

meet the lender

a free business loan fair

The 2009 Meet the Lender event was another smashing success from the City of Austin Small Business Development Program! The highlights of the event are outlined below...

Information Fair

- 2009 marked the Sixth annual Meet the Lender Business Loan Fair hosted by the City of Austin Small Business Development Program (SBDP).
- The event was held at the Palmer Events Center and hosted 31 exhibitors (banks, credit unions, Community Development Corporations, City lending programs, and factors). SBDP and these exhibitors welcomed over 550 attendees to the exhibit hall.
- 85% of the attendees were satisfied with the overall quality of the event.
- Several respondents to the evaluation cited the face-to-face interaction with lenders as the most helpful experience. Others said that the BizAid sessions were most helpful, and still others said they appreciated the wide array of lenders gathered for the fair.
- In an effort to continue to improve this event, SBDP has gathered formal feedback from the exhibitors at the event. 92% said that they believe that this event helps entrepreneurs gain access to capital.

BizAid Business Start-Up Orientations

- Two BizAid Business Start-Up Orientations were offered to Austin small business owners and potential entrepreneurs free of charge.
- Classes were offered from 3:30-4:30 and from 5:15- 6:15, led by SBDP staff members, Michelle Frith and Randi Jenkins, respectively.
- The first class hosted 102 participants, and the second class hosted 76 participants who responded collectively with a

97% affirmative evaluation of the question "This class helped me learn something new that will help me start my business".

- Evaluations were very strong with comments such as: "The presentation was entertaining, clear to understand, very effective!" the most helpful activity/learning experience was "...learning about all of the available resources Austin offers" and "I am glad the City of Austin has this program".
- After finishing the Business Start-Up Orientations, participants were encouraged to then make one-on-one appointments with BizAid counselors who can coach them at no cost in writing their business and marketing plans, or review existing plans for improvement. These services are also part of BizAid Business Development.

Further Follow-Up

- After completing their business plans, customers are also offered free financial management personal counseling, credit reviews and assistance with filling out loan applications through BizAid Accessing Capital. Small business owners can also attend low-cost classes on a myriad of business topics through BizAid Business Education.
- To sign up for an upcoming BizAid Business Start-Up Orientation, visit www.austinsmallbiz.org and click on SBDP Classes and Events to find the ideal date for you. For more information about how SBDP can help you, visit our website, or call 512.974.7800 for assistance.

