



Small Business
Development Centers
UC Merced Regional Network

News Release

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Small Business Services Expand in Central California

The University of California, Merced Small Business Development Center (SBDC) network is pleased to announce new partnership agreements with the Central Valley Business Incubator (CVBI) and California State University, Fresno's Office of Community and Economic Development (OCED) to expand the SBDC services. "We look forward to working with the excellent leadership and management teams at CVBI & OCED to provide exceptional services to entrepreneurs and the small business community," states Diane Howerton, Regional SBDC Director.

The SBDC program is a job creation and job retention program that assists business owners and entrepreneurs with business plans, loan package proposals, advises on financial systems and projections, evaluates plans for expansion, provides analysis and assistance on cash flow issues, provides technology needs assessment along with important research, international trade and procurement assistance. In addition to the free one-on-one business consulting, the management team offers a variety of workshops and seminars. The UC Merced's SBDC network is a nationally accredited program, largely funded by the U.S. Small Business Administration.

"CVBI is proud to have received this SBDC designation, and we are eager to leverage CVBI resources with the Small Business Development Center to provide exceptional business counseling and technical assistance throughout the Central Valley," says Kirk Nagamine, CEO of Central Valley Business Incubator. "CVBI and SBDC's combined history of business development partnered with the resources of CSU Fresno's Office of Community and Economic Development and the UC Merced Regional SBDC network is definitely a home run for Central Valley entrepreneurs and business owners who are maintaining and creating new jobs and opportunities for economic wealth here in the valley."

OCED is dedicated to aligning Fresno State's intellectual capacity and innovation-driven economic development initiatives to improve the competitiveness and prosperity of the San Joaquin Valley region. In supporting economic development innovation, OCED collaborates with regional industry clusters to develop a strategic approach to development, technology transfers, workforce development initiatives, infrastructure needs, and collaborative industry relations. Two direct results of OCED's activities are the California Partnership for the San Joaquin Valley (Partnership) and the Regional Jobs Initiative (RJI). Both initiatives are based on the idea that regional economies are made up of a series of related industries, or clusters, that benefit one another. Both initiatives continue to convene experts and leaders committed to sustainable community and economic development, environmental stewardship, and human advocacy for the San Joaquin Valley region.

Mike Dozier, Director, OCED, said "Our office works very closely with CVBI on a number of programs and projects. The opportunities that SBDC provides are very much in line with CVBI's strengths. I am

looking forward to making these opportunities available for all business within the four county boundaries of the program.”

The mission of the University of California, Merced SBDC Network is to promote the development and growth of small businesses by providing high quality business assistance throughout Central California thereby enhancing regional prosperity. This network working with new partners at CVBI and OCED will help to leverage all the federal funds available for the SBDC program in Central California.

The Central California SBDC program covers the counties of Fresno, Tulare, Kings and Madera. There are full time offices in Fresno and Visalia with new satellite offices in Clovis, Hanford, Porterville, and Madera. The main office is located at CVBI, 1630 E. Shaw Avenue, Fresno, CA, 559-292-9033, www.ccsbdc.org or www.cvbi.org. For additional information regarding SBDC assistance please visit the website at <http://ucmsbdc.ecenterdirect.com> or call 559.292.9033.

UC Merced was awarded the SBA contract in 2003 to serve 15 counties in Central California: San Luis Obispo, San Benito, Sana Clara (south of Bernal Road), Monterey (east of the Salinas River), Stanislaus, Merced, Madera, Tuolumne, Mariposa, Fresno, Kings, Tulare, Kern, Mono and Inyo. The mission of the network is to promote the development and growth of small businesses by providing high quality business assistance throughout Central California thereby enhancing regional prosperity.

This cooperative agreement is partially funded by the U.S. Small Business Administration and the University of California, Merced. SBA's funding is not an endorsement of any products, opinions or services. SBA funded programs are extended to the public on a non-discriminatory basis. This material is based on work supported by the U.S. Small Business Administration. Any opinions, findings, conclusions and recommendations expressed are those of the author(s) and do not necessarily reflect the view of the U.S. Small Business Administration (SBA). Reasonable accommodations for persons with disabilities will be made if requested at least two weeks in advance.

CVBI is a resource for people who want to start & expand their business through access to capital; work & meeting spaces; access to professional networks; and plan development. CVBI is an equal opportunity provider and employer. Auxillary aids and services available upon request to individuals with disabilities. CVBI is funded in part through a grant with U.S. Small Business Administration and a grant from USDA Rural Development California. To file a complaint of discrimination, write: USDA, Director, Office of Civil Rights, 1400 Independence Ave., SW, Washington, DC 20250-9410 or call (800) 795-3272 (voice), or, (202) 720-6382 (TDD).