



NEWS

RELEASE

PRESS OFFICE

Release Date: December 11, 2003
Information Officer

Contact: Susan Chang, Public

(714)550-7420, ext. 3808

Release Number: 03-83/04-06-1211
susan.chang@sba.gov

Internet Address:

SBA Announces the Opening of the First Women's Business Center in the Inland Empire

WASHINGTON – The U.S. Small Business Administration today announced that it is adding 11 new sites, in seven states, to the SBA's Women's Business Center (WBC) Program. WBCs provide long-term training, counseling, and mentoring services to women entrepreneurs who want to start or grow small businesses.

“Women own more than 10 million small businesses in America, and that number is growing,” SBA Administrator Hector V. Barreto said. “President Bush and I are committed to continuing to reach out to women business owners, providing them with the tools that can help them succeed. SBA's Women's Business Centers are a powerful resource for women business owners, and I am proud to announce these new openings.”

The 11 new WBC sites will share \$1,650,000 in SBA funding, to be distributed among the centers. Each site is required to match a portion of the federal funds with private contributions, and services are tailored to the community in which the WBC is located. The WBC program provides funding for an initial five-year term.

With the additional sites, the WBC program now has 91 community-based centers in 48 states, the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico, the Virgin Islands and American Samoa. Last year, the WBC program served more than 102,528 clients nationwide. The centers are located in rural, urban and suburban areas, and direct much of their training and counseling assistance toward economically disadvantaged women. They offer many innovative programs, including financial management, marketing and technical assistance, procurement training, Internet training, and mentoring in several different languages. The centers also provide specialized programs that address issues facing displaced workers or rural home-based entrepreneurs.

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

The Inland Empire Center for Entrepreneurship (IECE) at California State University San Bernardino (CSUSB) has been selected by SBA to establish a Women's Business Center program in the Inland Empire. Michelle Skiljan has been selected to direct the Inland Empire Women's Business Center (IE WBC) program. The IE WBC is based at the IECE Business Resource Center in San Bernardino, which is a collaborative effort between IECE, Arrowhead Credit Union, and the SBA. Please see the address listed below. The center will be open Monday through Friday from 8:00 am to 5:00 pm and will offer evening and weekend appointments.

Inland Empire Women's Business Center

California State University, San Bernardino
5500 University Parkway
San Bernardino, CA 92407-2397

Contact: Michelle Skiljan

Phone: (909) 890-1251

Fax: (909) 890-1538