



2013 LEGISLATIVE DAY at the STATE CAPITOL

SBDC Message for State Capitol Meetings

KEY MESSAGE POINTS

- 1) What is the SBDC? Briefly introduce and describe the program.
- 2) Explain how the member can help:
 - a. Support legislation that establishes SBDC in statute and provides a guideline for reporting in years that state funds are appropriated.
 - b. Support SBDC's appropriations request in the budget bill (\$6 million)
- 3) Explain what you can do for your elected official – the value you bring.

SUGGESTED TALKING POINTS

- 1) What is the SBDC? Provide brief background on services you provide and types of businesses/individuals you assist. Explain the importance and impact of your work in the legislator's district and region. Provide economic impact numbers: jobs and businesses created, capital infusion, other key indicators.
- 2) How can the member help SBDC?
 - a. *Support legislation* that establishes SBDC in statute and provides a guideline for reporting in years that state funds are appropriated.
 - b. *Support SBDC's appropriations request* in the budget bill (\$6 million)
 - Explain that a \$6 million investment from the state leverages an additional \$18 million for direct small business assistance services (\$12 million in cash from SBA; \$6 million in-kind) – a total of \$24 million.
 - We are asking the State of California to commit 25% of the funding for this statewide program.
 - You may want to say that California is virtually the only state that doesn't contribute matching funds to the SBDC. The SBA has invested more than \$100 million in California over the last 10 years.
 - Be prepared to explain the value – how will the state benefit?
 - With state funding, the SBDC will have the resources to provide services to even more California small businesses
 - Increased funding has a direct correlation to SBDC economic impact, such as jobs created, business starts, etc.
 - The SBDC will serve as the State's small business assistance arm, as it does in many other states (examples: Ohio, Michigan)
 - *Without state matching funds*, the SBDC will have to: send money back to DC, reduce services and close centers at a time when small business assistance is very much in demand.
- 3) Explain what you and your SBDC can offer to your legislator.

Examples include: provide access to the small business community in his/her district; offer expertise on issues affecting small business; provide opportunity to participate in community events and become engaged with the small business sector. Offer to prepare for them a list of small business resources for their websites. Ask if you can add them (or staff) to your e-mail newsletter update list, to keep them informed about activities. Offer to

send them regular updates on your performance and economic impact. Invite them to visit your center for a tour, and set up a small meeting for them with some of your clients.

HELPFUL TIPS

The most important thing to do is prepare your message so that you feel comfortable in the meeting. This goes beyond the simple presentation of collateral materials. You must be prepared to deliver a clear, concise and consistent message that results in further education, understanding and support for the network. **Remember, however, we are not there to lobby, but to educate and champion support for the program.**

Provide Materials. To support your points and to provide leave-behind information, give the legislators a copy of the updated statewide brochure, together with a document you or your lead center has created that shows local/regional economic impact and success. Make sure to offer your business card as well.

Plan ahead for your meetings. If colleagues are joining you in the meetings, take a few minutes beforehand to plan the following – remember that you'll probably only have 15 minutes with each legislator, and you want to make the most of your limited time.

- Decide who will make what points.
- Have facts lined up prior to the meeting.
- Keep focused on the meeting goal – state funding support for the CA SBDC.
- Be prepared to answer questions about funding sources, specific funding challenges, and possible solutions.

Stay positive! Remember, the CA SBDC is the state's largest and most effective provider of small business assistance. We are the biggest AND best at what we do -- proven by our results.

Don't hesitate to ask for support. Ask the legislator directly about his or her willingness to support state funding for the CA SBDC network. Identify points for follow-up and invite the legislator and staff to visit your center and meet with area businesses (your success stories and champions) from their district.

GENERAL SMALL BUSINESS AND SBDC TALKING POINTS

- SBDCs are on the front lines of the jobs crisis, doing our best with existing resources to address the unmet needs of California's primary job creators – small businesses.
- Emphasize the importance of small business to our state's economy:
 - Explain that start-up companies are California's most promising source of new jobs (Kauffman Foundation)
 - In 2010, there were 3.5 million small businesses in California. Of these, 684,953 were employers, and together, they account for 50.4% of private-sector jobs in the state.
 - **Small firms (under 500 employees) represent 99.2% of the state's employers.**
- Highlight the value of:
 - National leader – The CA SBDC is the country's largest SBDC network and a national leader in small business development services.
 - Statewide infrastructure – The CA SBDC has 37 local centers, with services available in EVERY county in California.
 - Cost effectiveness and ROI – In FY 2010-11, the California SBDC program created 1 job for every \$755 invested. This is, by far, **the most cost effective economic development and job creation program in the U.S.**
- Highlight that SBDCs serve real business needs that help businesses grow and add jobs.
 - Discuss how services focus on helping business strategically grow; focus on expanding to international markets; highlight local service areas (veterans, rural ag, etc.) important to the legislator's district and constituents.

- Highlight one to two appropriate business success stories that demonstrate how services directly helped business expand and add jobs.
- Discuss how the CA SBDC could significantly help the state's economy add jobs with state funding. When the network received one-time funding in 2010-11, our numbers increased significantly – with more funding, we can expand our services to create more jobs and assist more business owners and entrepreneurs.

FOLLOW-UP

The importance of following up on your Capitol visits cannot be overstated. Below are some suggestions that will help you develop an ongoing relationship with your legislators:

- Send a handwritten or typed thank you letter to the office shortly after the meeting.
- Ask to be added to the member's e-mail distribution list, and ask if a staff member would like to be added to the SBDC's e-mail list, to keep informed about success stories and upcoming events.
- Call the office in a couple of months to ask if they need more SBDC brochures.
- Invite the member and/or staff to attend local SBDC events.
- Prepare a detailed list of local/regional small business resources for their websites. This is a great and tangible follow-up action.