

Caribbean E-Outlook is a publication of the U.S. Small Business Administration Puerto Rico and U.S. Virgin Islands District Office

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For More Information:

- SBA offices are located in all 50 states, the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico, the U.S. Virgin Islands and Guam. For the office nearest you, look under "U.S. Government" in your telephone directory.
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- SBA Home Page: www.sba.gov.

All of the SBA's programs and services are provided to the public on a nondiscriminatory basis.

To be added to our mailing list, please e-mail Angelique Adjutant, Public Affairs Officer at angelique.adjutant@sba.gov.

NAGGL Holds SBA Lender Training in Puerto Rico

Courses to take place February 9 - 11

The National Association of Government Guaranteed Lenders (NAGGL) will be holding its most popular course February 9 – 11 at Banco Popular's Training Center in Centro Europa, Santurce. The three-day training course includes the following sessions:

Understanding the SOP 50-10: a course for all lending staff who must understand 7(a) guaranteed loan processing regulations.

SBA Application Processing: a course designed for those who complete the SBA loan application for guarantee approval.

Closing the SBA Loan: designed for those who prepare loan closing documentation.

SBA Construction Lending: designed to address special requirements related to construction lending and risk management.

SBA Servicing and Liquidation Regulations: a course designed for those responsible of managing their institution's SBA loan portfolio and/or liquidation process in accordance with SOP 50-50 and 50-51 regulations.

Founded in California during 1984, NAGGL is aimed at serving the needs and representing the interests of the small business lending community who utilize the Small Business Administration's and other government guaranteed loan programs. The association counts with 570 members nationwide, which include lenders, non-bank lenders, holding companies, credit unions, and certified development companies, among many others.

The last training course held in Puerto Rico was in 2001, with 100 participants. This year, NAGGL hopes to exceed 200 attendees. Registration per class is limited. For information please call NAGGL at (405) 377-4022.

Those interested in becoming a member of NAGGL, may also visit www.naggl.com, call the number above or write to: National Association of Government Guaranteed Lenders, P.O. Box 332 Stillwater, OK 74076.

SBA, OMB, GSA, and DOD Work Together to Integrate Pro-Net and CCR Database and Simplify Contracting Process for Small Businesses

The U.S. Small Business Administration, the Department of Defense, the Office of Management and Budget and the General Services Administration are taking steps to simplify the federal contracting process by creating an integrated database of small businesses that want to do business with the government.

The integration of the existing Pro-Net and DOD's Central Contractor Registration (CCR) databases will create one portal for entering and searching small business sources and will assist small businesses with marketing their goods and services to the federal government. The integration began on January 1.

The CCR-PRO-Net linkage is part of a comprehensive strategic effort to transfer Pro-Net's functions to the E-Gov Business Partner Network (BPN) in order to simplify government-wide vendor registration. The network is part of the Integrated Acquisition Environment (IAE), one of the e-government initiatives under the President's Management Agenda. IAE is carrying out OMB's mandate for new processes to streamline federal acquisition by creating common integrated business processes for buyers and sellers in the federal marketplace. The network incorporates DOD's CCR database. Registration in CCR is now a requirement for federal contracts.

After Dec. 31, CCR assumed all of Pro-Net's search capabilities and functions and small businesses will no longer need to manually register in both Pro-Net and CCR.

"We are continuing to make strides in simplifying the process to help small businesses conduct business with the government," said SBA Administrator Hector V. Barreto. "By integrating PRO-Net's functions into CCR, the foundation of the Business Partner Network, we are helping to advance the President's goal of a single, user-friendly, integrated acquisition environment."

This merger is another step toward the goals to unify common systems and ensure that data need only be entered once and then reused.

Procuring agencies and contracting officers who rely on Pro-Net as the authoritative source for vendors that are certified in SBA's 8(a) Business Development program, HUBZone Empowerment Contracting Program and Small Disadvantaged Business program will now access this information through CCR.

To conduct market research and confirm eligibility for SBA's procurement preference programs, users will go to the CCR Web site at www.ccr.gov and click on the "Dynamic Small Business Search" button. All of the search options and information that existed in Pro-Net will now be found at the CCR Dynamic Small Business Search site.

Within SBA, Pro-Net will be superseded by the Small Business Source System, an internal database of businesses certified by SBA as participants in the 8(a), HUBZone and SDB programs. Businesses will no longer have to self-certify as small businesses. The SBSS system will perform calculations necessary to determine whether companies are small, based on employment or revenue information entered into CCR. Firms will update their records on the CCR Update Web page and should follow the links and directions found there.

For more information about CCR, please visit the CCR Web site at www.ccr.gov. For more information about IAE, visit the Web site at <http://egov.gsa.gov>.

We are Looking for SBA Success Stories

If you or someone you know has received and benefited from SBA assistance, we would like to hear from you.

We are looking for small firms that have received past or present assistance through SBA programs or services or through its resource partners such as the SBDC, Women's Business Institute or SCORE.

Please send your recommendations to Angeliqe Adjutant, SBA Public Affairs Officer, via fax at (787) 766-5525 or e-mail at angelique.adjutant@sba.gov.

SBA and DOL Partnership Will Support Entrepreneurship Among People with Disabilities

U.S. Small Business Administration Administrator Hector V. Barreto and Labor Secretary Elaine L. Chao have 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.”

U.S. Small Business Administration Reopens 7(a) Loan Program

Temporary Solution Adopted Until Congress Passes SBA’s Appropriation

The SBA reopened its 7(a) loan program on January 14, with an additional \$470 million in lending authority, and a loan cap of \$750,000 per loan recipient.

With the SBA’s Fiscal Year 2004 appropriation still awaiting approval in the U.S. Senate, the program was suspended earlier this month because of volume constraints under the Continuing Resolution that runs through the end of January. Since the beginning of the fiscal year on October 1, 2003, SBA funding has come from a series of short-term Continuing Resolutions based on the Fiscal Year 2003 program level.

The SBA reopened with \$470 million in lending authority under the Continuing Resolution through January 31. However, if the program’s demand remains at the recently high level, this amount may not be adequate to keep the program running through the end the current Continuing Resolution, January 31st. Once SBA receives its full year’s appropriation, it expects to be able to keep the program running without interruption, working with Congress to manage the available funding.

“It is critical to our nation’s small business community that the 7(a) program is back up and running as quickly as possible,” said Hector V. Barreto, SBA Administrator. “We are reopening the program with the funding that Congress has approved, and the SBA will provide 7(a) loans as long as the necessary funding is available.”

UPCOMING EVENTS

February 5 - Financing Options to Start or Grow your Business (General Public)

February 13 - Trade Finance (Lenders and General Public)

February 19 - SBA Policies and Procedures (Lenders)

February, 27 - LowDoc Program (Non-PLP Lenders)

March 18 - Financing Options to Start or Grow your Business (General Public)

Time: 9:00 a.m. – 12:00 n

Place: SBA District Office
252 Ponce de Leon Ave.
Suite 200, Hato Rey, PR
Call: (787) 766-5572

LOAN PRODUCTION IN PR & USVI (AS OF 12/31/03 - 12/31/02)

Lender / CDC	# of Loans 2003	\$\$\$ Value	# of Loans 2002	\$\$\$ Value
Banco Popular de Puerto Rico ♦	130	\$13,663,415	126	\$9,076,360
Banco Santander Puerto Rico	67	\$8,815,300	33	\$3,789,100
Banco Bilbao Vizcaya Argentaria	61	\$3,916,000	15	\$1,404,500
Doral Bank	4	\$485,000	0	0
Oriental Bank & Trust	3	\$305,000	0	0
Business Loan Center	1	\$870,000	0	0
Virgin Islands Community Bank	1	\$100,000	0	0
Economic Development Bank for PR	0	0	1	\$322,000
Firstbank Virgin Islands	0	0	2	\$215,000
R&G Premier Bank of PR	0	0	1	\$150,000
Scotiabank Puerto Rico	0	0	1	\$130,000
Grow America Fund, Inc.	0	0	2	\$92,000
Government Development Bank of VI	0	0	1	\$50,000
Marketing Development Corp. *	4	\$1,092,000	3	\$785,000
COFECC*	3	\$1,426,000	4	\$1,474,000
North PR Local Development *	1	\$236,000	0	0
Totals	275	\$30,908,715	189	\$17,485,900

♦Includes Loans in VI

*CDC