



**PRESS OFFICE**

# NEWS RELEASE

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**Release Number:** 98-109

**Contact:** D.J. Caulfield (202) 205-6740  
**SBA News Releases:** [www.sba.gov/news/](http://www.sba.gov/news/)

## ***VICE PRESIDENT GORE ANNOUNCES NEW PUBLIC/PRIVATE PARTNERSHIP TO ENCOURAGE ENTREPRENEURIAL GROWTH AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT IN OUR INNER CITIES***

Washington, D.C. - Vice President Gore announced today a new partnership between the federal government and America's business community to encourage large businesses to work with small business owners and entrepreneurs, especially in America's cities and in economically distressed areas.

The Vice President made the announcement at a meeting with Treasury Secretary Robert Rubin, Small Business Administration (SBA) Administrator Aida Alvarez, and CEOs from leading American corporations and small businesses. The partnership known as BusinessLINC, which stands for Learning, Information, Networking, and Collaboration, provides opportunities for the federal government to encourage new partnerships in the business community.

"Our economy today is now stronger than it has been in a generation," Vice President Gore said. "As a result, businesses all across our nation are being presented with new opportunities to invest in some of the fastest growing markets in our country."

"BusinessLINC calls upon America's large businesses to forge new partnerships with-- and to make a wise investment in -- our small businesses and entrepreneurs so that both our large and small businesses will become more competitive in the new economy," he added.

To support the BusinessLINC initiative, the Vice President announced a series of new federal initiatives:

### **HUBZone Empowerment Contracting Program**

The Vice President announced the implementation of the new HUBZone Empowerment Contracting program. Under this program, up to \$6 billion in new federal contracts will be targeted to small businesses and distressed areas by the year 2000. In addition, it will widen the pool of potential Government contractors and create an estimated 25,000 new jobs in over 7,000 distressed communities.

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### **Department of Treasury and SBA Mentoring Programs**

The Vice President announced that both the Treasury Department and the SBA will create menteprotégé programs. The Treasury Department program -- Success Partnerships -- will help increase the participation of small, disadvantaged and women-owned businesses as contractors and subcontractors by offering technical advice, financial and management skills, endorsement credibility, and on-on-one advice from large companies. The SBA counterpart will seek to enhance the capabilities of participants in the agency's 8(a) business development program, and to improve their ability to compete and receive federal government contracts. In addition, SBA will expand ACENET (Angel Capital Electronic Network) that helps link minority and women-owned businesses with investment capital (corporate sponsors of these businesses are known as "Angels").

"In today's economy, small businesses need technical advice and assistance, access to resources and personal contacts necessary to compete successfully," said Treasury Secretary Rubin. "Through BusinessLINC strategies, larger companies can contribute to their own success through supporting the economic growth of smaller businesses, particularly those in economically distressed areas."

Administrator Alvarez added, "SBA has made a strategic commitment to opening doors of economic opportunity for all Americans. With partners like Bell Atlantic, and with the innovative programs like the new mentor-protégé initiative and HUBZone Empowerment contracting, we will be able to open those doors wider than ever before."

**BusinessLINC Leadership Coalition**

The Vice President announced the formation of a BusinessLINC leadership coalition of experts, comprised of both public and private sector representatives. The coalition will work to expand business-to-business relationships between large and small businesses and will provide businesses with on-line information, resources, and a database of companies with an interest in mentor or protégé programs ([www.businesslinc.sba.gov](http://www.businesslinc.sba.gov)).

Attending the meeting with the Vice President at the White House were Treasury Secretary Robert Rubin, SBA Administrator Aida Alvarez, and CEOs from McDonald's, Bell Atlantic, BankBoston, Chase Manhattan Bank, GE Capital, Science Applications International, ITC Personnel Services, Trumark Metal Stamping, Lazo Technologies, and Delilah's.

Among the new private sector commitments:

- Bell Atlantic has committed \$1.8 billion, through a partnership with SBA, to increase purchasing and subcontracting with minority and women-owned businesses.
- GE Capital has committed to expand its Small Business Colleges, which offer business advice to entrepreneurs in distressed areas, and to open a fifth college in St. Louis as well as a new pilot program for women business owners in Washington, D.C.

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- Science Applications International Corporation (SAIC) will execute joint marketing agreements with small businesses and support relationships with small businesses in the new HUBZone areas.
- Chase will create a new program that will connect its senior bank officers with women and minority small business owners, and a new partnership with the National Association of Black Management Consultants.

Today's meeting was the second in a series of White House Business and Entrepreneurial Roundtables that the Vice President has held on different aspects of the role that the private sector can play in cities and distressed communities.

At the first meeting, held on June 5, 1998, the Vice President announced several new private sector commitments to invest in low-income communities by such corporations as Pfizer, Rite Aid, Pathmark, and BankBoston. Also at this meeting, the Vice President directed Secretary Rubin and Administrator Alvarez to conduct a series of regional meetings on BusinessLINC and report back to him at the second Roundtable on ways to coordinate efforts to encourage large businesses to work with small businesses, especially in distressed areas.

As chair of the President's Community Empowerment Board, the Vice President oversees the Administration's Community Empowerment Agenda, which includes a series of initiatives to provide greater opportunity in, and expand the competitiveness of, our distressed urban and rural areas. An important part of the agenda has been to spur the private sector to play a greater role in these areas.

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*The U.S. Small Business Administration, established in 1953, provides financial, technical and management assistance to help Americans start, run, and grow their businesses. With a portfolio of business loans, loan guarantees and disaster loans worth more than \$45 billion, the SBA is the nation's largest single financial backer of small businesses. Last year, the SBA offered management and technical assistance to more than one million small business owners. The SBA also plays a major role in the government's disaster relief efforts by making low-interest recovery loans to both homeowners and businesses.*

*America's 23 million small businesses employ more than 50 percent of the private workforce, generate more than half of the nation's gross domestic product, and are the principal source of new jobs in the U.S. economy.*

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PRESS OFFICE

# NEWS RELEASE

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**Contact:** Patricia L. Young (202) 205-6740  
**SBA News Releases:** [www.sba.gov/news/](http://www.sba.gov/news/)

## ***SBA BOOSTS EFFORTS TO HELP PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES START AND GROW THEIR BUSINESSES***

WASHINGTON – Aida Alvarez, Administrator of the U.S. Small Business Administration, joined Vice President Al Gore today in announcing SBA's intent to develop a new outreach campaign to help Americans with disabilities start their own businesses. The announcement came during a meeting of the Presidential Task Force on Employment of Adults With Disabilities.

"Small businesses are the primary engine of job growth in America today," Vice President Gore said. "People with disabilities have higher rates of self-employment and small business experience than the rest of America, yet they often are not aware of the assistance available to them. This campaign would open the doors of opportunity wider to help Americans with disabilities get the assistance they need to create businesses that create jobs."

Administrator Alvarez noted that the entrepreneurial spirit is not limited to any single group. "We've mounted an aggressive effort to make our programs and services readily available to everyone who needs them. When people with disabilities have equal access to entrepreneurial opportunities, it helps to enrich their lives and benefits all of us," she said.

The Vice President asked the SBA to begin implementing right away the task force's recommendation to reach out to people with disabilities who want to start their own businesses or are currently operating a small business.

The new outreach campaign would provide greater access to SBA's entrepreneurial development programs, financial assistance incentives, and government contracting opportunities, including the Section 8(a) program, HUB Zones, and the small disadvantaged business program.

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Vice President Gore commended the task force's first report "Re-Charting the Course" and called for immediate implementation of specific recommendations, reflecting the administration's longstanding commitment

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# NEWS RELEASE

## PRESS OFFICE

**Release Date:** December 2, 1998  
**Release Number:** 98-104

**Contact:** Mike Stamler (202) 205-6740  
**SBA News Releases:** [www.sba.gov/news/](http://www.sba.gov/news/)

### ***ADMINISTRATOR ALVAREZ LEADS FIRST SMALL BUSINESS TRADE MISSION TO IRELAND***

**WASHINGTON – U.S. Small Business Administration Administrator Aida Alvarez will lead about 20 sales-minded high-tech small companies from all over the country on a strategic trade mission to Dublin, Ireland.**

**“This historic mission will be an intense, results-focused session aimed at doing business,” Administrator Alvarez said. “It is designed not only to promote American small business interests in Ireland, but also in the greater European Union through partnerships between U.S. and Irish firms.”**

Administrator Alvarez said the Strategic Partnership Development Mission will establish a new and expanded business arrangement with a reorganized Enterprise Ireland for trading partnerships between U.S. and Irish small businesses. It marks the first time an SBA Administrator has led such a delegation to the Republic of Ireland and the first time American firms have gone to Ireland under the U.S./Ireland Business Partnership Initiative.

**“Our goal for the mission is to secure substantial business partnerships between small and medium-sized American and Irish businesses,” Administrator Alvarez said. “We want to develop links between dynamic, growth-oriented Irish businesses and U.S. companies that can profit from such partnerships by accessing the European Market.**

**“We recognize that diversity, trade, and technology are sources of strength for all economies of the world,” she added. “This mission brings together all of these elements – with small business leading the way. It’s no coincidence that the companies participating in the mission are high-tech and that nine of them are women-owned and 10 are minority-owned.”**

The Strategic Partnership Development Mission is a direct result of President Clinton's White House Conference on Trade and Investment in Ireland and Northern Ireland, held in May 1995. One of the results of that meeting was a bilateral commitment to form partnerships between businesses in the U.S. and the Republic of Ireland.

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In Dublin, Administrator Alvarez will sign a new and expanded partnership agreement to increase trade opportunities for small businesses in both countries.

The agreements build on work started in November 1995, when SBA and Enterprise Ireland, an Irish government agency that is analogous to a combination of the SBA and the U.S. Department of Commerce, signed a bilateral agreement establishing a formal partnership. The SBA and Enterprise Ireland agreed to identify, contact, and screen prospective businesses in the two countries for strategic business alliances.

Under the agreement to be signed in Dublin, the SBA specifically agreed to:

- Identify small United States companies that have expressed an interest in participating in the program.
- Analyze each business in relation to a United States-Irish strategic business alliance.
- Provide the names of the interested United States businesses to Enterprise Ireland.
- Provide Enterprise Ireland with specific information on each interested U.S. business, including its alliance objectives.
- Coordinate partnership missions of Irish businesses to the U.S. and reciprocal missions of U.S. businesses to Ireland.
- Organize suitable public relations events and other activities needed to implement the initiative.
- Provide ongoing technical support to U.S. businesses to aid in implementation of the alliances.

Since the inception of the U.S./Ireland Business Partnership Initiative, the SBA and Enterprise Ireland have organized and coordinated four partnership missions of Irish businesses to the U.S. More than 100 Irish businesses have met with more than 300 U.S. businesses to discuss potential strategic partnership arrangements. So far, participants have signed 49 agreements, with more expected over the next year.

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*(List of Participating Small Businesses Attached)*

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## SMALL BUSINESSES PARTICIPATING IN THE IRELAND TRIP

Eleanor Andrews, The Andrews Group, Anchorage, AK

Fernando Ampuero and Ellison Ferrall, The Aquafuture Corp.,  
Monterey, CA

Charlie Priestley, Braswell Precision, Inc.,  
Glen Burnie, MD

Thomas B. Malone and Michael Creedon, Carlow International, Inc., Falls Church, VA

Dr. Chang Yul Cha and Song Hee Cha, CHA Corp., Laramie, WY

Richard Lowney and Linda Lowney, Clearview Software,  
Amherst, NH

Om P. Bansal, Compro Systems, Jessup, MD

Timothy Woods, Computing Made Simple, Inc., Fresno, CA

Carol Ann Hurley, EBS Econotel, East Providence, RI

Richard Lawlor, Educational Video Conferencing, Inc.  
Yonkers, NY

Karl S. Keller and Andrea Keller, Explore Reasoning Systems, Inc., Vienna, VA

Ali Nezhad, FEM Engineering, Los Angeles, CA

Salvador V. Vassallo, Industrias Vassallo, Inc.,  
Coto Laurel, PR

Lydia Vargas Fuller, INNOVA Consulting Services, Valparaiso, IN

Nikki Olyai, Innovision Technologies, Novi, MI

Dr. Charles Roos, National Recovery Technologies, Nashville, TN

Patrick O. Murphy and Victoria McCammon Murphy, Pan Atlantic, Portland, ME

Paul K. Matthias, Polaris Imaging, Inc., Narragansett, RI

Carlos Galvan, Preferred Technologies, Lebanon, NH

Harold Pachios, Preti, Flaherty Beliveau, Pachios, Portland, ME

Dr. Sheree Wen, Wen Technology, Yonkers, NY



# NEWS RELEASE

**PRESS OFFICE**

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**Contact:** D.J. Caulfield (202) 205-6740

**Release Number:** 98-101

**SBA News Releases:** [www.sba.gov/news/](http://www.sba.gov/news/)

## **SBA STARTS 13-CITY EDUCATION TOUR TO HELP DISADVANTAGED FIRMS BID ON U.S. CONTRACTS**

**WASHINGTON** --The U.S. Small Business Administration (SBA) will launch later this week a 13-city information and education tour to help thousands of disadvantaged firms gain access to or expand participation in the lucrative \$200 billion-per-year federal marketplace.

The SBA will use a series of two-day seminars to explain the steps needed to obtain federal certification as a small disadvantaged business (SDB). The series begins in Washington, D.C. on Thursday, Nov. 19.

"We plan to develop a list of perhaps 30,000 small disadvantaged businesses that will be certified and eligible to compete for government contracts," said SBA Administrator

Aida Alvarez. "I urge interested business owners to attend these two-day sessions and learn how SDB certification can enhance their opportunities for federal contracts."

In June, President Clinton announced that in his continuing effort to "mend, not end" the nation's affirmative action programs, he was creating a new system for providing small disadvantaged businesses access to federal contracts. The program offers SDBs seeking prime federal contracts a price credit of 10 percent, but to qualify they must receive certification from the SBA and be listed in the agency's on-line database, *PRO-Net*. This credit became available Oct. 1, although firms can seek SDB certification anytime.

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For many contractors, SDB certification is a new requirement, but it can lead to the 10 percent price evaluation adjustment in certain categories of federal procurement. The SBA, which began accepting applications Aug. 24, now has nearly 5,000 certified SDBs in *PRO-Net*. The list is on the Web at <http://pro-net.sba.gov>.

A program authorizing incentives to increase SDB subcontracting will become effective Jan. 1. That's when prime contractors who want to receive credit for using SDBs on federal projects must select their subcontracting partners from the SBA's specialized *PRO-Net* listing.

Seminar locations and dates are:

1998

Washington, DC

November 19/20

9  
**St. Louis, MO**

**December 8/9**

**Boston, MA**

**December 15/16**

1999

**Los Angeles/San Diego, CA**

**January 13/14**

**Philadelphia, PA**

**January 27/28**

**Orlando, FL**

**February 11/12**

**Atlanta, GA**

**February 25/26**

**Houston, TX**

**March 17/18**

**Seattle, WA**

**March 30/31**

**San Francisco, CA**

**April 15/16**

**Cleveland, OH**

**April 29/30**

**Chicago, IL**

**May 13/14**

**New York, NY**

**May 27/28**

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In addition to small business owners, federal contracting officials are invited to attend the seminars.

Participants will be charged a nominal fee to cover the cost of materials. In Washington, D.C., the fee will be \$30 for advanced registrations, and \$40 at the door. Additional information can be obtained by calling the SBA at 1-800-558-0884 or by visiting the agency's web site at <http://www.sba.gov/sdb>.

The series is being developed in cooperation with the Minority Business Enterprise Legal Defense and Education Fund, Inc. of Washington, D.C. The group's president, Anthony Robinson, is a strong advocate for minority business development and its founder, former Congressman Parren Mitchell, is a pivotal figure in the development of several national affirmative action programs.

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# NEWS RELEASE

## PRESS OFFICE

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**Contact:** Patricia L. Young (202) 205-6740

**Release No:** 98-91

**SBA News Releases:** [www.sba.gov/news/](http://www.sba.gov/news/)

### ***SBA TO ENTER PARTNERSHIP AGREEMENTS WITH OTHER FEDERAL AGENCIES TO INCREASE CONTRACTING OPPORTUNITIES FOR WOMEN***

**WASHINGTON** – In an unprecedented effort to increase government contracting opportunities for women business owners, Aída Alvarez, Administrator of the U.S. Small Business Administration (SBA), today announced partnership agreements with five federal agencies. With these agreements, each Cabinet secretary will commit to specific strategies to help reach the government-wide 5 percent contracting goal for women business owners.

“The agreements I am announcing today will provide a focused and sustained effort for increasing the participation of women-owned businesses in the federal contracting marketplace.” Administrator Alvarez said. “Women business owners get only about 2 percent of government contracts, even though they own nearly 40 percent of all small businesses.”

The first agency head to agree to the challenge was Department of Transportation Secretary Rodney Slater. Other Cabinet secretaries entering into partnership agreements with Administrator Alvarez include Secretary William Cohen, Department of Defense; Secretary Donna Shalala, Department of Health and Human Services; Secretary Madeline Albright, Department of State and Administrator David Barram,

General Services Administration. Together these agencies represent more than 65 percent of the overall \$200 billion federal contracting market.

The partnership agreements include innovative and productive ways that each agency will work to meet the 5 percent goal. Each Cabinet secretary is making a personal commitment to see that the goal is reached within his or her department and that staff, from agency heads to field personnel, is held accountable for reaching the goals.

The announcement came today during the 1998 Women's Economic Summit being held this week at the Michael D. Dingman Center for Entrepreneurship at the University of Maryland. The Summit '98 event unites entrepreneurs, corporate executives, public policy leaders, and academics to develop strategies that address the most critical initiatives for strengthening women-led businesses. The four core initiatives include financing business growth, leadership and advocacy, market opportunities, and training.

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U.S. Small Business Administration



## NEWS RELEASE

### PRESS OFFICE

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**Contact:** D.J. Caulfield (202)

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**SBA News Releases:**  
[www.sba.gov/news/](http://www.sba.gov/news/)

### *SBA's ALVAREZ SAYS SMALL BUSINESSES MUST DEAL WITH 'Y2K BUG' NOW*

## **Nearly 250 SBA events during 'Y2K Action Week'**

**WASHINGTON** – U.S. Small Business Administration (SBA) Administrator Aida Alvarez joined other senior federal officials today in calling on small business owners to take seriously the threat posed by the computer problem linked to the Year 2000, the so-called Y2K bug. The Administrator said that her agency will use "National Y2K Action Week," which runs Oct. 19 to 23, to host almost 250 seminars and workshops around the country to help firms counter the Y2K threat.

"Earlier this year, the SBA began a nationwide campaign with a simple, yet critical question: Are You Y2K OK?" said Administrator Alvarez. "That slogan is a call to action. Small business owners especially should take note. The loss of even a few days' income due to Y2K problems can be crucial to a small business. The SBA wants to do everything possible to minimize the Y2K risk."

Administrator Alvarez joined U.S. Department of Commerce Secretary William Darcy and John Koskinen, chair of the President's Council on Year 2000 Conversion, at a press conference in Washington, D.C. to preview Y2K Action Week events.

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In addition to SBA's activities, the U.S. Postal Service plans to use a special cancellation mark during the week featuring the 'Are You Y2K OK?' slogan. Also, a National Y2K Action Week poster will be hung in each post office displaying the phone number of the SBA's toll-free Answer Desk so the public can call for referrals to local events.

Administrator Alvarez said nearly all SBA district offices around the country will sponsor educational events during Y2K Action Week. In addition, the agency has called upon its vast network of resource partners to hold similar seminars and workshops. This network includes:

- 950 Small Business Development Centers
- 398 Service Corps of Retired Executive (SCORE) Chapters

- 52 Business Information Centers
- 69 Women's Business Centers
- 17 Tribal Business Information Centers
- 15 One-Stop Capital Shops

The SBA plans to hold more than 450 Y2K educational events before the end of the month. A complete listing is available at [Error! Bookmark not defined.](#)

One consulting firm, the Gartner Group, told Congress earlier this month that in the United States perhaps 15 percent of all firms will experience a mission critical system failure as a result of the Y2K bug, and that 10 percent of these failures will last three days or longer. They estimate the cost to recover from each failure could range from \$20,000 to \$3.5 million depending on the complexity. While Y2K conditions for many smaller firms have improved in recent years, said the Gartner Group, there are still "serious risks" for the U.S. and throughout the world.

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To deal with Y2K, SBA officials urge small business owners to take three immediate steps:

- **Determine your business' Y2K risk with affected hardware, software or embedded data chips. *A self-assessment test is available on the SBA's Internet Y2K web page. ([www.sba.gov/y2k](http://www.sba.gov/y2k))***
- **If you are vulnerable, take action now. Don't wait. Fix your problem and test the results. Develop contingency plans to deal with the effects of Y2K problems outside your control.**
- **Stay informed. Accurate information may change as solutions evolve.**

To keep the public informed, the SBA has instituted three procedures to obtain current Y2K information. These include a Y2K Internet home page at [www.sba.gov/y2k/](http://www.sba.gov/y2k/) and SBA's toll-free Answer Desk at **1-800-U-ASK-SBA** (1-800-827-5722). Answer Desk staff will route callers to the best sources of Y2K information. The third option is the agency's newly created fax-back system.

**To use the fax-back system:**

1. **Call this toll-free number: 1-877-RU-Y2K-OK (1-877-789-2565).**
2. **Make your selection from a menu.**
3. **Within minutes, you'll receive a fax targeted to your specific Y2K needs.**

SBA's Y2K Fax-Back can be used on touch-tone or rotary dial telephones and is available 24-hours-a-day.

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# NEWS RELEASE

## PRESS OFFICE

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**Contact:** Janie Dymond (202) 205-6746  
**SBA News Releases:** [www.sba.gov/news/](http://www.sba.gov/news/)

## **SBA ADMINISTRATOR ANNOUNCES FIRST PARTNERSHIP DEVELOPMENT MISSION TO IRELAND**

WASHINGTON – U.S. Small Business Administration (SBA) Administrator Aida Alvarez will lead the first SBA Partnership Development Mission to Ireland, December 6-9, 1998. In keeping with Ms. Alvarez's goals and priorities to help prepare small businesses for the 21<sup>st</sup> century, the SBA is encouraging small businesses to "go global" by looking to Ireland as the gateway to the European Union (EU).

"Small businesses will have an unprecedented opportunity to develop strategic partnerships with Irish companies operating in the EU. After all, Ireland is an ideal starting place for U.S. small businesses seeking to develop partnerships that can lead to profitable growth throughout Europe...Ireland is a major gateway to 370 million potential customers," stated Administrator Alvarez.

The mission of U.S. businesses to Ireland will have a high-technology focus. The mission is ideal for U.S. businesses in the following sectors: electronics, information technology, software, telecommunications, internationally traded services, biotechnology and precision manufacturing.

The focus of the December mission will be to enable U.S. businesses to develop strategic alliance relationships with dynamic Irish-based firms operating in the EU. These alliances can take on a variety of forms such as joint ventures, co-marketing, collaborative research and development, product/process licensing, technology transfer and contract manufacturing.

The SBA and Enterprise Ireland (formerly Forbairt) entered into a bilateral agreement in November 1995 as a result of President Clinton's White House Conference on Trade and Investment in Ireland.

"The SBA and the trade and technology agency of Ireland, Enterprise Ireland, have worked together for the past three years, as a result of the bilateral agreement. We have organized four successful partnership missions to the United States," stated SBA Regional Administrator Patrick McGowan, who has been spearheading the Irish Initiative for the agency. "This mission to Ireland will enable Administrator Alvarez to advocate U.S. business interests and strengthen the relationship the U.S. Small Business Administration has with Enterprise Ireland."

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According to recent statistics, firms that export experience 20 percent faster employment growth and are nine percent less likely to go out of business than non-exporting firms. Small firms employ more than half the workers involved in exporting and account for 30 percent of the dollar value of exported products.

**"It's time that America's small businesses had their fair share of opportunities in an increasingly international marketplace. The SBA has lending and technical programs as well as the needed partnerships to help small businesses succeed globally. I look forward to leading the mission to Ireland,"** Administrator Alvarez said.

The SBA is now seeking applications from U.S. small high-technology businesses that are interested in participating in this mission to Ireland. The mission will be a fast-paced, results-focused, three-day session. Each participating business will have one-on-one meetings with pre-selected Irish companies. Business briefings with senior U.S. and Irish government executives and business leaders will also be available to mission participants.

Interested businesses should contact: Robert F. Coen, U.S. Small Business Administration, (617) 565-5587 or (617) 565-5597 (fax). Applications should be submitted to Mr. Coen by October 30, 1998 to ensure sufficient time to obtain in-country appointments for applicants selected to participate in the mission. Applications received after that date will be considered only if space and scheduling constraints permit.

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# NEWS RELEASE

## PRESS OFFICE

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**Contact:** Patricia L. Young (202) 205-6740

**Release No:** 98-85

**SBA News Releases:** [www.sba.gov/news/](http://www.sba.gov/news/)

## **SBA's ONLINE WOMEN'S BUSINESS CENTER NOW AVAILABLE IN SPANISH**

**SAN ANTONIO, Texas – U.S. Small Business Administration (SBA) Administrator Aida Alvarez announced today that much of the popular Online Women's Business Center (Error! Bookmark not defined.) is now available in Spanish.**

The SBA's Online Women's Business Center is a free, interactive, full-service training site on the Internet completely devoted to the needs of women business owners. It offers beginning and existing women entrepreneurs business principles and practices, management techniques, networking, industry news, information about SBA services, market research, and technology training.

"This is *the* 21<sup>st</sup> Century high-tech tool to access information and find experts and peers who will help you navigate your way to economic independence through entrepreneurship," Administrator Alvarez said. "We felt sure this site would be a big hit with women in the United States. What we didn't expect was that, all over the world, women entrepreneurs would find it helpful, too."

"In 1991 few countries had access to the Internet. Today 90 million people in every country have access. We knew that we could not meet the needs of women in English only – in the U.S. alone, Spanish is the first language of about 18 million people," she added. "Translating SBA's Online

**Women's Business Center information into Spanish will help the SBA reach more women, help them build successful businesses, raise their standards of living, and improve their communities."**

The announcement came during Administrator Alvarez's keynote address before AVANCE, a nonprofit group that supports Hispanic families in parenting and family issues, and the White House Initiative on Educational Excellence for Hispanic Americans.

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Special features on the site include interactive mentoring and individual counseling, topic forums, news groups, and a new comprehensive state-by-state *Resource Guide*, which features a database of local tax and legal requirements, laws, and regulations.

Vice President Al Gore and Administrator Alvarez officially opened the SBA's Online Women's Business Center in January 1998. The site was developed by the North Texas Women's Business Development Center and is sponsored by IBM, JCPenney, NationsBank, GTE, and Avon.

The SBA's Online Women's Business Center uses the business expertise and best practices of the agency's 69 community-based Women's Business Centers in 38 states, the District of Columbia and Puerto Rico. These centers offer financial, management, and marketing assistance to a wide variety of geographic areas, population densities, and economic environments, including urban, suburban, and rural areas, with local economies that vary from depressed to thriving. The site's online counseling services are provided by the cyber-chapter of the Service Corps of Retired Executives (SCORE).

For more information on SBA's Online Women's Business Center, the Women's Business Center Program or other SBA programs, visit the agency's home page at **Error! Bookmark not defined.** or the Office of Women's Business Ownership home page at **Error! Bookmark not defined.** You may also call the SBA Answer Desk at 1-800-8-ASK-SBA.

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# **SBA** NEWS RELEASE

## **PRESS OFFICE**

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**Release Date:** Sept. 21, 1998

**Contact:** (202) 205-6740

**Release Number:** 98-78

**Press Release Internet Address:** [www.sba.gov/news/](http://www.sba.gov/news/)

## ***SBA DETAILS NEW CERTIFICATION PROCESS FOR SMALL DISADVANTAGED BUSINESSES***

**WASHINGTON --** The U.S. Small Business Administration (SBA) today announced details of its new program to certify firms as small disadvantaged businesses (SDBs).

The certification process is an important part of President Clinton's mandate to "mend, not end" affirmative action programs. SBA and other Clinton Administration officials discussed the program today during an interactive teleconference broadcast via satellite to over 80 cities.

**"The SBA's new certification service will help small disadvantaged companies grow and develop by participating in a marketplace worth about \$200 billion,"** said SBA Administrator Aida Alvarez.

Last summer, the Clinton Administration announced several reforms of federal procurement programs designed to expand economic opportunity for disadvantaged businesses. The reforms comply with the U.S. Supreme Court decision in *Adarand Constructors, Inc. v. Peña*, which said affirmative action programs must be narrowly targeted to remedy only the lingering effects of discrimination.

The new certification process will categorize a small business as "disadvantaged" only if an SBA review finds the firm is owned and controlled by someone who is socially and economically disadvantaged. (Companies participating in SBA's 8(a) Business Development program are already considered SDBs and won't undergo a second review.)

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The new system is expected to reduce costs, prevent fraud and abuse and ensure that the program is administered fairly.

The revised federal rules will also make it easier for business owners who aren't members of minority groups to become SDBs by demonstrating their disadvantage. In the past, the government relied on each company to "self-certify" or to truthfully identify itself as disadvantaged.

The SBA's Office of Small Disadvantaged Business Certification and Eligibility will:

- certify the ownership and control of all small companies that apply;
- decide protests and appeals;
- establish and oversee a nationwide network of private certifiers who will help SBA process applications; and,
- maintain a public on-line registry of certified SDBs for access by contracting officers and the general public.

SBA officials plan to offer more information and training on the process during a 12-city tour beginning in October.

**"The SBA has developed a certification process designed to treat small companies equitably and give them an efficient first step into the federal procurement arena,"** said

Richard Hayes, SBA's Associate Deputy Administrator for Government Contracting and 8(a) Business Development.

Once an SDB is certified and listed on the public registry, it will be eligible for preferences under new federal procurement regulations. The main preference is a "price evaluation adjustment" of up to ten percent for SDBs bidding as prime contractors. The price adjustment means an SDB won't have to be the lowest bidder to win a contract award. The rules also provide a system of preferences for large businesses that use SDBs as subcontractors.

The preferences will apply only to those industries in which disadvantaged companies are underutilized according to Department of Commerce studies. Those studies will rely on a research system known as benchmarking which determines whether SDBs are full participants in each industry's marketplace. Industry "benchmarks" will be adjusted periodically to reflect the latest procurement data.

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The price preference for some federal contracts goes into effect on October 1, and other preferences begin on January 1, 1999. Applications are available at SBA district offices nationwide or by calling the Office of Small Disadvantaged Business Certification and Eligibility at 1(800) 558-0884.

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U.S. Small Business Administration

# **SBA** NEWS RELEASE

## **PRESS OFFICE**

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**Release Date:** Sept. 18, 1998

**Contact:** Mike Stampler (202) 205-6740

**Release Number:** 98-77

**Press Release Internet Address:** [www.sba.gov/news/](http://www.sba.gov/news/)

## ***SBA LAUNCHES SMALL LOAN PROGRAMS TARGETING START UPS, 'NEW MARKETS'***

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***Streamlined Loans with Less Paperwork, Fast Turnaround, More Lenders***

**WASHINGTON – U.S. Small Business Administration (SBA) Administrator Aida Alvarez today announced that two streamlined small loan programs are expected to provide more than \$1 billion in hard-to-get small loans that will help open the doors of opportunity in "New Markets," – start-ups, women and minority-owned firms, and those in inner cities and rural areas.**

**President Clinton recognized the importance of SBA's outreach effort during a White House ceremony today, as he discussed efforts to expand economic opportunities for all Americans.**

**"SBA's small loan programs will provide many more Americans with access to the winner's circle of this new economy," said President Clinton, who spoke about the SBA initiative at an event with the Advisory Board to his Initiative on Race. "By opening doors for these new small businesses, we will help build communities, one small business at a time."**

The programs, *SBALowDoc* and *SBAExpress*, target a gap in the marketplace for small business loans under \$150,000. These two programs make it easier and more attractive for lenders to make smaller SBA-backed loans.

Administrator Alvarez added: "These loan programs will benefit all small businesses, but they will be especially helpful for small businesses in inner cities and rural communities, including firms owned by women, African-Americans, Hispanic Americans, Native Americans, and other minorities – firms that make up what we call 'New Markets.'

"*SBAExpress* and *SBALowDoc* will help us to narrow the opportunity gap, and will serve as a cornerstone of SBA's ongoing transformation into a stronger, more responsive, more user-friendly, and more streamlined 21<sup>st</sup> century leading edge financial institution," said Ms. Alvarez.

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"SBA has streamlined for success – the success of small businesses all over America," she said. "These programs are fast and easy for both lenders and borrowers."

The major new features of these two loan programs are:

- *SBALowDoc* – SBA will increase the loan ceiling from \$100,000 to \$150,000, assure a 36-hour turn-around on loan applications, simplify the process for participating lenders and borrowers and provide systematic reconsideration of all loans that are not approved as submitted.
- *SBAExpress* – SBA will make the three-year-old FASTRAK pilot program available to as many as 500 additional lenders under the new name *SBAExpress*. SBA will increase the loan ceiling from \$100,000 to \$150,000, assure a 36-hour turnaround on applications, push for installation of electronic application systems by April 1999, and offer a new revolving credit feature.

The revolving credit feature in *SBAExpress* is the agency's response to one of the top recommendations last year from a series of forums sponsored by SBA, the National Women's

Business Council and the Federal Reserve Bank on access to capital for women-owned businesses.

In *SBAExpress*, SBA relies completely on the lender's credit analysis, while in *SBALowDoc*, the agency relies heavily on the lender's credit analysis. These policies are in keeping with SBA's overall loan program re-invention strategy, which encourages greater reliance on private sector resources and expertise. Processing of *SBALowDoc* and *SBAExpress* applications has been centralized, and *SBALowDoc* will rely more on automated processing systems and credit scoring.

The *SBALowDoc* program was first launched as a pilot in December 1993 under the leadership of then SBA Administrator Erskine Bowles.

**"*SBALowDoc* has accomplished exactly what we asked it to accomplish," Administrator Alvarez said. "By streamlining the application process and relying on a simplified credit analysis, *SBALowDoc* has created a marketplace for smaller commercial loans where one did not exist in the past."**

The improved *SBALowDoc* program continues to feature a one-page application. Applicants will, of course, continue to provide additional information required by private lenders participating in the loan guaranty program.

Both programs will offer short-term and long-term loans, and SBA will encourage lenders to use *SBAExpress* to provide revolving credit loans.

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*SBAExpress*, a pilot program begun under the name FASTRAK in February 1995, allows participating lenders to use their own forms and procedures and to apply an SBA guarantee to a

loan without prior credit review by SBA. In return for this flexibility, participating lenders agree to accept a maximum loan guaranty of 50 percent.

The SBAExpress program widens the pilot program from the original 18 lenders to as many as 500 or more additional lenders – the better performing lenders participating in the agency's Preferred Lenders Program (PLP), as well as selected non-PLP lenders in some areas.

**"These new small loan programs will play an important role in helping SBA meet its aggressive outreach goals over the next two years," Administrator Alvarez said. "By making small loans more accessible to those New Market firms that need them, we are taking a major step forward to position SBA and the nation's entire small business community for the new economy of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. At the SBA, we are streamlining and partnering for greater small business success than ever before."**

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# NEWS RELEASE

## PRESS OFFICE

Release Date: Sept. 2, 1998  
Release Number: 98-74

Contact: D.J. Caulfield (202) 205-6740  
Press Release Internet Address: [www.sba.gov/news/](http://www.sba.gov/news/)

## ***SBA ANNOUNCES PILOT PROJECT TO BOOST FEDERAL CONTRACTS TO "VERY SMALL BUSINESSES"***

WASHINGTON – Small businesses with fewer than 15 employees will get the first shot at federal contracts under \$50,000 in 10 regions around the country under a new U.S. Small Business Administration (SBA) pilot program announced today by SBA Administrator Aida Alvarez.

"Today's announcement strengthens SBA's commitment to help the nation's smallest businesses get a foot in the doorway of the \$200 billion federal marketplace for goods and services," Administrator Alvarez said. "These emerging businesses are proven job creators, but they have been inhibited by their size in competing for lucrative federal contracts. Now we're going to see what happens when they get the first shot."

The regulations governing the Very Small Business Set-Aside Pilot Program were published today in the *Federal Register*. The pilot is to last until Sept. 30, 2000.

The rules define a "very small business" as one with 15 or fewer employees together with less than \$1 million in average annual receipts. Federal contracts ranging in size from \$2,500 to \$50,000 for those businesses are to be set aside for those businesses, if certain conditions are met.

Under the pilot program, federal procurement contracts between \$2,500 and \$50,000 must be set aside and reserved for very small businesses if:

- The contract activity – whether it involves the sale of goods or of services – will be performed in one of the 10 geographical areas included in the pilot, and
- There is a reasonable expectation of obtaining competitive bids from two or more responsible very small businesses that are headquartered in that same geographical area.

In FY 1997, there were 247,381 federal contracts under \$50,000. They had a total dollar value of nearly \$5.2 billion, and amounted to about 2 percent of all federal contracts.

The program is being piloted in the areas served by SBA district offices in Albuquerque, NM; Los Angeles, CA; Boston, MA; Louisville, KY; Columbus, OH; New Orleans, LA; Detroit, MI; Philadelphia, PA; El Paso, TX, and Santa Ana, CA. A list of the areas covered by these SBA field offices is attached.

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**AREAS INCLUDED IN PILOT DISTRICTS**

**Albuquerque:** the entire state of New Mexico

**Los Angeles:** counties of Los Angeles, Santa Barbara and Ventura \*

**Boston:** the entire state of Massachusetts

**Louisville:** the entire state of Kentucky

**Columbus:** the Ohio counties of Adams, Allen, Ashland, Athens, Auglaize, Belmont, Brown, Butler, Champaign, Clark, Clermont, Clinton, Coshocton, Crawford, Darke, Delaware, Fairfield, Fayette, Franklin, Gallia, Greene, Guernsey, Hamilton, Hancock, Hardin, Highland, Hocking, Holmes, Jackson, Knox, Lawrence, Licking, Logan, Madison, Marion, Meigs, Mercer, Miami, Monroe, Montgomery, Morgan, Morrow, Muskingum, Noble, Paulding, Perry, Pickaway, Pike, Preble, Putnam, Richland, Ross, Scioto, Shelby, Union, Van Wert, Vinton, Warren, Washington and Wyandot

**New Orleans:** the entire state of Louisiana

**Detroit:** the entire state of Michigan

**Philadelphia:** the entire state of Delaware and the Pennsylvania counties of Adams, Berks, Bradford, Bucks, Carbon, Chester, Clinton, Columbia, Cumberland, Dauphin, Delaware, Franklin, Fulton, Huntingdon, Juniata, Lackawanna, Lancaster, Lebanon, Lehigh, Luzerne, Lycoming, Mifflin, Monroe, Montgomery, Montour, Northampton, Northumberland, Philadelphia, Perry, Pike, Porter, Schuylkill, Snyder, Sullivan, Susquehanna, Tioga, Union, Wayne, Wyoming and York

**El Paso:** the Texas counties of Brewster, Culberson, El Paso, Hudspeth, Jeff Davis, Pecos, Presidio, Reeves and Terrell

**Santa Ana:** the California counties of Orange, Riverside and San Bernardino\*

\* For the purposes of the pilot program, the areas covered by the Los Angeles and Santa Ana district offices will be considered to be a single geographical area.

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U.S. Small Business Administration

# SBA NEWS

## RELEASE

### PRESS OFFICE

Release Date: August 5, 1998 Contact: Patricia L. Young (202) 205-6740

Release No. 98-69 SBA NEWS: [www.sba.gov/news/](http://www.sba.gov/news/)

### *SBA ADMINISTRATOR ANNOUNCES NEW INITIATIVES TO HELP NATIVE AMERICAN COMMUNITIES*

WASHINGTON - Alda Alvarez, Administrator for the U.S. Small Business Administration (SBA), today announced several new initiatives aimed at enhancing Native American participation in the agency's entrepreneurial development programs.

"The SBA is committed to building better understanding and more solid working relationships between tribal governments and private industry," Administrator Alvarez said. "That's why I am announcing several new SBA initiatives aimed at enhancing our presence in and relationship with the Native American community. These new initiatives will help Native Americans succeed in small business and build their communities."

The new initiatives include:

- A \$700,000 enhancement of the Tribal Business Information Center Program that will cover operating expenses for counseling and training. The centers will provide one-on-one technical assistance to tribal entrepreneurs, as well as HUBZone Empowerment Contracting Opportunity training. They will also facilitate relationships between tribal reservations and SBA's district offices, banks, and other local community business resources.
- Native American Procurement Initiative. This initiative will target contracting assistance to reservation-based Native American firms to help them access federal contracting opportunities.

- A study to evaluate the business practices of Native American small business owners in North and South Dakota. Information from the study will help the agency better serve these and other tribal communities.
- Establishment of a Native American National Advisory Committee at the SBA. This committee will advise SBA program managers on how they can better serve the Native American community. The committee will also encourage Native American participation in the agency's Welfare-to-Work program.

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- Expansion of SBA's Office of Native American Affairs. Administrator Alvarez announced the appointment of Rhonda Whiting as program manager to implement the agency's new initiatives for the Native American community. Ms. Whiting comes to the SBA with extensive experience in Native American issues and is herself a Native American from the Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes of Montana.

The announcement came at this week's "Building Economic Self-Determination in Indian Communities" conference. The two-day conference is an inter-agency effort to develop strategies for building strong economic and business opportunities for Native American communities.

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# NEWS RELEASE

## PRESS OFFICE

Release Date: July 30, 1998  
Release Number: 98-68

Contact: Mike Stamler (202) 205-6740  
Press Release Internet Address: [www.sba.gov/news/](http://www.sba.gov/news/)

### ***VICE PRESIDENT GORE PRAISES SBA FOR EXPANDING ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITY; CONGRATULATES AGENCY ON 45<sup>th</sup> BIRTHDAY***

**WASHINGTON** -- Vice President Al Gore congratulated the U.S. Small Business Administration on its 45<sup>th</sup> birthday. He praised the Agency as one of the government's most innovative and cost-effective tools in paving the way for economic development and new opportunity.

"Pound for pound, the SBA does more to help Americans get into the winner's circle of this new economy," the Vice President said during remarks in New Hampshire Wednesday. "I believe we must use today's prosperity to expand that winner's circle and open the doors of opportunity wider than they've ever been opened before. That's the SBA's mission, and it is a mission it performs admirably."

Administrator Alvarez added: "SBA is already the government's most cost-effective instrument for economic development. Our track record confirms that. But we can do better. We must become more effective and efficient, more user-friendly, more customer-oriented. And we are going to do that."

Since President Eisenhower signed SBA into existence on July 30, 1953, SBA has delivered more than 22 million direct or guaranteed loans to small businesses.

**SBA's current business loan portfolio of more than 500,000 loans, worth approximately \$39 billion, makes it the single largest financial backer of small businesses in the nation.** This is a far cry from the \$35 million SBA loaned to businesses during its first year of operation in 1953.

Over the past 45 years, SBA has grown in terms of total assistance provided and also in its array of programs. In addition to its primary business 7(a) and 504 loan guarantee programs, SBA now offers financial and federal contract procurement assistance, management assistance, specialized outreach to women, minorities and veterans, and advice and assistance to small business owners in international trade.

The SBA also provides loans to victims of tornadoes, floods, earthquakes and other natural disasters. This program has grown dramatically in 45 years. In its first year, SBA made 26 disaster loans totaling \$1.8 million. Last year, the agency made 49,515 such loans, amounting to \$1.1 billion.

SBA is currently focusing on three themes that Administrator Alvarez believes are crucial to small business success in the 21<sup>st</sup> century: diversity, technology and globalization.

As the face of America changes, bringing more minorities and women into the business community, SBA has pledged to sharply increase lending activity to these groups. Administrator Alvarez has announced minority lending initiatives aimed at tripling the number of loans to Hispanic-Americans by the year 2000 from 1992 and quadrupling the number of loans to African-Americans in the same period.

**In technology, SBA has launched a series of online services for small businesses. The Agency is also helping entrepreneurs learn more about technology in business. One example is ACE-Net, SBA's Internet site that links investors with newly emerging small businesses.**

With 95 percent of the world's population and two-thirds of its purchasing power located outside the United States, SBA has also developed services to promote small business exports. For example, 19 U.S. Export Assistance Centers located throughout the nation provide one-stop access to all export promotion and finance activities of the federal government.

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U.S. Small Business Administration



## *NEWS RELEASE*

### **PRESS OFFICE**

Release Date: July 16, 1998 Contact: Mike Stamler (202) 205-6740

Release Number: 98-62 Press Release Internet Address: [www.sba.gov/news/](http://www.sba.gov/news/)

### ***VICE PRESIDENT GORE ANNOUNCES***

### ***NATIONAL EXPANSION OF SBA PRE-QUALIFICATION LOAN PROGRAM***

**WASHINGTON - Vice President Al Gore today announced an innovative SBA loan program designed to increase lending to women, minorities and other targeted groups. With the new SBA Pre-Qualification loan program, small business owners can pre-qualify for a loan backed by the SBA before approaching a lender.**

The Vice President made the announcement today in Atlanta during the 89<sup>th</sup> national convention of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP). The changes will improve and expand the SBA's Minority and Women's Pre-Qualification pilot programs, and make the enhanced program available to every SBA field office nationwide.

For all our progress, we know that too many Americans never get into the winner's circle of this new economy," Vice President Gore said. "I believe we must use today's prosperity to expand that winner's circle by closing the opportunity gap in our workplaces. This SBA initiative will help."

SBA Administrator Aida Alvarez pointed out that "the Pre-Qualification program was developed to encourage lenders to make small business loans to those small business owners that often have difficulty in obtaining loans. We also provide one-on-one assistance to small business owners as they try to maneuver through the process of getting a loan from a lender."

Under SBA's Pre-Qualification Loan Program, selected non-profit and for-profit groups work with small business loan applicants one-on-one to develop viable business plans and credible loan packages. Once SBA finds the borrower to be eligible and creditworthy, it issues a pre-qualification letter to lenders indicating that the application appears appropriate for an SBA loan

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guaranty. The loan applicant takes that letter, along with a completed loan package, to a commercial lender to apply for a loan of up to \$250,000 backed by an SBA guaranty. SBA approval decisions reflect normal loan standards and are based on the borrower's key financial ratios, cash flow, business and credit history and repayment ability.

In the usual SBA loan process, applicants apply directly to a commercial lender before seeking an SBA guaranty, and SBA never sees the application unless the lender determines that it can approve the loan only with SBA's backing. The new pre-qualification process allows SBA to provide a loan commitment letter before a small business approaches a commercial lender.

SBA can guarantee up to 80 percent of a loan up to \$100,000, and up to 75 percent of larger loans, with the maximum loan size of \$250,000. Small business owners and entrepreneurs who want to know more about applying for a loan under the program should contact the nearest SBA field office.

SBA originally launched a Women's Pre-Qualification Loan Pilot Program in June 1994, at 16 locations scattered around the country. A Minority Pre-Qualification Loan Pilot Program was launched in 16 SBA districts in April 1995. The women's program was expanded in 1997 and offered to all field offices, based on field office assessments of whether the program was appropriate for the local market. Fifty of SBA's 69 district offices have adopted it. The new Pre-Qualification Program will combine these two existing programs, expand the effort to include veterans, exporters, certain specialized industries and rural small business owners, and be made available in all district offices.

During the pilot, more than 2,220 pre-qualification loan applications have been prepared and submitted to SBA. Of those, 1,460 received SBA commitment letters and more than 1,100 have received SBA-backed loans. Of those, 818 loans valued at \$80 million were for women, and 284 loans, valued at \$32 million, were made to minority-owned firms. Some applicants subsequently qualified for loans under other SBA programs, and others received loans from lenders without SBA backing.

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U.S. Small Business Administration



## NEWS RELEASE

### PRESS OFFICE

Release Date: July 6, 1998 Contact: Mike Stamler (202) 205-6740

Release Number: 98-58 Press Release Internet Address: [www.sba.gov/news/](http://www.sba.gov/news/)

## ***SBA-AID AGREEMENT COULD SPUR U.S. SMALL BUSINESS TRADE WITH DEVELOPING NATIONS***

WASHINGTON - U.S. Small Business Administration (SBA) Administrator Aida Alvarez today heralded an agreement between SBA and the U.S. Agency for International Development (AID) on linking small business exporters with SBA programs and services and increasing federal support for U.S. small business trade opportunities in developing countries.

The Memorandum of Understanding with AID is to be signed by Administrator Alvarez and AID Administrator Brian Atwood Tuesday during the InterAmerican Development Bank's Roundtable on Small and Medium Enterprises.

"Every day, in ways we could not have imagined, technology is establishing new connections, turning our world literally into a global village," Administrator Alvarez said. "We must be able to capitalize on the opportunities presented by this transformation to increase U.S. small business involvement in international trade. This agreement will help us do that."

Under the agreement, SBA will access AID's Global Technology Network (GTN), a database of international trade leads and U.S. companies that have shown interest in gaining overseas contracts with governments and foreign businesses. SBA and its resource partners - including U.S. Export Assistance Centers and Small Business Development Centers that specialize in international trade - will provide technical follow-up assistance to U.S. small businesses that express an interest in particular GTN trade leads to ensure that they have access to helpful SBA finance and advisory programs, as well as assistance from other U.S. government agencies.

Today at the two-day conference, Administrator Alvarez spoke of the role of small businesses in the U.S. economy and of SBA's supporting role in promoting small business growth. She urged nearly 40 international conferees - mostly from South and Central American nations - to emulate the SBA's successful methods of promoting and strengthening small business growth.

"It is difficult to overstate the importance of small business in the United States," Administrator Alvarez said. "In practical economic terms, small business is the engine of job creation. Since President

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Clinton took office, the economy has created 16 million new jobs - 80 percent of those jobs were created by small business.

"The nation's economic and political climate encourages small business formation and personal commitment. I believe in free markets, minimal barriers to entry, equal access to capital, and regulations that don't overly impede business growth."

Administrator Alvarez cited SBA's role as the government's primary lender helping citizens and businesses recover from natural disasters, as a guarantor of credit for small businesses that often don't fit the conventional credit pattern required by private lenders, as a source of technical and managerial assistance, and as a catalyst for outreach efforts increasing economic development among minority and women entrepreneurs.

"The Small Business Administration supports all of America's 23 million small businesses," she said. "SBA is their advocate in the federal government. SBA brings small business issues to the highest levels of decision-making in the federal government - regulatory fairness, taxation, and health and safety in the workplace.

"With the ever-expanding global marketplace, SBA's support and advocacy has to take a broader focus. SBA must look beyond its domestic borders to provide essential service to its small business clients. SBA's support includes innovative programs in export financing and the development of international strategic alliances designed to help fortify the small business sector."

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U.S. Small Business Administration



## NEWS RELEASE

### PRESS OFFICE

Release Date: June 29, 1998 Contact: Patricia L. Young (202) 205-6740

Release No. 98-55 SBA NEWS: [www.sba.gov/news/](http://www.sba.gov/news/)

## SBA WEB SITE OFFERS NEW COMPREHENSIVE GUIDE FOR BUSINESS RESOURCES AND INFORMATION

WASHINGTON - Need business-related legal advice? Have environmental and safety questions about your industry? Not sure where to go to get the necessary licenses and permits for your business? These answers and more are just a mouse click away in the new *Resource Directory* on the U.S. Small Business Administration's Online Women's Business Center Internet site ([www.onlinewbc.org](http://www.onlinewbc.org)).

The new *Resource Directory* is a comprehensive and easily accessible, state-by-state business-information site that eliminates the rigorous process of locating information and local resources essential to starting and operating a successful business.

"We are excited about our comprehensive new resource guide," said Sherrye Henry, assistant administrator for the SBA's Office of Women's Business Ownership. "If you need information about local permits or regulations, just look it up. Accounting, taxes, business hotlines? Your nearest SBA district office? Local business organizations? They're all right here. It's one-stop shopping for everything you need to start and run a business, and it's right at your fingertips, any time, day or night."

The *Resource Directory* provides information relative to each state in the following categories:

legal assistance

taxes

accounting

insurance

licenses and permits

environmental and safety regulations

employment

financial assistance

procurement

certification

business management

women's business organizations

state Internet sites

business hotlines

links to SBA services

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Women entrepreneurs can quickly choose a state and a category to find specific resources located in their areas. The site includes the name, address and phone number for the resource organization and a description of the services it provides.

Information for the *Resource Directory* is provided by the SBA's network of more than 60 women's business centers nationwide and the women's business ownership representatives located in each SBA district office across the country.

The Online Women's Business Center is a free, interactive web site that offers women who want to start or grow businesses information on best business principles and practices, management techniques, networking, industry news, market research and more.

For more information on other SBA programs and services, contact the SBA Answer Desk at 1-800-8-ASK-SBA or visit the agency's web site at [www.sba.gov](http://www.sba.gov).

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*The U.S. Small Business Administration, established in 1953, provides financial, technical and management assistance to help Americans start, run, and grow their businesses. With a portfolio of business loans, loan guarantees and disaster loans worth more than \$45 billion, the SBA is the nation's largest single financial backer of small businesses. Last year, the SBA offered management and technical assistance to more than one million small business owners. The SBA also plays a major role in the government's disaster relief efforts by making low-interest recovery loans to both homeowners and businesses.*

*America's 23 million small businesses employ more than 50 percent of the private workforce, generate more than half of the nation's gross domestic product, and are the principal source of new jobs in the U.S. economy.*

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U.S. Small Business Administration



## NEWS RELEASE

### PRESS OFFICE

Release Date: June 26, 1998 Contact: Jeanne Saddler (202) 205-6740

Release No. 98-54 Release Internet Address: [www.sba.gov/news/](http://www.sba.gov/news/)

## ***SBA COMPLETES MOVE TO STRENGTHEN 8(a) BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM***

### ***Agency Gears Up for Certification of Disadvantaged Firms***

WASHINGTON - Administrator Aida Alvarez of the U.S. Small Business Administration (SBA) today announced final regulations to strengthen and improve the 8(a) business development program that serves disadvantaged firms. The rules package will appear in the *Federal Register* early next week.

"I am particularly proud of the steps being taken by the SBA to strengthen and improve the 8(a) program," said Administrator Alvarez. "8(a) is a business development program that has proven its value time and again."

SBA's 8(a) program, named for a section of the Small Business Act, is a business development initiative that helps socially and economically disadvantaged American citizens gain access to the economic mainstream. Many of the more than 6,000 participating firms are minority-owned businesses. In fiscal year 1997, the program accounted for \$6.4 billion in federal contracting.

The final version of the 8(a) reform package retains the four main objectives outlined late last year when the proposed rules were first announced. They:

- Create a mentor-protégé program encouraging private-sector relationships;
- Enhance the ability of 8(a) and other small businesses to obtain large prime contracts and overcome the effects of contract bundling by allowing small businesses to affiliate in joint ventures;
- Provide a more equitable distribution of 8(a) contracting opportunities through caps on sole-source (non-competitive) contracts; and
- Revise the standard for social disadvantage, one of the two requirements for admittance into the program, so it conforms to the Justice Department's post-Adarand guidelines.

-MORE-

## SBA 98-54 / Page 2

The reforms also ease the procedure under which SBA delegates to other federal agencies elements of its 8(a) contracting authority. This delegation reduces the duplication of efforts that can slow the procurement process. It also allows the contracting agency to deal more directly with the 8(a) firm supplying goods or services, reducing the SBA's role as an intermediary.

Through the 8(a) program, SBA has enhanced the viability of thousands of firms, helping them provide employment to more than 175,000 American workers. The program generates subcontracting opportunities for other businesses and additional customers for the nation's suppliers. Above all, the 8(a) program has provided an avenue for disadvantaged Americans to achieve entrepreneurial success and contribute to the strength and vigor of our economy.

In a related development, SBA is preparing for its new role in certifying small disadvantaged businesses (SDBs) other than 8(a) firms that are interested in doing work for the federal government. The goal is to ensure that only qualified companies benefit from the series of affirmative action contracting reforms announced this week by President Clinton. One such reform is a price evaluation adjustment that will be available to SDBs in targeted industries that reflect the ongoing effects of discrimination.

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## ARE YOU Y2K OK?

*The Year 2000 computer problem is a potential risk for every U.S. small business.*  
SBA urges small business owners to:

- Assess business environments for Y2K risk.
- Take action now to address Y2K exposure.
- Stay informed in the months ahead.

SBA's Internet Website ([www.sba.gov/y2k](http://www.sba.gov/y2k)) has helpful information plus links to other useful Y2K sources.

U.S. Small Business Administration



## NEWS RELEASE

### PRESS OFFICE

Release Date: June 11, 1998 For Further Information: D.J. Caulfield (202) 205-6740

Release No. 98-49 News Release Internet Address: [www.sba.gov/news/](http://www.sba.gov/news/)

## ***SBA FINALIZES HUBZone REGULATIONS***

### ***Procurement Council Must Blend SBA HUBZone Rules Into Existing Regulations Before Program Can Begin***

WASHINGTON -- The U.S. Small Business Administration (SBA) today published regulations providing the operational framework for the HUBZone Empowerment Contracting Program. The program is designed to promote business and job opportunity in economically-distressed urban and rural areas by increasing federal contracting activity in those areas.

The regulations appeared in today's *Federal Register* and reflect public comments received during April when the regulations were first proposed. The Federal Acquisition Regulatory Council now has 180 days to change existing procurement regulations to incorporate the HUBZone rules. Under this timeline, HUBZone contracts could surface early in fiscal year 1999, perhaps by this coming December.

"SBA is very excited about the potential for this new program, using federal contracts to stimulate business activity," said SBA Administrator Aida Alvarez. "The HUBZone program will create jobs and investments in the areas that need assistance most -- the economically distressed regions of our country. In five years, it's estimated that the pool of available contracts will grow to around \$6 billion annually."

The increased contracting available to HUBZone firms is expected to create several thousand new

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jobs in the first year of the program, as well as promote private-sector investment. The new

workers will be employed by qualified small businesses located in HUBZones (Historically Underutilized Business zones), which are areas of generally low income and high unemployment.

HUBZones are located in more than 7,000 urban census tracts, in 900 mostly rural counties, and on every federally-recognized Native American reservation. Census tracts are areas that range in population from 2,000 to 8,000 persons.

Under the HUBZone legislation, many federal contracts are more likely to be awarded to small businesses in HUBZones. To qualify, a small business' principal office must be in a HUBZone and at least 35 percent of its employees must reside in a HUBZone. The firm must also be completely owned and controlled by U.S. citizens. Contracts reserved for HUBZone firms can be awarded through competition limited to qualified HUBZone firms or on a sole-source basis. Another option allows contracting officers to give HUBZone firms a price preference in bidding open to non-HUBZone firms.

The SBA has created an interactive Internet web page that identifies HUBZones by state, county and specific address. ([www.sba.gov/hubzone](http://www.sba.gov/hubzone))

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U.S. Small Business Administration



# NEWSRELEASE

SBA Number: 98-24 [www.sba.gov](http://www.sba.gov)

For release: Contact: D.J. Caulfield (202) 205-6740

May 6, 1998 [david.caulfield@sba.gov](mailto:david.caulfield@sba.gov)

## ***SBA STREAMLINES 8(a) CONTRACTING***

### ***Reports Another \$6.4 Billion Year for 8(a)***

WASHINGTON -- U.S. Small Business Administration (SBA) Administrator Aida Alvarez took a major step to make the 8(a) business development program stronger and better for the 21<sup>st</sup> century by signing "delegation of authority" agreements with 25 federal agencies that will substantially streamline the program's contracting process.

SBA's 8(a) program helps small disadvantaged businesses compete for federal contracts. Up to now, SBA has acted as "middleman" when federal agencies contracted with 8(a) firms for goods and services. Now, following a successful pilot project between the Department of Transportation (DOT) and SBA, the agencies will work more directly with 8(a) firms.

"Today's action makes good sense and will help our small businesses grow," Vice President Al Gore said. "These are the kinds of straightforward, easy to use government services the American people want."

"This agreement represents 're-inventing government' at its best," said Administrator Alvarez. "It makes 8(a) contracting easier and it will make the 8(a) program stronger and better. SBA can now devote more time and resources to business development services for 8(a) firms. It's a big win-win for the 8(a) business community and for the federal government."

Transportation Secretary Rodney Slater said the SBA-DOT pilot program has worked well. "The immediate and most visible benefit has been a major reduction in the time required to award these

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contracts," said Secretary Slater. "DOT obligated \$28 million in FY97 using the streamlined contracting process. The face value of the contracts was significantly higher. Approval time for agency offers for sole source awards has generally been reduced from several weeks to five days."

In a related announcement, SBA reported that the 8(a) program accounted for \$6.4 billion in federal contracting for fiscal year 1997, or nearly 3.5 percent of overall federal procurement.

"This is the third consecutive year that 8(a) contracting has achieved this level. That's a significant achievement at a time when the federal government is getting smaller and buying less," Administrator Alvarez said.

The SBA's 8(a) program, named for a section of the Small Business Act, is a business development initiative that helps socially and economically disadvantaged American citizens gain access to the economic mainstream. More than 6,000 firms currently participate and they employ nearly 179,000 workers. By law, the SBA must function as an intermediary for 8(a) contracts, but can delegate its authority through special agreements.

The agencies signing delegation of authority agreements with the SBA today are:

Agency for International Development

Consumer Product Safety Commission

Department of Agriculture

Department of Commerce

Department of Defense

Department of Energy

Department of Health and Human Services

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Department of Housing and Urban Development

Department of the Interior

Department of Justice

Department of Labor

Department of State

Department of Treasury

Department of Veterans Affairs

Environmental Protection Agency

Executive Office of the President

**Federal Emergency Management Agency**

**General Services Administration**

**National Aeronautics and Space Administration**

**National Archives and Records Administration**

**Nuclear Regulatory Commission**

**Office of Personnel Management**

**Smithsonian Institution**

**Social Security Administration**

**United States Information Agency**

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U.S. Small Business Administration



## NEWS RELEASE

### PRESS OFFICE

Release Date: May 14, 1998 For Further Information: Mike Stamler (202)205-6740 Release No. 98-26 News Release Internet Address: [www.sba.gov/news/](http://www.sba.gov/news/)

### ***SBA STREAMLINES "504" PROGRAM, EXPANDS LOCAL VOICE IN COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT LOAN PROCESS***

WASHINGTON - U.S. Small Business Administration (SBA) Administrator Aida Alvarez today announced steps to streamline the SBA's "504" Loan Program and simplify the loan approval process by expanding the Premier Certified Lender Program (PCLP).

Administrator Alvarez said that SBA would extend eligibility for PCLP status to all Certified Development Companies (CDCs) after a 30-month pilot that tested the idea with 13 CDCs. CDCs are community-based nonprofit corporations that work with SBA and private sector lenders to provide long-term fixed asset financing to small businesses.

"This step will help us increase small businesses' access to capital by streamlining our loan programs," Ms. Alvarez said. "It continues our efforts to strengthen and improve our loan programs, and make them more customer-friendly. The pilot has shown us that this approach speeds up the loan process and gives local decision-makers more authority and control over what is happening in their own communities. It also increases the flow of capital to small businesses that are creating jobs and contributing to the continuing expansion of the national economy."

The changes, drafted in accordance with legislation adopted last December, were published last week in the *Federal Register* as an interim final rule. The rule makes all 280 Certified Development Companies participating in the SBA's 504 loan program eligible to apply for PCLP status.

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Page 2/two

The program provides small businesses with long-term fixed-rate financing for major fixed assets, such as land, buildings and machinery and equipment. Typically,

a 504 project combines a loan from a commercial lender covering up to 50 percent of the project cost, a contribution by the borrower of at least 10 percent, and a loan funded through the sale of 100 percent SBA-backed securities for the remaining amount.

Under the interim final rule published last week, PCLPs will agree to share the risks of loan-making in exchange for the SBA delegating authority to the lender for authorizing, closing and servicing loans. SBA's involvement in the process will be limited to making an eligibility determination.

The program is modeled on the SBA's successful Preferred Lender Program for 7(a) general business loans, which now accounts for a third of all SBA-guaranteed loans.

A CDC that wants to become a PCLP must establish loss reserves in the amount of historic loss rates or 10 percent of exposure, whichever is greater, and be evaluated on the quality of its past loan performance.

Loans approved under the PCLP program will be subject to the same terms and conditions as other 504 loans. In recent months, the 13 CDCs participating in the PCLP pilot program - established in October 1995 - have made more than five percent of the 504 loans approved by SBA during that period. The entire 504 program produced 4,130 loans amounting to more than \$1.44 billion in FY 1997.

Also last week, the SBA proposed for comment a second package of regulations affecting the 504 loan program. Published in the *Federal Register* on May 5, the regulations are largely technical in nature.

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*Page 3/three*

The comment period for these proposed rules extends until July 6. The proposed rule changes would:

- Permit two or more small businesses to borrow together to finance a single fixed asset project.
- Allow small business borrowers in the program to finance CDC attorney's fees related to a 504 debenture closing, up to a maximum of \$2,500.
- Permit SBA to provide financing to a borrower who will be a passive owner of a property that will be occupied by two or more unrelated small businesses.

The interim final rule on PCLPs and the proposed rules on technical changes to the 504 program can be found on the *Federal Register* Online internet site via GPO Access at [www.access.gpo.gov/su\\_docs/](http://www.access.gpo.gov/su_docs/).

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U.S. Small Business Administration



# NEWS RELEASE

## PRESS OFFICE

Release Date: May 18, 1998 For Further Information: Jeanne Saddler

(202)205-6740

Release No. 98-28 News Release Internet Address: [www.sba.gov/news/](http://www.sba.gov/news/)

## ***SBA SIGNS AGREEMENTS WITH MINORITY BUSINESS ORGANIZATIONS TO INCREASE LENDING, TECHNICAL HELP***

View [Photo #1](#), [Photo #2](#), [Photo #3](#), or [Photo #4](#).

WASHINGTON -- Aida Alvarez, Administrator of the U.S. Small Business Administration (SBA), today signed partnership agreements with three leading minority business organizations. The agreements are part of SBA's three-year Outreach Initiative designed to sharply increase the amount of financing and other technical assistance available to America's minority entrepreneurs.

The agreements are in the form of Memorandums of Understanding and represent each organization's commitment to work with the SBA to identify and serve entrepreneurs in minority communities. Signing with SBA were: the U.S. Hispanic Chamber of Commerce (USHCC), the National Black Chamber of Commerce (NBCC), and the Minority Business Enterprise Legal Defense and Education Fund (MBELDEF).

"Today we celebrate the beginning of a closer working relationship, a partnership that we expect to greatly increase SBA services to the Hispanic and African-American communities," said Administrator Alvarez.

"It is clear to me, as a Member of the President's cabinet, that SBA has a major role to play in ensuring that economic opportunities are real for all Americans. That's why one of my major goals is a dramatic increase in SBA's financial, technical and procurement assistance for women and minorities. The commitment we are making today will open doors of opportunity for years to come," Administrator Alvarez added.

NBCC President and CEO Harry Alford said, "This is the beginning of a new era in capital access and technical support for minority businesses. The National Black Chamber of

**Commerce, SBA and all interested parties will finally be able to fully perform their mission. The African-American community will prosper from this relationship."**

**Page Two/2**

**Ronald Montoya, Chairman of the U.S. Hispanic Chamber of Commerce**, said, "This partnership will set a precedent and hopefully encourage this country's leading financial corporations to begin actively targeting the growing Hispanic and minority business communities. I applaud Administrator Alvarez's commitment to minority-owned business and pledge to work closely with the SBA to ensure that this agreement is a success. Today and in the future."

**Anthony W. Robinson, President of MBELDEF**, said, "This initiative will deliver a critical tool - capital - necessary for the growth and development of minority-owned businesses. The momentum of this government-sponsored initiative cannot be understated. It should be harnessed by this community as a building block for even greater achievement."

SBA lending to African-American and Hispanic-owned businesses has more than doubled under the Clinton/Gore Administration. Administrator Alvarez has announced aggressive new three-year goals as part of SBA's Outreach Initiative.

The SBA plans to deliver \$2.5 billion worth of loans to Hispanic-owned business by the year 2000 - representing a tripling of SBA lending to Hispanics under the Clinton-Gore Administration.

The SBA has set a goal of \$1.4 billion in loans to African-American owned businesses, representing a quadrupling of loans to this community in the same period.

These agreements will:

- strengthen links between SBA and these organizations on the national and local levels;
- help increase the minority business community's access to capital and technical assistance; and,
- help small disadvantaged businesses interested in government and private sector contracting.

In January, the Administrator signed the first major partnership agreement under the Outreach Initiative, with the Texas Association of Mexican American Chambers of Commerce.

Last week, she signed a letter of intent with the National Association of Government Guaranteed Lenders. The letter is expected to lead to the signing of an MOU that would pledge SBA and the national lender organization to work together to improve capital access to underserved communities.

SBA has also signed letters of intent with the National Urban League, National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, National Bankers Association, National Association of Black Accountants, National Council of Negro Women, 100 Black Men of America, Phelps Stokes Fund, and ONE - Organization for a New Equality.

Administrator Alvarez said that the outreach effort will help SBA keep pace with the changing face of American small businesses heading into the 21<sup>st</sup> century. She noted that the latest Census Bureau figures show that the number of businesses owned by Hispanic Americans grew by 83 percent over a five-year period, and businesses held by African Americans grew by 46 percent. This compares to a 26 percent growth rate for all businesses.

**Page Three/3**

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# NEWSRELEASE

SBA Number: 98-18 [www.sba.gov](http://www.sba.gov)

For release: Contact: D.J. Caulfield (202) 205- 6740

April 2, 1998 [david.caulfield@sba.gov](mailto:david.caulfield@sba.gov)

## ***SBA PROPOSES RULES FOR HUBZones; 25,000 JOBS FORECAST FOR FIRST YEAR***

WASHINGTON - The U.S. Small Business Administration (SBA) today issued proposed rules for the HUBZone Empowerment Contracting Program that will increase federal procurement opportunities for small businesses located in economically distressed communities throughout the United States.

Increased contracting activity by HUBZone firms is expected to promote private-sector investment and create as many as 25,000 new jobs in the first year of the program. The new workers will be employed by qualified small businesses located in HUBZones (Historically Underutilized Business zones), which are areas of generally low income and high unemployment. HUBZones are located in more than 7,000 urban census tracts, in 900 mostly rural counties, and on every Native American reservation. Census tracts are areas within counties that range in population from 2,000 to 8,000 persons.

The proposed HUBZone rules were published in today's *Federal Register* and are open for public comment for 30 days. The HUBZone program is part of the Small Business Reauthorization Act signed by President Clinton on Dec. 2, 1997.

Vice President Al Gore noted that the HUBZone program builds on President Clinton's Empowerment Contracting Executive Order. "If we give people the tools to spur community collaboration and economic opportunity, we can tap the ingenuity and enthusiasm of every citizen, and

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help restore our cities and distressed areas to a level even our grandparents would be proud of," Vice President Gore said.

SBA Administrator Aida Alvarez said: "HUBZones will bring jobs and economic opportunity to communities most in need. Over the next five years, the level of annual federal contracts earmarked for small businesses in HUBZones should rise to nearly \$6 billion. This is economic empowerment in the best sense."

Under the HUBZone legislation, a specified level of federal contracts is reserved for small

businesses in HUBZones. To qualify, a small business' principal office must be in a HUBZone and at least 35 percent of its employees must reside in the zone. The firm must also be owned and controlled by a U.S. citizen. Contracts reserved for HUBZone firms can be awarded through competition limited to qualified HUBZone firms or on a sole-source basis. Another option allows contracting officers to give HUBZone firms a price preference in bidding open to non-HUBZone firms.

The SBA has created an interactive Internet web page that identifies HUBZones by state, county and specific address. The website is at: [www.sba.gov/hubzone](http://www.sba.gov/hubzone).

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U.S. Small Business Administration



## NEWSRELEASE

SBA Number: 98-17 [www.sba.gov](http://www.sba.gov)

For release: Contact: D.J. Caulfield (202) 205- 6740

April 1, 1998 [david.caulfield@sba.gov](mailto:david.caulfield@sba.gov)

### ***SBA PRAISED FOR STRATEGY IN HELPING FIRMS DEAL WITH 'Y2K' MILLENNIUM BUG***

WASHINGTON -- Small business owners concerned that their computers will malfunction as the year turns to 2000 were urged this week to look to the U.S. Small Business Administration (SBA) for help.

The newly-appointed head of the President's council dealing with what's known as the 'millennium bug,' or Y2K issue, praised the "great things" the SBA is doing to help small businesses meet the Y2K challenge. Experts are concerned that on Jan. 1, 2000, many computers will recognize 'double zero' not as 2000 but as 1900. The glitch could cause them to stop running or to start generating erroneous data.

"My visit to the Small Business Administration," said John Koskinen, "was among the most encouraging I have had thus far, because here is an agency that really is doing some great things in terms of outreach." Mr. Koskinen was selected only last month to head up the President's Council on the Year 2000 Conversion, and has been visiting various federal agencies for briefings since that time.

Mr. Koskinen joined several federal officials Tuesday, including SBA Administrator Aida Alvarez, in a White House event to discuss the status of federal efforts to deal with the Y2K situation.

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Administrator Alvarez said, "Today we are reaching out to the nation's 23 million small

businesses. Now and in the months ahead, we will provide small business owners with balanced and accurate information they need to make informed decisions on how to deal with their particular Y2K problems."

The Administrator demonstrated the easy availability of SBA's Web page, which contains vital information on the millennium issue. The agency's site is located at <http://www.sba.gov>, with a link to the Y2K area clearly marked on the opening page.

Administrator Alvarez suggested that all business owners concerned with the millennium issue conduct a self-test of their computer systems, initiate a plan of action and keep informed. She said SBA plans to launch a comprehensive public outreach effort on the Y2K issue later this year.

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# NEWSRELEASE

SBA Number: 98-14 [www.sba.gov](http://www.sba.gov)

FOR RELEASE: Contact: Patricia L. Young (202) 205- 6740

MARCH 23, 1998 [patricia.young@sba.gov](mailto:patricia.young@sba.gov)

## ***SBA ADMINISTRATOR MEETS WITH CANADIAN AMBASSADOR TO ENCOURAGE CROSS-BORDER TRADE BETWEEN WOMEN BUSINESS OWNERS***

WASHINGTON - The head of the U.S. Small Business Administration, Aida Alvarez, met recently with Canadian Ambassador Raymond Chrétien and representatives from leading women's business organizations to discuss ways to expand and improve trade opportunities for women business owners in the U.S. and Canada.

The meeting laid the groundwork for the first U.S.-Canadian Businesswomen's International Trade Summit scheduled for May 1999 in Toronto. The summit is one facet of a proposed memorandum of understanding (MOU) between the two countries that will facilitate trade for women entrepreneurs in the U.S. and Canada.

"Canada is America's largest trading partner and it is appropriate that we assist women entrepreneurs on both sides of our border to begin and increase their international trading activities," said Administrator Alvarez. "We want to begin our efforts to encourage bilateral trade and also to get the word out to American and Canadian businesswomen about all the assistance available to women going international."

Ambassador Chrétien noted that one-third of all Canadian firms are owned by women. These companies provide more jobs than the *Canadian Business Top 100 Companies* combined. "That's why the Canadian Women's International Business Initiative was created. Our goal is to encourage more American and Canadian women entrepreneurs to do more cross-border business."

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The SBA is working with the Canadian Embassy on an MOU to facilitate trade between women business owners on both sides of the border. Details of the agreement will be worked out in the next few months. In addition to establishing the international trade summit, the agreement includes plans to:

- encourage dialogue among small- and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) owned by U.S. and Canadian businesswomen;
- facilitate exchanges of leading-edge research on entry of women-owned SMEs into international markets;
- foster strategic alliances among U.S. and Canadian women business owners;
- develop focus groups of U.S. and Canadian businesswomen near border locations to discuss cross-border issues, and
- explore enhanced electronic linkages to reach out to and inform women-owned SMEs about international trade opportunities and assistance.

Canada and the U.S. enjoy the world's largest trading relationship with more than \$1 billion in goods and services crossing the border daily. Recent studies show that women-owned businesses involved in the global marketplace have higher growth rates than those not participating in international trade. Additionally, firms that

go global also experience increases in domestic trade. Fifty-two percent of women-owned firms in global trade expanded domestically, compared to 23 percent of those not exporting or importing.

"These are exciting times for women in business. Let's work together to ensure that more and more women can enter and succeed in the world of international trade," Administrator Alvarez said.

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*America's 23 million small businesses employ more than 50 percent of the private workforce, generate more than half of the nation's gross domestic product, and are the principal source of new jobs in the U.S. economy.*

U.S. Small Business Administration



# NEWSRELEASE

SBA Number: 98-12 [www.sba.gov](http://www.sba.gov)

**For release:** Contact: D.J. Caulfield (202) 205-6740

**March 5, 1998** [david.caulfield@sba.gov](mailto:david.caulfield@sba.gov)

*PRO-Net: NEW INTERNET TOOL SMOOTHES THE WAY*

*FOR SMALL BUSINESS PROCUREMENT CONTRACTS*

WASHINGTON - *Pro-Net*, a procurement-related Internet database created by the U.S. Small Business Administration (SBA), is now accepting online registration from small companies interested in doing business with the government.

*Pro-Net* is a one-stop Website open to government contractors and small businesses seeking federal, state and private contracts. It helps contracting officers fill contracts and small companies market their firms to government agencies. *Pro-Net* can be found on the SBA's Website at <http://pro-net.sba.gov>.

*Pro-Net* takes the place of the PASS (Procurement Automated Source System) procurement database, which is now defunct. *Pro-Net* has all the vendor information previously contained in PASS, plus other features and improvements.

"*Pro-Net* gives small companies an edge by providing direct online exposure to contracting officers in charge of the \$200 billion-per-year federal market," said SBA Administrator Aida Alvarez.

"Congress, with the support of SBA, recently increased the small business share of the federal market from 20 percent to 23 percent. That's \$6 billion more in small business

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contracts annually," Ms. Alvarez added. "*Pro-Net* can help small business and government make connections in this bigger marketplace."

"As the SBA prepares for the 21<sup>st</sup> century," said Ms. Alvarez, "we are creating

opportunities for America's small business community through the smart, efficient use of technology."

Already listed on Pro-Net are more than 165,000 small, disadvantaged and women-owned businesses, including the more than 6,000 firms certified under the SBA's 8(a) business development program. Companies with Internet home pages can link their site to a PRO-Net profile.

The system also can be used free of charge by small businesses looking to partner with other small firms to tackle larger, more complex contracts.

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U.S. Small Business Administration



# NEWSRELEASE

SBA Number: 98-09 [www.sba.gov](http://www.sba.gov)

For release: Contact: D.J. Caulfield (202) 205- 6740

Thursday, Feb. 19, 1998 [david.caulfield@sba.gov](mailto:david.caulfield@sba.gov)

## *VICE PRESIDENT AND SBA ADMINISTRATOR ANNOUNCE PACT WITH BIG THREE AUTOMAKERS*

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### *Agreement Will Boost Minority Small Business Contracts By \$3 Billion in Three Years*

WASHINGTON - Vice President Al Gore and Administrator Aida Alvarez of the U.S. Small Business Administration (SBA) today announced an unprecedented agreement with the "Big Three" U.S. automakers that will increase subcontracting awards to minority businesses by nearly \$3 billion over the next 3 years -- a 50 percent increase over current levels.

The agreement among SBA, General Motors Corp., Ford Motor Co. and Chrysler Corp. is an important public-private partnership that will improve opportunities for minority-owned small businesses in a major industry. It marks the first time an industrial group of this size and economic importance has engaged in a partnership with SBA.

"Right now, our economy is stronger than it has been in decades," said Vice President Gore. "As we move into the 21<sup>st</sup> Century, our challenge is to make sure that every individual, every business, and every community has a chance to thrive. That's why our new partnership with the Big Three is so significant - and that's why the leadership of the auto industry will make such a big difference. By opening the doors of opportunity wider than ever before, we can prove that our growing diversity and our growing prosperity go hand-in-hand."

SBA Administrator Aida Alvarez said: "I am very excited about this initiative. The agreement with the automakers will create expanded opportunities for an

increasingly diverse small business community. The payoff will be more business for minority suppliers and more jobs and dollars in the communities where those suppliers are located."

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The agreement is spelled out in a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) that builds on the automakers' current contracting efforts with minority suppliers. It represents a sharp increase in contract dollars flowing to small disadvantaged businesses (SDBs). *(A SDB is a small business that is owned and controlled by one or more socially-disadvantaged and economically-disadvantaged individuals.)*

The MOU also provides new private-sector contracting opportunities for firms participating in the 8(a) business development program. The 8(a) program is helping about 6,000 SBA-certified disadvantaged firms, mostly minority-owned, compete in the economic mainstream.

The agreement is designed to:

- Increase contract awards to minority and SDBs--by nearly \$3 billion over 3 years;
- Provide new business opportunities for SBA-certified 8(a) firms;
- Make more technical and developmental assistance available to SDBs; and,
- Encourage strategic alliances between minority and non-minority suppliers.

SBA Administrator Aida Alvarez said that the auto industry agreement could serve as a model for similar pacts between small business and other industry groups.

SBA's agreement with the automakers involves first-level and second-level subcontracts (known in the industry as Tier 1 and Tier 2). It helps the automakers leverage their commitment to minority businesses by encouraging first-level subcontractors to increase opportunities for minority firms when they contract out. The agreement will benefit a wide variety of small firms that supply everything from nuts and bolts to advanced computer systems.

Specific Goals of the MOU:

- General Motors will increase first-level and second-level subcontract awards to minorities and SDBs by \$1 billion, resulting in first-level subcontract awards of \$2.2 billion and second-level awards of \$800 million by the third year of the agreement (the year 2000).
- Ford will increase first-level and second-level subcontract awards by \$900 million, resulting in first-level subcontract awards of \$2.5 billion and second-level awards of \$800 million by the year 2000.
- Chrysler will increase first-level and second-level subcontract awards by \$1 billion, resulting in first-level subcontract awards of \$1.5 billion and second-level awards of \$1

billion by the year 2000.

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- The automakers will assist SBA in its 8(a) business development efforts by sponsoring at least 10 minority executives annually in executive education programs. These individuals will attend schools such as the Amos Tuck School of Business at Dartmouth and the University of Wisconsin, for a total of 30 executives over three years.

The automakers also agreed to help improve opportunities for women-owned businesses by targeting marketing and outreach efforts to women-owned businesses in the auto industry.

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U.S. SMALL BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION  
Office of Public Communications  
409 Third Street, S.W.  
Washington, DC 20416

## NEWS RELEASE

Release Date: January 5, 1998 Release No: 98-01  
For further information, contact: Patricia Young 202/205-6606  
Internet address for news releases: <http://www.sba.gov/opc>

VICE PRESIDENT AND SBA LAUNCH INTERACTIVE  
INTERNET COMMUNITY FOR WOMEN BUSINESS OWNERS

WASHINGTON - Vice President Al Gore today joined Aida Alvarez, Administrator of the U.S. Small Business Administration, in launching a new Internet site designed to help women entrepreneurs start or expand their businesses.

"By using the technology of the Internet, women nationally and globally can turn their dreams of economic independence through business ownership into a reality," said Vice President Gore. "This administration is committed to maintaining and enhancing the current economic environment that is helping millions of women-owned American businesses grow, while fostering many more new businesses."

The SBA's ONLINE WOMEN'S BUSINESS CENTER ([www.onlinewbc.org](http://www.onlinewbc.org)) is a free, interactive, training site on the World Wide Web. It offers beginning and existing women entrepreneurs business principles and practices, management techniques, networking, industry news, information about SBA services, market research, and technology training.

In an electronic ribbon-cutting ceremony at the White House today, the SBA's Online Women's Business Center was officially opened for business by Vice President Gore and SBA Administrator Alvarez. They were joined by representatives from women's and business organizations and the online center's corporate sponsors: IBM, J.C. Penney, NationsBank, GTE, and Avon.

SBA Administrator Alvarez said, "Women who dream of starting a business or who want to grow their businesses can now get the information they need with the click of a mouse. The SBA's Online Women's Business Center is a one-stop resource available anywhere in the country around the clock.

"I am committed to increasing women business owners' opportunities for success with innovations such as this online center," Alvarez continued. "My goal is to increase SBA's outreach to women, loans to women, and federal contracting opportunities for women, the fastest growing segment of the small business community."

According to figures compiled by the National Foundation of Women Business Owners, the eight million women-owned businesses in the United States employ one in every five workers, grow at a rate twice that of all businesses, and contribute \$2.3 trillion in sales and revenues to the nation's economy.

The SBA's Online Women's Business Center was developed by the North Texas Women's Business Development Center. It will train and counsel women using the business expertise and best

practices of SBA's more than 60 Women's Business Centers located in 36 states, the District of Columbia, and Puerto Rico. These community-based women's business centers offer financial, management, and marketing assistance to a wide variety of geographic areas, population densities, and economic environments including urban, suburban, and rural areas with local economies that vary from depressed to thriving.

The online center will offer a wide range of information and services to women at all levels of business development. Special features on the site include interactive mentoring and individual counseling, topic forums, newsgroups, and a resource guide with a state-by-state list of all of the professional services that women need to start and expand businesses.

For more information on SBA's Online Women's Business Center, the Women's Business Centers or other SBA programs, visit the agency's home page at [www.sba.gov](http://www.sba.gov) or the Office of Women's Business Ownership home page at [www.sba.gov/womeninbusiness](http://www.sba.gov/womeninbusiness). You may also call the SBA Answer Desk at 1-800-8-ASK-SBA.

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