



Charleston County News Release

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SPECIAL MEDIA INVITATION: Help us get the word out about this important program – Call (843) 958-4012 to set up a one-on-one interview!

Small Business Enterprise Program a Growing Success, Free Workshops Offered to Assist Business Owners

Charleston County's Small Business Enterprise Program is race and gender neutral with an emphasis on growing and enhancing small companies.

Charleston County's Small Business Enterprise (SBE) Program recently began in September, and it has already become a tremendous success. So far, 25 businesses have become certified, and many more are currently going through the process.

The SBE Program is race and gender neutral, with an emphasis on growing and enhancing small companies to help them reach the level of capability to do business with local, state and federal government agencies.

Charleston County will be holding three free SBE workshops on the following dates:

- **Thursday, Nov. 29, 2007**
How to Do Business with Charleston County – Learn how to become certified as a Small Business Enterprise, locate bid opportunities, and be placed on bid lists. This class will be held from 2-4 p.m. at the Lonnie Hamilton, III Public Services Building; 4045 Bridge View Drive; North Charleston, S.C. 29405 (Room B339, the Emergency Operations Center conference room)
- **Thursday, Jan. 24, 2008**
Bidding on Contracts with Charleston County – An overview of the County's bid process: providing information on how to prepare your bid. This class will be held from 2-4 p.m. at the Lonnie Hamilton, III Public Services Building; 4045 Bridge View Drive; North Charleston, S.C. 29405 (Room B339, the Emergency Operations Center conference room).
- **Thursday, Feb. 21, 2008**
How to do Business with the city, county, state and federal government – An overview of the public procurement process and how to prepare your bids. This class will be held from 6-8 p.m. at the Lonnie Hamilton, III Public Services Building; 4045 Bridge View Drive; North Charleston, S.C. 29405 (Room B339, the Emergency Operations Center conference room).

Businesses can register online for the free seminars at www.charlestoncounty.org. During each of the workshop seminars, County staff will be available to assist business owners in completing the simple one-page certification application.

Business owners who bring the following documents with them to the seminar can actually become fully certified before leaving:

- Copy of signed business tax returns for the past three years
- Copy of current driver's license (or other government identification card)
- Copy of deed, rental or lease agreement showing business address (a post office box is not acceptable for business address)
- Copy of any applicable business license(s)
- Copy of receipts for any applicable Charleston County fees or taxes

Charleston County's SBE Program has many features to aid small businesses, and is the first of its kind in South Carolina. The concept for the program was developed through a disparity study that was commissioned by County Council in 2006.

The SBE Program will have some guidelines in order for business owners to participate. The following are requirements for certification under the program:

- Gross revenues of \$7.5 million or less (as averaged over the previous three years)
- Eligible owner is actively involved in the daily management and operations of the business
- Business has been actively in service for the preceding twelve months
- Applicable business licenses, fees and Charleston County taxes are current

Additional goals of the SBE Program are:

- To enhance contract competition
- To establish aspirational goals for SBE firms' participation on County contracts
- To conduct an outreach program with features such as the upcoming workshops, which will aid entrepreneurs in business development and get them ready for competing for County contracts.

Interested business owners go through a short and simple certification process to participate in the program, which begins with completion of a one-page application (available at www.charlestoncounty.org). Oversight of the SBE Program falls under Charleston County's Contracts and Procurement Department Director, and the program is administered by the County's SBE Program Manager.

To learn more, contact the Charleston County Procurement Office:

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Visit the Charleston County Web site at www.charlestoncounty.org for news, services and up-to-date information relating to Charleston County Government.