

BUSINESS INFORMATION AND COUNSELING CENTER

The Business Information and Counseling Center (BICC) was established by the Honolulu District Office of the U.S. Small Business Administration (SBA) in 1993. Its purpose is to guide small business owners in better business planning, in how to conduct market research, and in using the latest technology to help improve the productivity and profitability of their firms.

The BICC was developed by Jane Sawyer, SBA Assistant District Director for Business and Entrepreneurial Development, with support from Andrew Poepoe, the SBA District Director for the Honolulu District Office, and Darryl Mleynek, the Hawai'i SBDC Network State Director.

The Hawai'i SBDC Network is a principal partner in the operation and presently a co-tenant in the BICC, along with the Service Corps of Retired Executives (SCORE) and the Hawai'i Women's Business Center. The BICC features a business computer lab equipped with the latest high-tech small business software and a resource center of current business books, guides, videos and magazines available for client use at the center.

The BICC reported another highly successful year of activity at its downtown Honolulu location. With over 9,000 visits from a diverse client base, this facility was the top performer out of all of the SBA Business Information Centers nationwide.

"A great deal of credit for that outstanding performance does go to our Hawai'i SBDC Network. We're fortunate to have the expertise and credibility of the O'ahu Service Center staff readily accessible, but we also tap into the talent and skills of the other center directors statewide and the Business Research Library for additional information and support. It's proven to be a winning formula for small business owners and start-ups," said Sawyer.

Who does the BICC serve? While approximately 54% are established business owners seeking assistance to expand their firms, the balance of the clients are in the start up phases, recently displaced workers or those working on improving their quality of life and financial security. Records show that 55% of the clients are female, 72% are minorities, and 11% are veterans. Key areas of assistance continue to be financing, business planning and management, and market research.

If the year 2000 was exciting, 2001 also promises a high energy pace for business services. With our BICC partners and supporters, SBA has developed a strategy to improve the delivery system for the programs and services in response to the demand. With the addition of a new team partner from the City and County of Honolulu, BICC will relocate to a new expanded facility in mid 2001. Upgraded computer and teleconferencing technology is expected before the end of the fiscal year to enhance opportunities for training, research and consulting. The local BICC website, <http://www.sbahawaii.org>, will provide greater connectivity for our resources. A new satellite facility, the Kuha'o Center, opened its doors in April on Moloka'i, establishing a prototype for other locations to serve our island communities.

This vision of a comprehensive, one stop, high technology business assistance center would remain only an idea without the successful collaboration of our committed resource partners like the Hawai'i SBDC Network.



SBA Assistant District Director Jane Sawyer.



Mary Dale, project officer, and David Brown, Economic Development Specialist / BICC Site Manager.