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AGENCY FOR INTERNATIONAL

DEVELOPMENT

"Opportunities for International
Business Conferences"

Boston, Massachusetts

June 4, 1987

INTRODUCTION

On Thursday, June 4, 1987, the Agency for International Development (A.I.D.) Office of Small and Disadvantaged Business Utilization Minority Resource Center (OSDBU/MRC) held its fourth and final "Opportunities for International Business" Conference in Boston, Massachusetts. The purpose of the conference was to attract and identify small, minority and woman-owned businesses, Private Voluntary Organizations (PVOs) and Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs) interested in pursuing the international marketing opportunities offered by A.I.D. The enactment of the Gray Amendment of 1984 coupled with the continuous relief efforts by A.I.D. in over 70 less developed countries has improved opportunities for minority-controlled U.S. businesses interested in international trade and commerce.

The Lafayette Hotel was selected as the conference site. The Lafayette Hotel provided by far the best accommodations and amenities of any site selected for the three previous outreach conferences. Laurie Shields and the Lafayette Hotel staff were very professional and paid attention to the details needed to make the conference a success. The conference was successful in part because of the the service and staff of the Lafayette Hotel.

CONFERENCE ATTENDANCE

Attendance for the Boston Outreach conference was comprised of a diversified group of businesses ranging from high technology to small manufacturing. Participants were representative of the business community of the Greater Boston area and the Northeastern United States. A total of two hundred four (204) participants attended the conference including A.I.D. staff and special guests. One hundred nineteen (119) participants pre-registered for the conference with an additional forty-three (43) registering on-site the day of the conference.

Technical Service/Consulting Firms had the largest number of representatives in attendance followed by Import/Export firms. The breakdown is listed below.

- 1. Technical Service/Consulting Firms - 54
- 2. Import/Export Firms - 37

The following is a breakdown of businesses by ownership ethnicity:

- 1. Black Owned : 41%
- 2. Asian Owned : 8%
- 3. Woman Owned : 24%
- 4. White Owned : 34%
- 5. Hispanic Owned : 0%
- 6. Other : 0%

The activities that had the most significant impact on the conference participation were: (1) selective mailings (2) outreach activities (3) media relations. The importance of each activity supplemented the overall objective of the conference which was to introduce the New England small business community to the Agency for International Development.

Through the selective mailing activities, 6,000 firms were identified and mailed conference materials in Massachusetts and the Northeastern United States. An additional 500 firms were identified from specialized listings and through trade associations and organizations.

The following organizations served as communication networks to inform the business community of the A.I.D. conference.

1. Greater Boston Chamber of Commerce
2. Bristol County Development Council, Inc.
3. Boston/Urban League
4. Boston Region/NAACP
5. Boston Business Resource Center, Inc.
6. Boston Federal Executive Board
7. Bridgeport Economic Development Corporation
8. Massachusetts Venture Capital Corporation
9. Massachusetts State Office of Minority Business
10. New England Minority Purchasing Council
11. Rhode Island Department of Economic Development/
Minority Enterprise
12. Hartford Minority Purchasing Council
13. Boston Urban Coalition

The final phase of the conference promotion activities was the media relations campaign. The campaign focus was to further publicize the upcoming conference through the use of electronic and print media.

Press materials on the conference, including background information on Jay F. Morris, Deputy Administrator of the Agency for International Development, were mailed to over 150 radio and T.V. stations and print media outlets. Media coverage and interest in Boston was exceptional. Representatives of electronic and print media, including minority outlets provided media coverage and conducted interviews with Mr. John Wilkinson, Special Assistant to the Deputy Administrator. The following is a list of media outlets that were granted interviews with Mr. Wilkinson.

Media Interviews

1. WILD Radio - AM 1090
2. WVNR Radio - AM 1600
3. Sampan News - Boston, Massachusetts
4. El Mundo News - Boston, Massachusetts
5. Christian Science Radio News
6. Boston Globe Editorial Board
7. Center Daily News - Boston, Massachusetts

Fifty (50) public service announcements, forty (40) English, ten (10) Spanish were sent to radio stations in the Greater Atlanta area and surrounding regions. Information for the selection of appropriated radio stations for airing public

service announcements were provided by the March 1987 Radio and Recordings Rating Report and the Arbitron Rating System. The airing of public service announcements were confirmed with programming and public service directors.

CONFERENCE PROCEEDINGS SYNOPOSIS

At 8:00 am registration for the conference began on the 4th floor lobby. One hundred sixty-two (162) participants registered for the conference. Name tags and conference material packages were disseminated to all attendees after registering. Attendees reported to the Thomas Jefferson Ballroom where pastries and coffee were available. The registration area remained open until 1:00 pm to accommodate late registrants.

9:00 AM

The plenary session began with LaVerne Drummond, the Minority Resource Center Representative, providing opening and welcoming remarks. Mr. Joe Bennett, Director, Office of Small and Disadvantaged Business Utilization then provided words of encouragement and instruction on how to best utilize the resources available from A.I.D. Participants then viewed a videotaped message from Vice-President George S. Bush concerning small business involvement with the Agency for International Development. Ms. Drummond served as the session moderator. Ruth Saris, Director of Public Affairs, Greater Boston Chamber of Commerce discussed the Chambers efforts to increase the involvement and participation of small businesses in the Greater Boston area. She further explained the impact of small businesses on the international arena and how the chamber is assisting businesses to pursue overseas business and markets. Mr. Frank J. O'Connor, Boston District Office, U.S. Department of Commerce-International Trade Administration followed. Mr.

7

O'Connor illustrated the Commerce Department's programs targeted to assist small businesses interested in international business. A third panelist was scheduled to speak; however, she was unable to attend. Conference participants then viewed a videotaped presentation entitled "Introduction to A.I.D. Development Activities." The instruction period of the plenary session began with Ms. Renata Cameron providing an overview of the agency "The Roadmap to A.I.D." A morning coffee break followed allowing participants to converse among themselves and meet A.I.D. staff persons as well as review materials provided at the A.I.D. information booth.

10:15 AM

The conference reconvened with its morning workshop "The experience of Contracting with A.I.D.--The Successes and Pitfalls." The panel was comprised of four contractors. Each shared their myriad of experiences with the Agency for International Development for those interested in pursuing contracting opportunities.

12:00 PM

Conferees following a short break returned to the Thomas Jefferson Ballroom for the conference luncheon. Mr. John Wilkinson, Special Assistant to the Deputy Administrator delivered the Keynote address. Mr. Wilkinson discussed the future utilization of small businesses in A.I.D. and the

importance of their continued involvement. The A.I.D. areas of interest could be identified during the luncheon by signs placed on the tables. A.I.D. staff persons with expertise in these areas were assigned to the appropriate tables.

1:30 PM

The afternoon was comprised of two workshop sessions on specific topics related to contracting opportunities with A.I.D. The conferees had the opportunity to select one workshop in each session. The workshops offered were:

1. Opportunities for Technical Services Firms
2. Commodity Exporting and Commodity-Related Services
3. Opportunities for Architectural/Engineering Firms
4. Marketing the Missions
5. Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCU's)
6. Networking and Joint Venturing
7. Contracting Procedures for Technical Services
8. Private Voluntary Organizations (PVO's)

Participant interest varied with workshop selections. The workshops most attended were the following:

<u>Workshops</u>	<u>Attendance</u>
1. Opportunities for Technical Service Firms	49
2. Export Opportunities and Export-Related Services	44
3. Marketing the Missions	38
4. Networking and Joint Venturing	30
5. Contracting Procedures for Technical Services	24
6. Architectural/Engineering Opportunities	13
7. Private Voluntary Organizations	5
8. Historically Black Colleges and Universities	3

Overall attendance for all the workshops was very good. The workshop evaluations reflected cross sectional opinions and suggestions from conference participants.

5:00 PM

Following the conclusion of the second workshop session, conferees re-assembled in the Thomas Jefferson Ballroom for the closing session. Mr. John Moffit, Assistant Regional Administrator, U.S. Small Business Administration (SBA) provided

an overview of the SBA, its 8(a) program and future activities. Ms. Gina Sanchez, Regional Director, U.S. Department of Commerce, Minority Business Development Agency provided additional remarks on the Department of Commerce sponsored programs available to small and minority-owned businesses. A short question and answer period followed the SBA and Department of Commerce Representatives. The moderator then introduced Joe Bennett, Director of the Office of Small and Disadvantaged Business Utilization who gave closing remarks. Following the closing session, a reception was held to provide conferees take opportunity to network with other conferees and A.I.D. staff.

GENERAL OBSERVATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The Boston "Opportunities for International Business" Conference was a perfect conclusion to a very successful national outreach campaign. The attitude of the business community in New England was the same evident throughout the country's small businesses are interested in A.I.D. financed projects. The attendees of the Boston conference have a new understanding of A.I.D. which will serve as the basis for greater interest and involvement in A.I.D. activities. The diversity of firms and businesses located in the New England region provide a representative mixture of industries and technology; nevertheless, an additional effort needs to be undertaken by OSDBU to identify more small and minority-owned firms in the New England region for A.I.D. projects.

Consideration of the following recommendations could further enhance the effectiveness of the A.I.D. Outreach conferences.

1. An A.I.D. external affairs officer or representative should be assigned to each outreach conference.
2. Research additional minority businesses and organizations in the New England area.