



News Release

PRESS OFFICE

Release Date: March 16, 2006
Release Number: 06-18

Contact: Anne Marie Frawley (202) 205-6948
Internet Address: <http://www.sba.gov/news>

SBA Asks Private Sector to Join Policy Discussion On Disaster Response

Solicits Input on Private Sector Role and Capabilities

WASHINGTON – The U.S. Small Business Administration today released a Request for Information (RFI) soliciting input from interested parties on how the private sector can best support the delivery of SBA’s Disaster Assistance program, within its current operational framework and/or within a guaranteed lending framework.

“We are hoping to engage the general public in a policy discussion about the potential role and the capability of the private sector to deliver disaster assistance loans to the victims of natural disasters,” said SBA Administrator Hector V. Barreto. “Where there are ideas to improve the federal government’s response to such unprecedented natural disasters as the 2005 hurricanes along the Gulf Coast, it is our obligation to hear them.

“We’ve done a lot to expedite our response in these areas, and over the last six months we have approved more disaster loan dollars in a shorter time frame than in any other disaster response in the agency’s history,” Barreto said. “But that doesn’t mean there isn’t a better way.”

“Following the unprecedented disasters of Hurricanes Katrina, Rita and Wilma, the SBA made numerous changes to its disaster loan program to provide assistance to qualifying homeowners, and business owners as quickly as possible,” said Representative Don Manzullo, Chairman of the House Small Business Committee. “I appreciate the fact that Administrator Barreto is looking to do better and is seeking guidance from the private sector on how they can help our government help Americans the next time disaster strikes.”

In the aftermath of a federally declared disaster, SBA provides assistance to qualified homeowners, renters and business owners in the form of long-term low-interest loans. The magnitude of the 2005 hurricanes that devastated the Gulf region caused more home and business owners to apply for SBA assistance than any previous disaster in the agency’s history.

In order to prepare for future disasters, and to ensure that the disaster program is operating at its highest potential, SBA seeks ideas and options for complementing the agency’s existing resources. The comment period will last for 45 days. All responses must be received by 5:00 pm EST on May 2, 2006.

Over the past six months, the SBA has processed over 282,587 applications for more than \$6.2 billion in disaster recovery loans from hurricane survivors in Louisiana, Mississippi, Texas, Florida and Alabama.

Complete details available on the Fed Biz Ops Web site at
<http://www.fbo.gov/spg/SBA/OOA/OPGM/SBAHQ%2D06%2DI%2D0001/SynopsisR.html>.