

Advocacy's Office of Economic Research Conducts Regional Focus Groups to Assess and Direct Its Research Efforts

Inaugural Session in Chicago on May 16, 2003

- The Office of Economic Research (OER) within the Office of Advocacy conducts research and disseminates data that demonstrate the importance of small businesses to the U.S. economy and highlight policy-relevant issues important to these small firms.
- Consistent with the President's mission of accountability in government, Advocacy wants to assess the usefulness of its research products and continue to reach out to academics, legislators, and others who impact public policy. OER wants its reports and data to be an integral part of academic research.
- Small business research focus groups can help ensure the timeliness and appropriateness of OER's research. In addition, they provide an excellent "sounding board" for feedback on future directions.
- The Chief Economist will conduct a series of focus groups incorporating the 10 SBA regions throughout the country. Participants will discuss their current research initiatives and comment on the general strengths and weaknesses of OER's research and resources. Suggestions for improvements and/or potential research topics will also be solicited.
- The first regional focus group will take place in Chicago at DePaul University on Friday, May 16. Participants include representatives from the Coleman Foundation, the Federal Reserve Bank of Chicago, DePaul University, Northeastern Illinois University, the University of Chicago, and the University of Illinois at Chicago.
- A second regional focus group is planned for the Washington, D.C. area on Friday, May 30. Participants include representatives from the Congressional Budget Office, George Mason University, Georgetown University, George Washington University, the University of Baltimore, and the University of Maryland.
- Other regional focus groups are in the planning stages.
- An annual report will be prepared to document the findings of the regional focus groups. Feedback provided by the participants will help guide the future research strategies of the Chief Counsel for Advocacy and the Chief Economist.
- For more information, email Chad Moutray at chad.moutray@sba.gov or visit www.sba.gov/advo. To receive email notices of new Advocacy research, regulatory communications, newsletter issues, and press, sign up on Advocacy's Listservs at <http://web.sba.gov/list>.