



NEWS RELEASE

PRESS OFFICE

Release Date: September 30, 2002

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Release Number: 02-52

Internet Address: www.sba.gov/news/indexheadline.html

SMALL BUSINESSES ACROSS THE NATION WILL HAVE OPPORTUNITIES TO MEET WITH CONTRACTING OFFICERS IN SERIES OF "MATCHMAKING" EVENTS

First local event to be held in Cleveland

WASHINGTON – Small businesses from around the country will have opportunities to meet directly with federal and prime contracting officers in a series of 10 "matchmaking" events cosponsored jointly by the U.S. Small Business Administration and the U.S. Chamber of Commerce, beginning Oct. 9 in Cleveland.

The national Procurement Matchmaking Initiative rollout will build on the success of the matchmaking event held last May in Washington, D.C., when more than 400 small businesses networked with buyers from federal agencies and large corporations.

These contracting outreach efforts will be held in 10 cities during the next year, allowing small businesses throughout the country contracting opportunities with federal agencies and private industry firms, while obtaining business training and financing support.

"With these matchmaking events, business owners across the nation will have a chance to begin conducting business, exchange information about financing options and attend specifically designed workshops," said SBA Administrator Hector V. Barreto. **"This initiative is aimed at creating an environment where small businesses can cultivate the resources needed to succeed,"** Barreto added.

During the next year, matchmaking events will be held in several major U.S. cities. In each city, individual meetings will be pre-scheduled between small businesses and procurement managers from the public and private sector. Before the events, buyers and small business owners will complete online profiles to provide information on what both parties have to offer.

The events will feature one-stop shopping for information on financing, with local financial institutions participating in the matchmaking events. The education component will consist of seminars on a variety of "how to" topics such as contracting with the federal government, financing the growth of small business, marketing your business, etc. Workshops on international trade and business planning will also be conducted.

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To learn the dates for future Matchmaking events, and to register for upcoming events, visit the SBA's Web site at www.sba.gov/gc/, or the U.S. Chamber of Commerce at www.uschamber.com/Events/Matchmaking/default.htm

Registration for all future Matchmaking events will be on a first come, first served basis.

For more information about all of the SBA's programs for small businesses, call the SBA Answer Desk at 1-800-U-ASK SBA or TDD 704-344-6640. Also, visit the SBA's extensive Web site at www.sba.gov.

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