



NEWS RELEASE

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SBA and Department of Labor Partnership Will Support Entrepreneurship Among People with Disabilities

Washington – U.S. Small Business Administration Administrator Hector V. Barreto and Labor Secretary Elaine L. Chao today signed a Strategic Alliance Memorandum designed to help people with disabilities pursue small business ownership and increase their employment opportunities in small businesses.

“The New Freedom Small Business Initiative” agreement is designed to assist adult workers in acquiring the skills and resources they need to successfully begin and operate a small business and to educate small business owners about hiring people with disabilities. The two departments will cooperate to encourage people with disabilities to pursue small business ownership, provide them with technical assistance, and encourage small businesses to hire people with disabilities. The initiative also is meant to build the capacity of the workforce system to serve people with disabilities and support their entrepreneurship through economic development and coordination of small business activities among federal departments.

“Today we celebrate another milestone that builds upon the President’s *New Freedom Initiative*,” said Secretary Chao. “This strategic alliance creates a new partnership that will benefit small businesses, people with disabilities and ultimately, our country as a whole. The timing for this initiative could not be better. More Americans, especially women, are launching themselves on the road to entrepreneurship than ever before. We want to ensure that people with disabilities have full access to this path to financial independence, which has proven so rewarding for so many Americans.”

SBA Administrator Barreto said, “Today is an important step forward in an ongoing mission to ensure that the door to the American Dream is wide open to all Americans. The small business community can’t afford to be without this group of Americans, and encouraging people with disabilities to become part of the most powerful segment of our economy is more than just the right thing to do, it’s the smart business thing to do.”

Assistant Secretary Roy Grizzard, who heads DOL’s Office of Disability Employment Policy, said: “Through this collaboration, people with disabilities will be able to launch successful entrepreneurial careers and also be recognized as an exceptional pool of talent available to small business owners.”

Copies of the Initiative are available by accessing www.dol.gov/odep or www.sba.gov.

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