



Economic Stimulus Opportunities for Small Businesses

By Andrea Zeller

By the time you read this, President Obama will have signed legislation authorizing the nearly \$800 billion American Recovery and Reinvestment Act. President Obama sought the creation of a Act that emphasizes infrastructure development and public works projects modeled much after the New Deal programs created by President Franklin Roosevelt shortly after entering office in 1933. President Obama's massive economic stimulus package is intended, much like President Roosevelt's New Deal programs, to jumpstart a flailing economy.

As a business owner, have you thought about what opportunities this legislation will offer you? The new American Recovery and Reinvestment Act brings billions of dollars in contract opportunities to government contractors over the next several years. Do you offer products or services that could be used in the various areas where stimulus strategies are targeted? The government likely will award contracts to increase energy efficiency in federal buildings, expand health care information technology, and continue military construction projects. Meanwhile, billions more will be provided to state and local governments for shovel-ready infrastructure projects, creating business for small and mid-size construction firms.

For example, infrastructure development funds, such as highway and bridge improvements, will flow federal funds through Caltrans. If you are in construction, be sure your business is certified through the State of California to access the Caltrans opportunities. The Act also contains billions of dollars to improve health information technology and there's money for green initiatives. The US Army Corps. of Engineers and the US General Services Administration will have numerous opportunities.

Are you ready for this? If you have a product or service that can be used in any of these areas, you definitely want to prepare and position your company so that government buyers can quickly place contracts with you. Do you know how to get certified as a small business, as a women-owned or minority-owned business, or as a disabled veteran-owned business enterprise etc.? Do you understand how to find and bid on government contracts?

There is a parallel tract of things you need to do to best position your company to take advantage of these opportunities. First, get certified. Then second, identify which government buyers are likely to need your company's products or services, and plan your marketing strategies to reach these buyers! You want to be sure your targeted government buyers know your company and are familiar with your products and services before the funds from the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act begin flowing. Here at Mission Community Services Corporation, we have the resources and connections to help you prepare to take advantage of these government contracting opportunities. Call or visit us today.

Andrea Zeller, Executive Director of Mission Community Services (MCSC), coordinates Women's Business Partners (WBP) to ensure all community resources are leveraged and optimized to support entrepreneurial women. WBP serves everyone interested in establishing self-sufficiency through small business ownership. WBP can take you step by step towards success and can help those who speak only Spanish. Visit www.MCSCCorp.org or call 595-1357 to find out more.