



NEWS RELEASE

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POLICY CHANGE WILL ALLOW MORE TRAVEL AGENCIES TO QUALIFY FOR SBA DISASTER ASSISTANCE

WASHINGTON - The U.S. Small Business Administration has increased its revenue-based size standards for travel agencies, with the change being made retroactive to Sept. 11 for firms that were hardest hit by a dramatic downturn in both tourism and business travel after the terrorist attacks on the World Trade Center and the Pentagon.

The change raises the revenue-based size limit from \$1 million to \$3 million allowing larger firms to qualify for SBA assistance under the agency's size standards. It will provide much needed financial assistance to one of the industries that was hardest hit by the September 11 attacks by allowing more travel agencies to qualify for Economic Injury Disaster Loans (EIDL).

Businesses located in the presidentially designated disaster areas of New York and Northern Virginia have until Sept. 30, 2002, to apply for Physical Disaster loans and Economic Injury Disaster loans. The deadline for businesses nationwide to apply for the expanded Economic Injury Disaster Loan is May 22, 2002.

The new size standard, which was published in the *Federal Register* on March 15, 2002, as an interim final rule with a 30-day comment period, became effective immediately.

“Recognizing the hardships facing travel agencies nationwide after the attacks, we are pleased to announce that the SBA is now able to make EIDL assistance available to those businesses nationwide,” says SBA Administrator Hector V. Barreto.

In conjunction with the new rules, the SBA also has published a proposal to increase the travel agencies' size standards to \$3 million for all other small business programs and services. If adopted, 700 additional travel agencies will be eligible to benefit from SBA programs and services. Comments on this proposal are due by April 15, 2002.

For more information on EIDL assistance, contact the SBA Help Desk at 1-800 U ASK SBA (1-800-827-5722) or visit www.sba.gov/disaster. For additional information on the new size standard, visit the SBA's Office of Size Standards Web page at www.sba.gov/size, and click on **“What's New?”**

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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. You can receive all of the SBA's News Releases via email. To subscribe, visit <http://www.sba.gov/news/indexheadline.html> and click on "Subscribe to SBA News."

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