

Supplier Connection: connecting you to America's leading companies

This letter from Karen G. Mills, current Administrator of the U.S. Small Business Administration (SBA), is to all small business owners.

Small businesses like yours are the engines of our nation's economy, and the Small Business Administration exists to help you find opportunities to grow and create jobs. I want to make sure you know about two online tools that give you greater access to markets for you to sell goods and services. Recent reports show that small suppliers can more than triple revenue growth and more than double job growth just a few years after becoming a large company supplier.

Created by the IBM Foundation, **Supplier Connection** is a free online common application that allows you to simultaneously send information about your products and services to fifteen private sector companies. These buyers include some of America's most respected firms, with purchasing power of \$300 billion each year – **Facebook, AT&T, IBM, Pfizer, UPS, Caterpillar, AMD, Office Depot, Dell, JP Morgan, John Deere, Wells Fargo, Citi, Kellogg's and Bank of America.** Over the coming months, we expect even more large companies will be added. To join Supplier Connection, please visit www.supplier-connection.net. For frequently asked questions, a user manual and a list of industries and commodities being requested, click on the "FAQs" tab on the top of the screen.

SUB-Net: connecting you to federal government sub-contracting opportunities

SBA also helps small businesses become suppliers to the world's largest buyer – the Federal Government. One way to break into Federal contracting is to become a sub-contractor to a large prime contractor. Each year, small businesses are awarded \$70 billion in Federal sub-contracting opportunities. We maintain an online database that helps you search for Federal sub-contracting opportunities posted by large prime contractors and other non-federal agencies, which we call **SUB-Net**. To learn more about SUB-Net, please visit <http://web.sba.gov/subnet/>. To view a list of current solicitations, click "Search" on the top of the screen and then click "View all solicitations" on the left side of the screen.

These databases break down barriers to make it easier for you to access Federal and commercial supply chains. I hope you will look at them. In addition, after you do, remember that SBA stands ready to help you get the contracting know-how, capital and counseling to be successful suppliers. As we discover more resources which may benefit your small business we may send you additional information. Visit www.sba.gov for more details on our small business programs and resources.

Requirements

Small businesses interested in joining must have fewer than 500 employees, or have less than \$50 million in annual revenue. Additionally, small businesses must provide one of the following services:

- Chemicals
- Connectivity
- Construction & outside plant work
- Consulting Services
- Educational Services
- Facilities Maintenance & Design
- Financial Services
- Fleet/auto parts
- Human Resources Services
- IT Products, Services, & Maintenance
- Legal
- Logistics
- Marketing Communications
- Market intelligence/research
- MRO/supplies/office supplies
- Packaging material & services

Jones Cleaning & Remodeling - a TSB with a spotless reputation

Austin and Valerie Jones are a young African-American couple living in Ames, raising three sons. Owning a business was a dream they both shared. In 2008, they started Jones Cleaning and Remodeling Services (JCR), a family owned business and a proud Targeted Small Business (TSB) of Iowa. Raising three children and managing a growing small business is no small feat, but Austin and Valerie manage to get it done with lots of teamwork, hard work and a strong faith.

Any Iowa TSB has access to low-interest loans and advantages in doing business with the state of Iowa. In March 2011, Valerie Jones attended a workshop called "Doing Business with the state of Iowa" sponsored by the Targeted Small Business Program and hosted at the Iowa DOT headquarters in Ames. Her goal was to learn more about landing the state of Iowa as a client. She knew there was much to learn about selling services to the state and finding out about bid opportunities.

"I went to the workshop in Ames as an "open book", eager to learn more about bid opportunities with the state and how to respond to them," Valerie reflects. "And that's exactly the information I received." Armed with that knowledge and some new connections with Iowa State University that she made at that workshop, Valerie and Austin started to respond to more state bid opportunities.

"We're proud to say we recently landed a three-year contract with Iowa State University (ISU) as the primary vendor for Custodial Services on all the units in their Department of Residence, which includes all dorms and other types of student housing. Not only that, we also won the opportunity to be the secondary vendor for Custodial Services for ISU's Facilities Planning and Management Department, which is responsible for every building on the sprawling ISU campus."

Although being a TSB in Iowa does not guarantee that a company will win bid opportunities with state agencies, it can give you an edge. "We are grateful for the TSB Program giving us the "edge" we need to connect with state agencies that are serious about contracting with TSBs in order to meet their TSB spending goals. It has been extremely instrumental in helping us get our foot in the door! As a small business,



just getting in the door can sometimes seem like the biggest obstacle, but once we have been given the opportunity, we strive to excel in everything we do," Valerie says.

But the state of Iowa is not their only client. They have many commercial clients including Friedrich Real Estate — the largest real estate firm in Ames, Iowa. Any small business owner will tell you customer loyalty is critical because it is cheaper to retain clients than to attract new ones. Valerie shared, "About 95 percent of our business comes through word of mouth and referrals, which is a testament to our hard work ethic and dedication to being the best."

Friedrich Real Estate has been a satisfied client of Jones Cleaning and Remodeling (JCR) Services since Val and Austin started the company in 2008, and they have nothing but good things to say.

"It was a pleasure working with JCR on our home interior painting projects! Valerie, Austin and team were very friendly, courteous and professional from start to finish. They took time to discuss all aspects of the project with us to make sure we were all on the "same page". They certainly met our expectations, and we would highly recommend JCR. They are an extremely reliable and honest company...and they did a great job!!"

- Rodger & Marcy Main

Jones Cleaning & Remodeling (continued)

JCR is comprised of professionals — some with over 30 years experience in their respective trades. Their backgrounds range from licensed carpenters and apprentices to professional window cleaners and housekeeping associates. They are able to complete projects with exceptional quality and attention to detail. For commercial clients, JCR offers a wide range of services including:

- *Trash Out Services*
- *Construction Clean Up*
- *Remodeling and Painting*
- *Janitorial/Cleaning/Professional Window Cleaning Services*
- *Lawn Grooming (per push / per hour / seasonal rates)*
- *Snow/Ice Management (per push / per hour / seasonal rates)*

Jones Cleaning and Remodeling serves Ames, Iowa and its surrounding areas including Des Moines. Visit their website at www.iowacleaningandremodeling.com to learn more about their services. They are truly a one-stop shop and one of the best targeted small businesses (TSBs) in their field.

TSB loan awards

These certified targeted small businesses have recently been awarded loans from the TSB program! Congratulations!

Business Name	Owner(s)	City	Loan Award
The Sheep's Stockings	Thiessen, Kathryn Gail	Marshalltown	\$35,000
Melting Pot, LLC	Speetzen, Raquel	Bettendorf	\$36,800
Tiji Salon	Nguyen, Tim & Un	West Des Moines	\$50,000
Stone Wall Brick Oven Pizza	Stutzman, Julia	Wellman	\$28,739

expert help from our technical assistance providers

A key benefit of being a targeted small business is the free technical assistance received when you apply for financial assistance. The TSB Program has four professional business consultants positioned throughout Iowa with expertise to help make sure your loan application is well done, logical and complete. The TSB Program covers the consultant's fee for certified TSBs. The business owner and the technical assistance provider must discuss when and where to meet. The technical assistance provider can work up to 10 hours on the application. The technical assistance provider will not complete the loan application but will review the application and business plan and help with research and preparing financials.

Even with that assistance available, the TSB Program receives a fair amount of loan applications that are incomplete, illogical or poorly done. Some are missing key information or have errors in calculations. The loan process takes two to three months for a well-done application. Faulty applications are returned for revisions, further delaying the process. Take advantage of this free technical assistance that comes with being a TSB so your loan application is strong and complete! For more information on TSB loans, visit iowaeconomicdevelopment.com.

SBA Business, Breakfast and More is back for 2012

The Des Moines office of the SBA (Small Business Administration) has been offering their “Business, Breakfast and More” events for years. Held six times annually, these breakfasts are a great way to learn and network.

The SBA, TSB Program and SCORE are sponsoring this year’s series. New this year, the Iowa Association of Business & Industry (ABI) is hosting each breakfast in their state-of-the-art conference room located at 400 East Court Ave, Suite 100, in Des Moines, IA.

Breakfasts cost approximately \$12 – 15 and include a delicious hot buffet featuring many of your favorite breakfast foods, along with juice, coffee, and tea. Check-in begins at 7:00 a.m., breakfast at 7:30 a.m., and the speaker at 8:00 a.m. You’ll be finished by 9:00 a.m., tops! It is a great way to start your day!

Pre-registration is required for each breakfast event. If you’d like to receive an email alert for upcoming breakfasts, call 515.284.4913 or send an email to dawnelle.conley@sba.gov to be added to the mailing list.

Remaining 2012 Breakfast Dates

Date	Info
May 24	Derek Lord, Iowa Economic Development Authority, talks about the U.S. Treasury’s State Small Business Credit Initiative (SSBCI) and the new business financing options Iowa now offers
July 19th	Mini-Expo with small business service providers, vendors and more to provide information about resources available to small business owners. This breakfast only will be held at the Downtown Des Moines Holiday Inn.
September 20th	TBD
November 15th	TBD

the Startup Iowa Calendar – check it often

The Iowa Startup and Entrepreneur’s Calendar is the complete view of what is happening in the entrepreneurial and startup scene in Iowa. Anyone is welcome to link or submit an event for the calendar at <http://www.startupia.org/statewide-events-calendar/>. Clicking on the pull down menu for the main calendar will display a list of all of the calendars available. If you or your group would like to add a calendar to the system, send an email to mcolwell@desmoinesmetro.com. There is no fee for use of the calendar. You will note that the sponsor logo will appear on all calendars viewed by the public. Thank you to Startup Launchpad and the Davis Brown Law Firm for this service.

Please note that there are six event types available. Each of these types is represented on the main calendar by a separate color:

Awards – Yellow	Conference – Green
Education – Teal	Government – Pink
Networking – Orange	Holiday – none

There is a complete user manual and tutorial videos available at <http://www.mhsoftware.com/documentation.html>

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