

SBA Brings 7(j) Management Training and Technical Assistance Program Closer to Home for Convenience and Flexibility of Those Wishing to Attend

By Sam Jones, Region VII Administrator, U.S. Small Business Administration

SBA's best intensive training just got easier for our small business customers to attend.

The mission of the U.S. Small Business Administration's (SBA's) [Office of Business Development \(BD\)](#) is to assist economically and socially disadvantaged businesspersons to achieve competitive viability in the marketplace. To that end, SBA is authorized, under Section 7(j) of the Small Business Act, to enter into grants, cooperative agreements or contracts, with public or private organizations to deliver management or technical assistance to individuals and enterprises eligible for assistance under the Act.

This assistance is delivered through the 7(j) Management and Technical Assistance Program and until this fiscal year, these trainings have been available only in one location, usually on the East Coast. This year SBA will bring the mountain to Mohamed, so to speak, by spreading this free five-day training, valued between \$2,000 and \$3,000 to 18 locations across the United States. This first-of-its-kind "business boot camp" training will be available in high unemployment, low income communities to SBA 8(a) certified firms, small disadvantaged businesses, businesses operating in areas of high unemployment or low-income or firms owned by low-income individuals. And also a first, for the first time, not only a company's owner may attend, but a company may send different personnel to the various modules provided. This flexibility will enable some companies, who previously could not attend due to the length of the training and time away from their company.

The management and technical assistance will be presented in three tracks by [Alabama A&M University Research Institute \(AAMURI\)](#). The tracks are entitled management and marketing – two days; accounting and financial management – two days and a one-day track on the legal aspects of owning an SBA 8(a) certified firm for those 8(a) companies that take part in the intensive week-long training.

Additionally, an executive education program is offered for owners and senior officers of 8(a) firms to take part in intensive week-long training sessions.

The training will consist of two phases: (1) the training workshops described, and (2) the development of [Individual Business Development Plans \(IBDPs\)](#). Phase II will span over a 12 month period during which, business owners will have access to one-on-one counseling and technical assistance relating to the development of an IBDP tailored specifically to their business goals.

Locations for the training in Region VII, serving Kansas, Missouri, Nebraska, and Iowa companies, will be in Kansas City at the Ewing Marion Kauffman Foundation, 4800 Rockhill Road during the week of December 13-17, 2004, and at St. Louis Community

College campuses in Florissant Valley, Forest Park and Meramec, Missouri, from January 10-14, 2005. Reasonable accommodations for persons with disabilities will be made, if requested at least two weeks in advance of workshop.

Only 1500 companies will be trained through this program nationwide in the next fiscal year and companies interested may apply to attend at the following web address:
http://aamuri.aamu.edu/sba/sba_index.htm.

We at Region VII are interested in seeing as many companies as possible with Heartland area addresses attend the newly designed program, which former participants have found to have been extremely valuable in managing their companies. We invite eligible companies to visit the website and apply, or call your nearest state SBA Office, all listed on our website at www.sba.gov for further information.