

## **DIRECT BUSINESS ASSISTANCE (DBA)**

### **Referral Program Enrollment Information**

The Direct Business Assistance program (DBA) is a referral service designed to provide entrepreneurs and owners of growing businesses with access to experienced business advisors, or "service providers." You have the opportunity to work with professionals who have the business and/or technical expertise important to growing companies. DBA service providers and advisors provide their expertise at reduced rates.

### **Program Participants**

DBA Participants are new or existing business owners/entrepreneurs who have registered for the DBA program.

### **Services to be Provided**

The DBA program offers two types of referrals - professional and advisory - as part of an integrated professional services delivery system. The service offered is based on his/her level of business expertise and requirements. The professional referral program links you, the DBA participant, with service providers who will perform specific business services for the participant.

The Advisory Board referral program allows you to select up to five professional/knowledgeable people to offer advice and counsel in all areas of business planning and operation. The two referral programs are complementary and may be utilized sequentially or simultaneously, depending on the need.

### **Service Providers**

Service providers are experienced and qualified professionals who can provide specific business services (e.g., legal, accounting, financial or others) and/or business managers with the ability to guide a business owner through the stages of developing and managing a growing company.

### **Free and Reduced Rate Services**

An initial half-hour introductory meeting with a professional service provider is offered at no charge. You may either request specific services (e.g., setting up an accounting system or writing a contract), or assistance from one or more advisors (e.g., advice on managing personnel or obtaining financing for expansion).

After the initial meeting, the services are offered at free and reduced rates. Service providers have signed agreements with the DBA program for maximum charges but may offer rates below those maximums. Other forms of non-cash compensation may also be negotiated.

The DBA Fee Discount Schedule is as follows:

<i>Maximum one-half hour</i> Introductory Meeting.....	No charge
First two hours of service.....	No charge
Next two hours of service.....	25% of schedule rate
Next four hours of service.....	50% of schedule rate
Next eight hours of service.....	75% of schedule rate
All additional services.....	Schedule rate

Any Professional Service Provider you may be referred to has an agreement with DBA to charge only the published fee on the following discount schedule. In those cases where there is no hourly charge for service, the DBA Professional Service Providers agree to give you a 30% reduction on your first order or job and a 20% reduction on the second.

### **Professional Referral**

If you need specific professional services such as legal counsel or accounting, you will be provided a list of one to three service providers in each category. You should interview and select the service provider with whom you wish to work. During the initial consultation with prospective service providers, you are responsible for providing a detailed description of your business and needs for service; such description will serve as a basis for discussion concerning the specific nature and scope of the professional services to be rendered.

### **Advisory Board Referral**

The DBA program is based on the premise that growth-oriented businesses can improve their operating performance through consistent input from outside professional advisors. You may select one or more board members to act as advisors to your business. The duties of the advisory board can be defined to meet the your individual needs and the availability of the board members. After a period of service offered free of charge by advisors, compensation for board members is optional and may take negotiated, non-cash forms.

### **Other DBA Services**

DBA is fully integrated with all the resources of the University of Houston Small Business Development Center (SBDC) Network, including consulting, training, government procurement, and other assistance programs.

