



Montana District Office

District Director
Michelle Johnston

Michelle Johnston is District Director for the U.S. Small Business Administration's (SBA) Montana District Office located in Helena. Appointed in December of 2001, Ms. Johnston is responsible for the delivery of SBA programs throughout Montana including a loan portfolio of over 2500 loans and more than \$330 million dollars, oversight of ten Small Business Development Centers (SBDC), and seven SCORE chapters.

Ms. Johnston began her federal career in 1974 with the Veterans Administration and moved to U.S. Geological Survey in the fall of 1976. In 1986, she transferred to the Internal Revenue Service and in 1987, came to SBA in Business Development. One of her collateral duties was the Women's Business Ownership Rep and was honored for her work in that arena and started the very successful Women's Network for Entrepreneurial Training (WNET) in Montana. She was responsible for oversight of the Small Business Institute program and during that period, three of the plans were recognized as the National Undergraduate studies of the year. Michelle was named Chief of Entrepreneurial Development in 1996, and not only oversaw all ED programs but government contracting as well as the Public Information function. In 2000, she was named Acting District Director and one year later was named District Director for Montana.

During her tenure as District Director, Montana ended the first year of the scorecard, 2003, as the #1 office out of 70 District Offices, reaching or exceeding 125% of goals. Again in 2006, Montana tied two other states in the country for very small markets reaching or achieving all goals. In 2001, Montana was honored to have the National Minority Small Business of the Year, in 2004, the National Exporter of the year and in 2006, the 1st Runner Up for National Small Business Person of the Year.

Throughout Michelle's professional career she has served on many boards including Career Training Institute, President of the Helena YWCA, President of Business and Professional Women and a past State Business Chair. She currently serves on the Combined Federal Campaign Committee.

Johnston is no stranger to small business, as she and her husband have owned and operated their own small business for many years. They started their auto body shop business in 1976, received an SBA guaranteed loan to purchase the real estate in 1979, and today have grown it into a profitable and successful enterprise. She is proud to be a small business owner and knows first hand the trials and tribulations of owning a small business can bring. Both Johnston and her husband are Montana natives and have two adult children, Heather and Travis and two grandchildren.