



NEWS RELEASE

PRESS OFFICE

Release Date: July 16, 2004

Release Number: 04-57

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SBA Announces Funding For Women's Business Centers

WASHINGTON – The U.S. Small Business Administration today announced the funding of 34 existing Women's Business Centers (WBCs). The WBC program provides training, counseling, and mentoring services to women entrepreneurs and was established by Congress in 1988.

“One of the most exciting things about the Women's Business Center Program is that it continues to reach out to new customers,” said SBA Administrator Hector V. Barreto. “Women business owners are one of the fastest growing segments of the small business community. These centers offer those entrepreneurs comprehensive, professional advice and counseling about how best to start and grow their businesses.”

The WBC Program, administered by the SBA's Office of Women's Business Ownership (OWBO), provides female entrepreneurs with the resources they need to start and grow a business. The 34 existing WBC sites will share \$5.1 million in SBA funding. Each site is required to match a portion of the federal funds with private contributions, and services are tailored to the community in which the WBC is located. The WBC program provides funding for an initial five-year term. The 34 centers are included in this part of the program.

The locations of the WBCs receiving the SBA matching grants are Birmingham, Ala; Pago Pago, AS; Tucson, Ariz.; Los Angeles, Calif.; San Bernardino, Calif.; San Diego, Calif.; Santa Barbara, Calif.; Lenexa, Kan.; New Orleans, La.; Worcester, Mass.; Grand Rapids, Mich.; St. Paul, Minn.; Kansas City, Mo.; Asheville, N.C.; Durham, N.C.; Lyons, Neb.; Reno, Nev.; Bronx, N.Y.; Brooklyn, N.Y.; Buffalo, N.Y.; Queens, N.Y.; Utica, N.Y.; White Plains, N.Y.; Cleveland, Ohio; Durant, Okla.; Norman, Okla.; Oklahoma City, Okla.; Lancaster, Pa.; Sioux Falls, S.D.; Chattanooga, Tenn.; El Paso, Texas; Springfield, Va.; Richmond, Va.; and Everett, Wash.

Last year, the WBC program served more than 106,612 clients nationwide. The centers are located in rural, urban and suburban areas and direct much of their training and counseling assistance toward economically disadvantaged women. They offer many innovative programs, including financial management, marketing and technical assistance, procurement training, mentoring in several different languages and Internet training. The centers also provide specialized programs that address issues facing displaced workers or rural home-based entrepreneurs.

The program also offers an online Women's Business Center that can be accessed 24 hours a day at <http://www.onlinewbc.gov/>. For more information on the SBA's Women's Business Center Program or to find the location of the nearest center, contact your local SBA office or visit the Office of Women's Business Ownership's home page at www.sba.gov/financing/special/women.html

A complete list of all centers can be found online at the OWBO site at <http://www.onlinewbc.gov/>.