

Small Business Assistance on the Information Superhighway

Anyone with access to a computer and a connection to the Internet can literally have a wealth of small business information at a keystroke. The U.S. Small Business Administration has made it easier than ever to speed along the information superhighway to find exactly the right help in the shortest amount of time. Today, small business owners and entrepreneurs can check into the SBA's World Wide Web site and find free, online courses taking them step-by-step through the process of starting or expanding a business.

Want to know how to finance your new business? The SBA Web site provides information on its loan and equity-investment programs.

Need some small business management advice? The SBA provides it free online through connections with members of SCORE, the Service Corps of Retired Executives.

Want SBA publications or forms? You can download many of them, including loan applications, from our Web site.

Through electronic connections to bulletin-board services and the Internet, the SBA keeps you on the cutting edge of federal programs designed for small business owners and potential entrepreneurs. The services are available every day of the year.

SBA's Internet Resources

All that wealth of information starts at the SBA's home page at www.sba.gov. The page introduces you to an overview of the agency and features such areas as Headline News, which includes information about recent SBA initiatives and Congressional actions affecting small businesses. Other areas on the home page include:

- Starting - A special section providing complete, step-by-step instructions to begin a business, including a start-up kit, business plan, training, counseling, online classes in such areas as business plans and raising capital, and BusinessLINC, an area bringing together available business mentors and proteges with programs designed to help new entrepreneurs. The section also contains free e-mail business counseling offered by SCORE at www.score.org.
- Financing - A section detailing loan and equity-investment programs, SBA loan forms you can fill out online or download, free SBA online financial workshops, and free downloadable financial shareware for use in your business.
- Expanding - A section offering growth opportunities, such as PRO-Net® for online government solicitations and procurement opportunities, ACE-Net for growing businesses seeking angel investors, SUB-Net at web.sba.gov/subnet for subcontracting opportunities with large companies, and Trade Mission OnLine, a database of small businesses that seek to export their products, at www.sba.gov/tmonline/.
- Offices & Services - A section outlining programs devoted to women, veterans, minorities, networking, disaster assistance, the national Welfare to Work Initiative and HUBZones, a program designed to provide federal contracting opportunities for qualified small businesses located in distressed communities.
- Local SBA Resources - a listing of local SBA offices, contacts and the services they provide to local businesses, including a local calendar of events for workshops, seminars and other programs.
- Your Government - A section with Internet links to Web pages of the White House, Congress, the U.S. Business Advisor, federal and state agencies, including the U.S. Patent Office, the U.S. Census Bureau, the Internal Revenue Service and state home pages.
- Online Library - A section with specialized areas for the laws and regulations pertaining to small businesses, SBA publications, reports, statistics and studies, and communications with Congress.
- Outside Resources - A section with Inter-net links to all sorts of business resources from financing to business schools; from search engines to find particular products or programs to trade shows and business travel.

Other Electronic Resources

The SBA's bulletin-board system, called SBA OnLine, is easily accessed by anyone with a computer, modem and the software needed to download information using major transfer protocols such as Telnet. By using Telnet, you don't need a direct connection to the Internet through a commercial provider. A toll-free number, 1-800-697-4636, provides connections to SBA and other government agencies and to downloadable files.

A toll number allows users to download software applications and access personal mail-boxes, searchable databases and government bulletin-board gateways.

Special-interest groups provide forums for businesses with common interests to exchange information. The SBA's special-interest groups include advertising, agriculture, aviation, communications, computer services, construction, desktop publishing, education, home-based businesses, mail-order businesses and more.

How to Access the SBA Electronic Bulletin Board

Number	Access Usage
1-800-697-4636	SBA and other government agency information Downloadable files
1-900-463-4636 (14¢ per minute)	SBA and other government agency information Downloadable files
202-401-9600 Washington, D.C., metro area (Toll call)	Downloadable application software files Gateway Mailboxes Searchable databases
202-205-6400	Technical support

How to Access the SBA on the Internet

Home page:	www.sba.gov
Gopher:	gopher.sba.gov
Telnet:	telnet.sba.gov
U.S. Business Advisor:	www.business.gov

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, or contact:

- Phone: 1-800 U ASK SBA
- Fax: 202-205-7064
- E-mail: answerdesk@sba.gov
- TDD: 704-344-6640
- Your rights to regulatory fairness: 1-888-REG-FAIR

Inquire at your local SBA office for the location of the following resources:

- BICs - Business Information Centers
- TBICs - Tribal Business Information Centers
- OSCSs - One Stop Capital Shops
- SCORE - Service Corps of Retired Executives
- SBDCs - Small Business Development Centers
- USEACs - U.S. Export Assistance Centers
- WBCs - Women's Business Centers

Publications

- The Facts About ... SBA Publications - a listing of free SBA publications

Did you know that in fiscal 1999 the SBA -

- maintained a guaranteed loan portfolio of more than \$40.5 billion in loans to 486,000 small businesses that otherwise would not have had such access to capital?
- backed nearly 49,000 loans totaling a record \$12.5 billion to America's small businesses?
- made 3,100 investments worth \$4.2 billion through its venture capital program?
- provided more than 36,000 loans totaling over \$936 million to disaster victims for residential, personal-property and business losses?
- extended management and technical assistance to more than 900,000 small business persons through its 11,500 Service Corps of
- Retired Executives volunteers and 1,000 small business development center locations?
- created HUBZones providing federal contracting assistance to small businesses located in "historically underutilized business zones"?

Did you know that America's 24 million small businesses -

- employ more than 52 percent of the private work force?
- generate more than 51 percent of the nation's gross domestic product?
- are the principal source of new jobs?

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

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