there's this question, has the applicant firm earned revenues in its primary NAICS code for at least two years? This is where you're going to upload any evidence to waive your revenue requirements. So that could be either proof that the people who manage the daily business have the technical experience they need, until the firm has a record of successful performance on government and non-governmental contracts and the firm has adequate capital to sustain its operations. You can upload all of that or you can upload the parent company's letter of support and then your parent company's financial statements for the most recent year. If you would like you can also upload your primary NAICS analysis, we know some entity owned firms upload that but it's not a requirement.

So those are the only differences for the potential for success section. So I'll go back to the overview, okay.

So this section is about firm control. Okay, so this question, do any other firms or individuals provide financial support or bonding support to the applicant firm? Here you're gonna upload and documents that describe how either an individual, another company or your parent company provides support. But if you already uploaded the documents from your parent company in another section of the application you don't need to upload them again.

This question regarding the highest compensated person in the applicant firm, here you can select N/A because as entities you don't need to prove disadvantaged status. Please upload all business bank account signature cards. So here you'll just upload the signature cards and then we're also going to ask, if you have bank signatories that are not officers, directors, member representatives or day-to-day managers, so people who normally wouldn't submit the 10-10 INDs we still need to get an SBA from 9-12 from them so you can upload that here. So that could be just an employee that has signatory access to your bank account. But for all those other people life officers and directors you don't have to upload the form 9-12 because we're going to ask them to fill out those questions later.

Is the applicant firm co-located with any other firm at the location and does it share any resources with any other firms? This applies to any company that would include a sister subsidiary or your parent company. The same thing for the next question, if you're sharing office space we'd like to know that. These are the same.

Okay so you see right here there's a character section, this section is very short, it's about the character of your business, so there are no changes in that with an entity owned firm. The individual contributor section is what we're going to go through next.

Okay, so when you get here you see there's three steps to fill out, first is the firm owner and individual cleaning disadvantage. The second is provide a name for anyone else that needs to provide information for your 8(a) application. So as some of you may know, currently this first section, firm owner and individual cleaning disadvantage, so this section answered the questions for the 9-12, the 10-10 IND and the 4-13. It is currently required for submission even though entity owned firms technically do not need to fill out this section. So what we're going to ask you to do, in this section if you click in to the vendor administrator, so whoever is filling out the application for your firm will fill out this section and what we're gonna have them do is only answer the questions that are on the 9-12 and the 10-10 IND and that's all it outlines right here. So if you don't see, again just like the other sections of the application, if you don't see a question in this word document answer it normally. So gender you would answer, marital status you would answer, where things kind of change is down below.

So here for resume, we only need the resumes of the day-to-day manager. So if the person filling out the application is also the day-to-day manager you can upload the resume here but if the person filling out the application is someone else you do not need to provide a resume, unless the firm is an NHO in that case the board members provide re-

sumes too. So if the board member is filling it out you can provide that here, otherwise you can provide the board members resumes in that question in the ownership section that I showed you earlier.

So we're gonna skip ahead to full time devotion. So you can answer this ... [crosstalk]. So here we need to know if, we only need to know full time devotion if the day-to-day manager is filling it out. So the same thing applies to the resume, you can answer this question if you're the day-to-day manager honestly, so if you have two jobs please let us know and add the right, add the applicable documents. If you are not the day-to-day manager, say you are a board member, you can just select no here.

Okay, so as you can see there's a lot of sections and in this section on the application are a lot of different pages that don't apply because they're from the 4-13. I'm just gonna go through a few. Okay. So for basis of disadvantage, here we're going to have you select native american, which applies, will apply for the ANCs, the AITs, the NHOs and the CDCs. Then here in native american documentation, you do not need to provide this. So what you're going to do is upload a blank pdf for now. So what you can do is go in to Microsoft Word and open a new document and then just save it as a pdf. You can even name it like I did here just as blank pdf so the analyst will know. What happens once you do this, we're gonna request a blank pdf for a few of these questions. So here you have the option of uploading, which is a regular upload window or choosing from your document library. When you choose you can just select blank pdf and then associate it with the application. So you don't have to continuously upload the same thing over and over again, it should be pretty quick.

Okay, so now we're getting in to a lot of questions about the access of the individual that's applying, for all of these questions you can either select no or enter zero dollars. So I've outlined all of those questions in this document and the analyst will know when they're processing your application that your firm is entity owned so you don't need to fill this out. So you don't need to worry about them being confused as to why there are so many zeros on your application. So I'm not gonna go through each question because it will take a long time to load the application.

Okay, so going back in to the individual contributors page, the next little block of text is about another 8(a) applicant if applicable. This is not applicable to the entity owned firm so you don't need to worry about adding another disadvantaged individual. Same thing goes for spouse, you don't need to add the spouse of a disadvantaged individual. But this section is very important, please add up all other individuals directly involved with the business. So your firms officers, directors, member representatives and day-to-day manager need to complete this section. So for example if the day-to-day manager is the one that's filling out the application, so filled out this vendor administrator section, that manager does not need to fill out this section as well because it will ask the same questions.

This section covers the former SBA forms 10-10 IND and 9-12. How it works is you'll select add an individual and then you would type in that individual's name and email address and then that person, let's say it's a board member, will receive an email from the Certify system prompting them to create an account. Then they'll fill out this section of the application. In that section there's only a few things that they'll need to be aware of. So if you have board members and other managers that aren't on this call, please share this document with them so they know when they're filling out their section. It's really just two questions, the first one, are you the former employer of the individual claiming disadvantage? This doesn't apply to entity owned firms, you can select no. And then business affiliations, do any of your immediate family members have a contractual relationship with your firm? Again you can select no.

For the prior 8(a) involvement questions we know that many of the people that are filling out this section for entity owned firms will have prior 8(a) involvement and they're allowed to. So here just answer the questions truthfully, it's not going to impact your firms eligibility. So in this section if you add someone by mistake you can also remove them as a contributor or you can send them a reminder in case they haven't filled it out. So they'll get another email to create their application. So that is all of the sections in the initial application, should we just open it up for questions or do you want to talk about the larger issues? [crosstalk 00:23:19]

Laura:  Okay. So before we open it up for questions, there's a lot of issues that we've been having with the system that we just want to be transparent about and we hope to spend the next half an hour kind of discussing them with you so we better understand what should be a priority to fix and what needs to be fixed first essentially. So the first issue we heard is that the person who's filling out the account cannot fill out these sections for their contributors. So for example if there's someone at the parent company who manages all of the FDA compliance for all of their subsidiary firms that person tends to fill out the 9-12 and the 10-10 IND for all the board members and then just gets them to sign off on it. That person can't do that within the Certify system.

Rick:  Yeah, so this is Rick Lee. We realize that this creates a heavy burden for some of you, probably a lot of you, and we are working on functionality to change this, to be able to provide delegation for those board members so that they can assign someone to be able to fill those things out. The issue that we have from a system perspective is that we require a lot of personally identifiable information, which is extremely sensitive. We need to be able to have a system that operates, we need to be able to control who can see that. So we'll be able to provide that delegation but it has to actually come from that contributor, so if you have a board member named Jane Smith who needs to fill something out for the application, she's the one who needs to say I'm going to delegate that authority to John Smith, to be able to fill out that application and that's the functionality that we're working on building.

Francine Morris:  We're discussing. [crosstalk 00:25:40].

| | |
|---|---|
| Rick: | Yeah, oh and actually Van Tran was just bringing up a great point, one of the hurdles to this is legal right? So we're working with our general councils office to define what the requirements are specifically for that delegation. |
| Laura: | Okay, thanks Rick. So the second thing we heard really relates to that section and that is there's no administrator review function. So that means let's say I'm the account administrator here and I invite Rick to lead to fill it out because he's a board member on my firm, I cannot go in to the system and see his information to correct any errors or anything that he might have done wrong. Again that's because of that same PII issue, so this should be fixed once we implement that delegation software that Rick was just describing. The next issue, let me try to find an example here. So if we're in potential for success, let's same I'm uploading a document, little bit bigger so everyone can see, I'm just gonna load a blank PDF. You can see right here that there's a file type and often there's only one option, so this might be the firm income tax returns and that might not be what you're uploading. So for this question you might be uploading your parent company a letter of support, we know that this type is wrong and that's fine, what you can do is write here parent company letter or something like that to describe what it is and then the analyst will know that this type is incorrect and in the future we can go back and fix that. We're going to be incorporating an other option eventually so that you won't have mislabeled documents. |
| | Okay. The next issue is going to bring us back to the individual contributor section. So when I'm adding an individual, let's just say I'm inviting myself, I get a warning because it says I already have an account in Certify, I'm already associated with another business. So right now there's a one to one relationship between an email and an 8(a) application. So if you're a contributor on multiple applications you currently need to use a different email for each application to fill it out. We know this is a big problem for a lot of the entity owned firms and it's another issue we're working on sorting out - if you have extra details. |
| Rick: | Not really a whole lot of details [crosstalk 00:28:59]. |
| Laura: | Okay. |
| Francine Morris: | There's a time frame that we ... like months down. |
| Rick: | Months? Probably a couple of months yeah. |
| Francine Morris: | Down the road. |
| Rick: | Yeah, which is why we wanted to focus on getting some of these quick work arounds out. |
| Francine Morris: | Okay, yeah. |
| Laura: | So if anyone missed that, the email functionality is probably going to take a few months for us to correct and that's why we're trying to have this call and open up this conversation so we can make it as easy as possible for you in the meantime. So the next issue we've heard is that, you |

know there's not any place to submit additional information documents. So we're trying to solve that issue currently with this call by giving you different spaces to upload different kinds of information that you might have.

Then the last thing we've been hearing and you can bring up additional issues after this, I'm sure we're not capturing everything here but the last issue is that we're asking for the same information over and over again. So for example here I have the list of firms owned by entity's or for example your parent company's tax returns, if you're filing multiple applications you have to upload the parent company's tax returns multiple times. We know that's a barrier, we're working on a few things, one is we're trying to essentially baseline the system so it has all of your information in it, so that in the coming years we can pre-populate certain things and you won't have to fill it out again. Right now we're not able to connect two firms to each other to say okay they're associated as one entity but we are working on that and it is on the horizon for some time in the future. Is there anything else you want to add?

Rick:          No.

Laura:        Okay.

Rick:          Thank you.

Laura:        And with that we'll open it up to questions.

Speaker 1:   Ladies and gentlemen, as we move in to the Q&A please feel free to submit a written question using the participants menu at the top of your screen and opting to send notes to all presenters. If you're logged in using the web based application use the notes tab on the right hand side of your screen and address your questions to all moderators. We have received a few questions so far. First question comes from Colleen. Is there a list of all extra documentation needed?

Laura:        Yeah so all of the documentation you need will be in this ... all of the documentation that we have listed in this ... sorry it takes a little while to load the whole thing, in either the tables here or right below the tables, this should cover all of the documentation that you need to provide. We've worked with the analysts at different district offices, we've worked with the legal team here at headquarters and we've worked with a few different firms so we think we've captured everything. There could be things we're missing, in which case please submit any other documentation to this question that is, is the applicant firm at least 51% or more unconditionally owned by another entity.

Speaker 1:   And our next question comes from Vince. If we have already submitted and attempted our own workarounds, how will this effect the application? Should we withdrawal and refile?

Van:          Hi there, this is Van Tran. I work for the, I'm the director of the 8(a) program. If you have sent that already and if you have provided those supporting documentations that we need and if you're able to tell us where, you know what, can you email, if your application is already as-

signed to a BOS can you send an email to the BOS and then they will, he or she will connect with you and then look for the documents.

Laura: So you can send that message, also let me just show you quickly, you can send a message through Certify. So right up here you see overview documents and messages, right now I can't send a new message because this application is not submitted yet but if you've submitted this feature is enabled. So you can send a message to your BOS and ask to have that conversation.

Van: Yeah and you can tell them where you uploaded the supporting documentation in what section, that will help them navigate.

Laura: Yeah and process faster.

Speaker 1: And our next question comes from Colleen. Are we now allowed to fill out managers for our members or are we still sending out live emails?

Van: [inaudible 00:33:57] this system is built to protect people's PII. We're not going to say you can fill out the person's behalf, that is up to the business, we can't tell you that, all we can tell you is that we're working on this delegation to fix the issue, so [crosstalk 00:34:19].

Francine Morris: We can't tell you that, that's okay for you to do.

Laura: Right so again what you have to do is if you're a manager, for your manager to fill it out you have to enter their name and email address and then that manager will get a notification from the Certify system that says create an account and then they'll fill out their section of the application.

Speaker 1: Our next question comes from Joshua. I may have missed it but where can I get this Word document that walks you through the questions?

Laura: We haven't sent it out yet so you didn't miss anything. We wanted to have this conversation and review with you in person, so we'll be sending it out after the calls and when we do please share it with any other entities that you know of that might not be on the call.

Van: And also we will post this document on our Knowledge Base - that everyone in the public has access to it; it is... Laura is showing it *[Editor's Note - on screen in the recording]*. It also has the recording of this webinar too, in case you missed it.

Laura: So what you do is if you go to certify.SBA.gov and select help, this is the knowledge base and there's how-to and helpful guides. So we're going to post it right up here after the call.

Francine Morris: It only takes a couple days to get the recordings.

Laura: Okay great.

Francine Morris: [crosstalk 00:35:49] yeah for the recording, it will take a few days, but the document I will be posting.

| | |
|---|---|
| Speaker 1: | The next question comes from Ashley. Where can we find the supplementary documents? |
| Laura: | We just covered that one. |
| Speaker 1: | And our next question comes from Colleen. Do we know when the changes will take place? |
| Rick: | So like I said we're working through some issues with the general council, we have a few items that we're working on for some other enhanced functionality for initial application not related to, more around some of the messaging services and what not so that we can better facilitate these communications and don't have to use email. After that we'll be getting started on some of these other fixes. Laura is gonna be the lead for speaking with you guys, helping get a solution together, some of the things that we're talking about, which she'll cover in much more detail but we're discussing some solutions that include workflows that are specific to entities and things like that so that it'll be a much more customized solution specifically for you. |
| Francine Morris: | Can you speak to them about the agile methodology, how we're doing this iteratively to understand that it's a continuous push out. |
| Rick: | Sure. So one of the things that makes this different than a lot of government systems that are deployed is that we're developing this in what we call an agile environment. So what we mean by that is we work in two week sprints and every two weeks we release new functionality in to the application. We spent the last couple of years just building a foundation for this application, just to deal with the accept data, the data that you're submitting here. So at this point now we've got what we call a minimum viable product, which admittedly is a little bit more minimum for individual firms than it is for entities, but we've always had the intention of going back and iterating and developing that functionality that you need. So we're in that cycle right now, I think to be perfectly - so I work for OMB, which is the office of budget and management out of the white house - and I think as the product owner for this I should be probably the one taking the blame for not emphasizing some of the entity needs of it more. But I want to make sure that you are aware that we are aware of your pain and are working as diligently as possible to get it fixed. |
| Van: | And I just want to add on we will do better with our communication. So when there's releases that impact you or like for example the delegation, something like that, we will send out a communication. I know Certify has a mailing list right? |
| Laura: | Can you show that is that possible? |
| Van: | If you're in that mailing list we will make sure to send that out, to use the mailing list as a source and then we will share with our resource partners, our district officers and of course the associations. So we will try to be better, to communicate with you the updates. |

| Laura: | And we'll figure out a way, I'm actually not quite sure how to show the mailing list right now but we'll figure that out and add it to the guide when we send it out. So we'll just put it right up top here. Next question. |
|---|---|
| Speaker 1: | Next question comes from Sue. Are the work around directions referenced in this conference going to be made available to us? |
| Laura: | I think we answered that one. |
| Francine Morris: | Yes. |
| Van: | Yes. |
| Speaker 1: | Next question comes from Lisa. Are the forms 1790, 10-10 rep and 4506T supplementary and parent required? And where should they be uploaded? |
| Van: | So the 1790 is an outside assistance, so I think we covered that, it's on one of the questions and there's a link to it. |
| Laura: | That's 1010 rep also. |
| Van: | And that's a 1010 rep. The 4506T is not part of the updated regulation the 4506T is optional, you do not need to submit it. If the SBA BOS determine that it's need we will reach out to you but you do not need to submit it as part of your application. |
| Speaker 1: | Our next question come from Carl. How is the document and issue list accessed? |
| Laura: | We'll send them out after the call and then through the health center we just described. I think that's every question. |
| Francine Morris: | I think so, I'm not sure. |
| Speaker 1: | Our next question comes from Greg. I initially submitted my application in August. Somehow it got kicked out so I had to resubmit on December 8th. When can I expect to hear from my reviewer? |
| Van: | This is Van. I want to be transparent, we are backed up in our application, as you understand we are trying to — there's an application in our old system, BDMIS, and that system will go away, so we're trying to do our best to get those applications out. But also know that we are trying to stage our solutions to address all the applications with Certify. So we have teams trying to work through those applications in Certify. As you know with any new system there will be technical difficulties and bugs and fixes and stuff that we need to address so we ask for your patience and understanding as we do this, enhance the new system. If you haven't heard back from us feel free to reach out to us but again please give us some ... I ask that you have patience with us and understanding as we try to work with our new system. |

| | |
|---|---|
| Speaker 1: | Our next question comes from Melanie. In the individual contributor section I have the A director listed twice with the same email address. The application status for one of them shows complete and the other shows in progress. If we remove contributor to the in progress profile will it automatically delete the completed profile and force the director to start over? |
| Rick: | Yeah you can submit a help desk ticket, it shouldn't do that. |
| Laura: | But it might be better to double check before... |
| Rick: | But it'd be better to double check yeah. |
| Laura: | So if you email help@certify.sba.gov and include your firm name and DUNS number and just that description they should be able to confirm that for you. |
| Speaker 1: | Our next question comes from Dee. To setup the initial account for Certify it requires the owner to set up the account. Entity owned participants usually have employees to set up multiple accounts. How do we get around this? |
| Laura: | So that is the issue we were talking through before. If you have an employee that is filling out the application you can ... |
| Francine Morris: | Use their email, you don't have to use multiple emails. |
| Laura: | Yeah so the employee's going to be able to fill out all of the sections and then everyone else will just have to fill out the individual contributors page. |
| Rick: | Yeah so what we recommend at that level at this point in time is, and we realize this is not an ideal solution but, so what we recommend is that you set up an email address on Google or something like that, that it will allow you to create an address that's specific to your firm. So that'll be two things, one it will be ... |
| Francine Morris: | you can track that- |
| Rick: | We can track that form, you can, if you trust all of the employees that you're working with and I'm sure you do or they wouldn't be your employees you can share that email address to get the applications completed and then having one for each firm will temporarily solve the problem of parent companies who have multiple firms and one manager to manage them. They just need to track multiple emails for a short period of time. What we would ask from you is if you're going to do that send an email to Van or someone in the program, whatever email address Van wants to use, she'll post that up in the chat here, that lets us know what emails you're assigning to each firm, so that when we do get this fixed in a couple of months we can go back and replace those emails and re-associate the firms with that single user. |
| Van: | Somebody will provide you additional guidance for the document. |

Rick:          Yeah but I want to make sure that they know that they should be tracking those. They don't have to send them right away I want to make sure that they know to track them. So you understand, if you choose not to track them it's not a big deal, you'll just have to contact us probably through the help desk to get those changed when we're ready.

Van:           To help you to help [inaudible 00:46:10] I think will be great [inaudible 00:46:11] that way we can speed up.

Rick:          Yeah.

Speaker 1:     Next question comes from Melanie. Word documents, how do you know who to send it to? I did not register for this course.

Van:           If you're talking about the guide - we will send it out to the association, but again it will be posted on our knowledge base so you can have access to it.

Speaker 1:     The next question comes from Grace. If you have limited access to 3G and LTE internet is there an option to work offline and save for later to submit when you're connected to decent internet speed?

Rick:          No there's not right now. So what we'd recommend I think is take a look at the documents that Laura's provided, in your offline time or when you don't have good connectivity make sure that you pull all the documents that you need and stick them in a single folder and then you'll just have to complete the application when you get in to a better location. One other thing that I'd like to point out is, these PDF scans, often times as you scan documents to be included you're gonna be using default settings on the scanner, which aren't always necessarily best for uploading. One thing that you want to probably check is the resolution of how you're scanning the documents. We only accept files that are up to 25 megabytes but more importantly if you are in a lower bandwidth area the smaller you make those files the better the system will work for you.

Laura:         Right and just to point out quickly how saving works, if you are filling out your application, once you select save and continue on that page, everything that you uploaded and everything in that page is saved. So you don't have to complete the whole section before the system is saving it. It is saving it as soon as you complete the page, so depending on your bandwidth you can plant that way as well.

Speaker 1:     And our next question comes from William. With the new system of application submittal and the old system being reviewed, will the 60 to 90 day window still apply for the application process or will it take longer?

Van:           So you're talking about the 15 day planning, the 90 processing and the 45 day reconsideration right? Those are statutory review times. We always try to reach that goal but there are times where we won't meet that goal due to building a new system, technical bugs, the work around, so we will do our best with the limited resources that we have but as you understand with agencies we're working down the clock. So again I ask for your patience, if you have questions always feel free to

contact me. My email and my phone number is 202-205-7567 or email at Van, V-A-N, dot T-R-A-N at SBA.gov [van.tran@sba.gov]. But I will ask that you reach out to your BOS and their supervisor asking for status. Again Laura indicated that messaging. If your application has been longer, months and you haven't heard from anybody from the BOS or from the supervisor then reach out to me.

Speaker 1: And our next question comes from Melanie who responds to a previous question. I submitted a help desk ticket and they said it was resolved for duplication. I didn't want to resend my ticket after it was closed without resolution because I know sometimes it can take some time to respond. Should I resend?

Rick: You can. So sometimes the way our help desk system works, if you submitted a ticket and then submitted a similar ticket, and this happens a fair bit especially if you create a login through that system. Our help desk folks will mark those tickets, will mark one of those tickets as resolved as duplicate and they'll work through the issue with the other ticket. If it's been a while you might want to resubmit it.

Speaker 1: And we do have one question remaining, this one is from Lisa. Rather than creating additional alias emails for the same person for different 8(a) firms can we just upload form 912, 1010 and resumes?

Van: No unfortunately again as we're trying to build the system and establish the firm's application, that's the reason why we take away the form right? The questions on the form is in the system and we're trying to move away paper, we're trying to be paperless. If you upload the form that means somebody still has to go in and answer the questions.

Rick: But, what Van says is true but this is also on radar for fixing in the next couple of months. One of our goals is to get to the point where we not only have delegation so that say a board member can delegate someone to complete their part of the application but also reuse so that a board member's application can be applied to multiple firms. So we realize there's some pain in the short term but it's on our list to get fixed. In fact it's a priority of ours right now.

Speaker 1: And at this time there are no further questions in queue.

Francine Morris: Let's give them another minute or so, if anyone else thinks of a ... [crosstalk 00:52:50].

Rick: Hold on. Melanie.

Francine Morris: Was it Melanie or William?

Rick: Melanie, it was Melanie.

Francine Morris: Melanie, the help desk ticket that you have that you were concerned about, if you could send me an email, it's Francine F-R-A-N-C-I-N-E .morris M-O-R-R-I-S @sba.gov. That's francine.morris@sba.gov, I think

there was two. One was a question of duplicate and then the other was —

Rick:                   Same question.

Francine Morris:        Was it the same send an email?

Rick:                   Yeah I'm looking to see if I can find Melanie's ticket right now.

Francine Morris:        Okay, I didn't know if that was William. We'll take care of that for you.

Rick:                   Great.

Francine Morris:        There's no further questions so I want to close the call but I want to first say thank you to everyone again for your patience. We've tried this several times within SBA, all of you that don't know this, to build a system that will incorporate all of our programs to make it easier for all of our firms to be able to apply for the programs and we've tried this several times. This is the farthest that we've gotten to making this happen. It's going to be painful, a little painful for everyone, trust me, we're looking at, not only all of our industry, that's both our individual firms as well as our entities, as well as our analyst inside of SBA that have to use the system as well. We have a lot of stakeholders across the board that this system touches inside of our agency as well with our OGC and I just want to thank you all for your patience.

It's a little painful at the start but if you could give me some patience and work with us, we're working to get your feedback, we're not going to stop reaching out and we're going to have a system that will work for everyone in the long run. So again it takes some time, I understand you all have some real hard work arounds, I thank Laura for her support in being our point person with the entities, I really appreciate that but I do want you all to know that we're here, we're willing to give emails, telephone numbers, we know that there's going to be issues but we're gonna work through those issues. Again timeline wise, things may seem months down the road but trust me we're releasing functionality as Rick said every two weeks to try to make the system better for everyone and you'll be seeing the progression as we do as well. So again thank you all and no other questions? We'll end the call.

Laura:                  Thank you.

Speaker 1:              Thank you to all our speakers and thank you to all in the audience for joining us today, the event's complete and you may disconnect.