

SMALL BUSINESS NETWORK OF THE AMERICAS



DOS Photo



Accion U.S. Network Photo



DOS Photo

“In today’s globalized world there is an opportunity for a small business or a medium-sized business to access a global marketplace and grow rapidly, and that means more jobs...”

—President Barack Obama, launching SBNA in 2012

Small and medium businesses employ more than half of the workforce in the Western Hemisphere. The Small Business Network of the Americas (SBNA) is comprised of community-based centers helping more than two million entrepreneurs and small business people create jobs. Business owners across the United States can walk into one of 1,100 Small Business Development Centers (SBDCs) to get long-term business counseling, managerial training, and market research services for little or no cost. Additionally, 1,250 incubators help entrepreneurs build new companies. These centers of expertise can connect with thousands of similar centers throughout the Western Hemisphere, extending business links beyond national borders. Membership in SBNA is open to a wide variety of organizations providing services to entrepreneurs and small business owners. SBDCs, incubators, accelerators, and other service providers are welcome to join.

The following programs support SBNA goals:

- » **SBDC Replication Program:** In the Western Hemisphere, 19 countries are adapting the SBDC model to local conditions. Currently, 68 SBDCs operate throughout Latin America and the Caribbean; 102 more are scheduled to open in 2015 and 2016. In 2014, SBDCs in the region helped 20,000 businesses create 16,000 jobs. For example, after receiving assistance from the Prospera Aguablanca Center in Cali, Colombia, a company called Decoraciones Calafell increased its sales by 58 percent.
- » **International Sister Center Program:** The U.S. Department of State facilitated more than 200 center-to-center partnerships in less than two years and provided 16 fellowships under which “sister centers” have exchanged staff. SBNA Sister Centers share best practices, provide joint counseling for small business clients, facilitate cooperative trade missions, and support soft landing programs for companies looking to expand internationally. For example, the SBDC at the University of Texas San Antonio worked with the Brazilian Network of SEBRAE Centers through SBDCGlobal.com to help a Brazilian small business called FlexDeck register its business and expand U.S. sales.
- » **La Idea Incubator Program:** The La Idea Incubator Program provides Latin American entrepreneurs with better access to the U.S. network of 1,250 specialized business incubators and connects them to the Latino diaspora. Beginning with 40 entrepreneurs from Mexico, Colombia, Peru, and Chile, the program provided scholarships for entrepreneurs to learn cutting edge business practices. For example, Carlos Sánchez of Colombia applied manufacturing techniques he learned at the Coastal Bend Innovation Center to increase labor productivity by 40%.

How do I get involved?

- » **Entrepreneurs:** Find your local business service center and ask if it can help you participate in SBNA.
- » **Business service providers:** Ask for an SBNA membership application at sbna@state.gov.
- » **Government officials:** Support your business service centers and encourage them to find international counterparts through SBNA.
- » **Universities:** Create a new center or link existing centers to SBNA.

Want to learn more?

- » Follow SBNA on [Facebook](#), [LinkedIn](#), or [Twitter](#).
- » Watch the SBNA [video](#). (A [transcript](#) of the video is also available.)
- » For additional information or to become a member of SBNA, contact: SBNA@state.gov.