

Business Diversity Efforts Poised to Benefit from New Partnership between U.S. Small Business Administration and National Gay & Lesbian Chamber of Commerce

LGBT Business Builder Aims to Connect SBA Resources to LGBT Business Enterprises

WASHINGTON, D.C., Feb. 5, 2015—Recognizing the business imperative to embrace diversity, the [U.S. Small Business Administration \(SBA\)](#) and [the National Gay & Lesbian Chamber of Commerce](#) launched the first initiative of its kind focused on LGBT business owners.

LGBT Business Builder will bring together expertise and resources from staff at SBA district and regional offices, NGLCC's 38 U.S.-based affiliate chambers, and other resource partners. Businesses will learn how to leverage NGLCC's LGBT-owned business certification and explore opportunities through SBA's suite of services around [government contracting](#), [exporting](#), and other [SBA initiatives](#).

"Today's announcement is about ensuring that entrepreneurs who are gay, lesbian, bisexual or transgender have the support they need to excel. I'm here because we cannot separate the fight for civil rights from the fight for market rights and economic empowerment," said SBA Administrator Maria Contreras-Sweet. "This agreement is not about what we will do here in D.C., but we will do together in all 50 states to help LGBT entrepreneurs grow their revenues and their payroll."

"At its heart, America is a country that builds things, especially businesses. It is gratifying to know the leadership of the Small Business Administration sees the value of LGBT citizens who have wondered for too long how they can also gain a seat at the table. This program will ensure they will understand the value of becoming an LGBT-certified businesses and all the SBA resources that are available to them. We commend Administrator Contreras-Sweet for putting an unprecedented focus on harnessing the potential of LGBT-owned businesses," said Justin Nelson, president and co-founder, NGLCC.

The day-long training sessions will occur in the next 24 months for LGBT business owners in Atlanta, Los Angeles, Sacramento and San Francisco. Other cities will be announced in the near future.

The focus on California is especially important in light of a new law that took effect Jan. 1. California public utilities are now required to extend existing provisions granted to ethnic

minority-, women-, and disable veteran- owned business enterprises to LGBT certified business owners. It is believed to be the first bill of its kind in the United States and will serve as a model for similar legislation covering other highly regulated industries and in other states.

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About SBA

The U.S. Small Business Administration (SBA) was created in 1953 as an independent agency of the federal government to aid, counsel, assist and protect the interests of small business concerns, to preserve free competitive enterprise and to maintain and strengthen the overall economy of our nation. We recognize that small business is critical to our economic recovery and strength, to building America's future, and to helping the United States compete in today's global marketplace. Although SBA has grown and evolved in the years since it was established in 1953, the bottom line mission remains the same. The SBA helps Americans start, build and grow businesses. Through an extensive network of field offices and partnerships with public and private organizations, SBA delivers its services to people throughout the United States, Puerto Rico, the U. S. Virgin Islands and Guam. www.sba.gov

MEDIA CONTACT:

Miguel Ayala
SBA Press Secretary
Miguel.Ayala@SBA.gov
202-450-0148

About NGLCC

The National Gay & Lesbian Chamber of Commerce is the business voice of the LGBT community and is the largest global not-for-profit advocacy organization specifically dedicated to expanding economic opportunities and advancements for LGBT people. NGLCC is the exclusive certification body for LGBT owned businesses. www.nglcc.org

MEDIA CONTACT:

Adam Shapiro
Adam.Shapiro@adampr.tv
202-427-3603