

PARTNERSHIP FOR SMALL BUSINESSES IN ILLINOIS
Illinois Small Business Development Center Network
and the
Occupational Safety and Health Administration
and the
State of Illinois Onsite Consultation Program

I. Background

The Illinois Small Business Development Center (SBDC) Network, the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA), and the State of Illinois Onsite Consultation Program (DCCA) continue to strive to meet customer needs by providing information, assistance and training that will enable small businesses to successfully meet their unique challenges.

Based on experience, OSHA recognizes that outreach activities and cooperative initiatives can have a significant impact on worker safety and health. These tools provide opportunities for employers and employees to voluntarily improve their safety and health management systems and be recognized for outstanding performance.

The Illinois SBDC Network has contact with over 50,000 small businesses each year through their statewide network of service centers. Working together, the Illinois SBDC Network, OSHA, and DCCA can expand the information, assistance and training available to small business employers on safety and health in the workplace. In addition, small businesses can be recognized for their commitment to worker safety and health through OSHA's Voluntary Protection Program (VPP) or Consultation's Safety and Health Achievement Recognition Program (SHARP).

II. Partnership Goals

The Illinois SBDC Network, OSHA, and DCCA will work in partnership to accomplish the following partnership goals:

- Enhance outreach activities and training programs to improve small business awareness of OSHA's regulations, safety and health management systems, and cooperative programs.
- Increase the use of OSHA technical and training assistance, and participation in cooperative programs by small businesses.
- Improve the safety and health performance of businesses that receive outreach, training, and other assistance services (i.e. mentoring, onsite consultation, hazard identification).

III. Objectives

The Illinois SBDC Network, OSHA, and DCCA will work in partnership to accomplish the following objectives:

Awareness: Develop an efficient and effective avenue for communicating occupational safety and health information and resource options to the small business community to:

- Increase the knowledge of OSHA's regulatory requirements through publications geared toward small businesses.
- Highlight the benefits of having a comprehensive safety and health management system.
- Increase use by small businesses of Illinois SBDC Network, OSHA and DCCA resources.

Referrals & Assistance: Facilitate the use of and participation in OSHA's cooperative programs to:

- Identify business owners who wish to improve their safety and health performance and promote the use of Consultation services and training.
- Expedite referrals to the appropriate Consultation project to request assistance.
- Facilitate the assignment of mentors for those businesses interested in gaining recognition through the VPP and SHARP.

Training: Identify and target interested small businesses for safety and health training on OSHA requirements in addition to the elements and benefits of effective safety and health management systems. Specifically:

- Provide training to assist businesses in complying with OSHA's regulations and standards.
- Identify small business needs for specific safety and health training and develop and deliver courses as appropriate.
- Provide joint training for Illinois SBDC Network coordinators to enhance their awareness level of safety and health issues.
- Create and promote instruction that will address the needs of non-English speaking and other hard-to-reach employers and employees where appropriate.

Improved Performance: Demonstrate a positive impact on worker safety and health for businesses participating in activities provided through the partnership to:

- Reduce the number of accidents, injuries, and associated costs in participating small businesses; track and analyze results.
- Improve the accuracy of recordkeeping to capture the "true picture" of illnesses and injuries.
- Increase the number of small businesses with written, comprehensive safety and health management systems.

IV. PARTNER ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

The Illinois SBDC Network, OSHA and DCCA agree to work in partnership to improve safety and health performance of small businesses.

The statewide, lead Small Business Development Center agree to work with local SBDC Network service centers to:

- ✓ Identify issues on which OSHA should focus in order to meet small business needs.
- ✓ Distribute safety and health information to small businesses.
- ✓ Provide locations and outreach assistance for small business training on OSHA requirements and effective safety and health management systems.
- ✓ Promote OSHA's cooperative programs among their clients, and provide referrals to OSHA (e.g., Consultation and mentoring requests) when authorized to do so by individual small business employers.
- ✓ Track, analyze, and share information on activities.

The Occupational Safety and Health Administration agrees to:

- ✓ Work cooperatively with the Illinois SBDC Network and/or its members to provide safety and health information, training, and training materials specifically aimed at small businesses.
- ✓ Provide training and training materials, through the Illinois SBDC Network to help employers understand and comply with OSHA regulations and to implement effective safety and health management systems.
- ✓ Respond to referrals from the Illinois SBDC Network and/or its members, providing OSHA services to small businesses (e.g., Consultation and VPP mentoring).
- ✓ Track, analyze, and share information on activities.

The State of Illinois Onsite Consultation Program agrees to:

- ✓ Work cooperatively with the Illinois SBDC Network and OSHA to provide safety and health information, training and training materials specifically aimed at small businesses.
- ✓ To support effective delivery of training and outreach that will positively impact the small business community.
- ✓ Respond to referrals from the Illinois SBDC Network, providing OSHA services to small businesses (i.e. Consultation).
- ✓ Track, analyze, and share information on activities.

V. PARTNERSHIP ADMINISTRATION

Steering Committee: A Steering Committee will be formed to manage the partnership. Representatives from each of the following will comprise the Committee: the Illinois Small Business Development Center Network (3), OSHA's Illinois Area Offices (2), and the State of Illinois Onsite Consultation Program (2).

The committee will determine partnership procedures, hold quarterly conference calls, track, analyze and share information on partnership activities and results, and meet at least annually to evaluate the effectiveness of the agreement. When possible, the meeting will take place in conjunction with the Fall SBDC Network meeting.

VI. PARTNERSHIP MEASURES

The Partnership Steering Committee will identify appropriate performance measures for the partnership. These measures will focus on the impact of outreach, training, assistance, and reductions in illness and injury experience.

VII. IMPLEMENTATION

The initial phase of the partnership will focus on providing information and training regarding OSHA's machine guarding standards and Safety and Health Program Action Items. To achieve that goal, the Steering Committee will coordinate the announcement and availability of OSHA's machine guarding standards and Safety and Health Program Action Items training and develop a pilot program to be offered at SBDC's. Once training has been provided and evaluated, the courses will be offered through other SBDC Network sites.

Concurrent with expanding the machine guarding and safety and health program training, the Steering Committee will develop and implement an action plan to address the remaining partnership objectives.

VIII. TERMS OF AGREEMENT

This agreement will begin 30 days from date of signing and run for three (3) years. The agreement will be reviewed annually in writing and at the end of the three (3) year term by the Steering Committee. The agreement may be modified at any time with the agreement of all signatory partners. The agreement may be renewed at the end of three years, also with agreement from all parties.

IX. FUNDS

It is not anticipated that any funding will be transferred between OSHA and the SBDC. However, OSHA will endeavor to provide the necessary training and promotional materials, subject to the availability of appropriations.

X. TERMINATION

The partnership may be terminated for any reason 30 days following the receipt of a signed, written letter from any signatory partner.

Signed this _____ day of _____ 2002

Charles Shields, Area Director
Aurora Area Office, OSHA

Peggy Zweber, Area Director
Peoria Area Office, OSHA

Diane Turek, Area Director
Chicago North Area Office, OSHA

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