



Charleston County News Release

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See photo of previous workshop: <http://www.charlestoncounty.org/NewsImages/sbe.htm>

County Offers Free Workshop for Small Businesses on March 26

Over 100 businesses now certified with Charleston County Government

Charleston County's Small Business Enterprise (SBE) Program, the first of its kind in South Carolina, began in September of 2007 and has been a remarkable success.

More than 100 small businesses have become certified with the County so far, and more are currently going through the process. Approximately 150 small business owners and other interested citizens have attended the first three in a series of four workshops that have been held since the program officially began.

Charleston County Government will be holding its final workshop in the series on March 26:

- **Wednesday, March 26, 2008, 2-4 p.m.**
Contacts to Contracts – Small Business Opportunities with Charleston County and its Small Business Partners. This workshop will provide an opportunity to learn about the small business partnerships between the Charleston County Small Business Enterprise Program, the Charleston County Park and Recreation Commission, and Charleston Water System. Key decision makers from all three entities will participate in the “matchmaker” session that follows the informational segment of the program. Small businesses will have an opportunity to market their businesses face-to-face. The seminar will be held in Charleston County Council Chambers on the second floor of the Lonnie Hamilton, III, Public Services Building at 4045 Bridge View Drive; North Charleston, SC 29405; from 2-4 p.m.

Those interested in attending can register online at www.charlestoncounty.org.

“This workshop will provide a tremendous opportunity for small business owners to interact with officials from three of the largest public service organizations in the area – and all in one place! It truly doesn't get much better than that for a business owner,” said Charleston County's SBE Program Manager Barrett Tolbert. “While this will be the last in the initial series of workshops, we will return with a new series beginning in July, so I would encourage interested business owners to keep their eye on the Charleston County Web site for the announcement of the schedule for the new workshops.”

The SBE Program is race and gender neutral, with an emphasis on guiding and assisting small companies to reach the level of capacity to do business with local, state and federal government agencies. Business owners who are interested in becoming certified will go through a short and simple process, which begins with completion of a one-page application (available at www.charlestoncounty.org).

The following are eligibility 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 for the County and its small business partners
- To conduct an outreach program with features such as the upcoming workshop, which will aid entrepreneurs in business development and help them to be ready to compete for contracts

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, Tolbert. The concept for the program was developed through a disparity study that was commissioned by County Council in 2006.

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.