

City of Alexandria, Virginia

MEMORANDUM

DATE: APRIL 21, 2004
TO: THE HONORABLE MAYOR AND MEMBERS OF CITY COUNCIL
FROM: PHILIP SUNDERLAND, CITY MANAGER^S
SUBJECT: BUDGET MEMO # 71: SMALL BUSINESS FORUMS

This memorandum is in response to Councilman Smedberg's question: "When was the last time the City sponsored a (small) business forum?"

The City participates in business forums by co-sponsoring or supporting seminars and forums held by the Alexandria Economic Development Partnership (AEDP), the Alexandria Small Business Development Center (SBDC) and the Chamber of Commerce. Both AEDP and the SBDC receive a substantial part of their budget from the City.

The Alexandria Small Business Development Center holds roundtable discussions every month on a broad range of business issues of concern to small business owners. These are usually cosponsored with the Alexandria City Public Schools and/or the Chamber of Commerce. Roundtables are scheduled for April 13, 15, 19 and 20, including "Practical Steps for Small Business Start-ups," "Developing a Business Plan," "Introduction to Quickbooks Pro," and "Sizing Up the Competition." Topics scheduled for May include "How to Price your Products & Services" and "Avoiding Legal Landmines in Your Daily Business."

AEDP will hold four business seminars in 2004, but the final schedule has yet to be determined. They are hosting a seminar on April 20, 2004, with McGuireWoods LLP (law firm,) regarding Alexandria's Industrial Development Authority (IDA). It is geared to nonprofit organizations, especially associations, who wish to purchase a building. AEDP sponsored five business seminars in 2003, including a seminar with George Mason University titled "Seven Factors for Business Success," on November 6, 2003.

Thus, a good range of opportunities for small businesses to network, obtain start-up information, avoid legal pitfalls, learn how to compete, market and perform well, and so forth have been made available. A "small business forum," designed for these same purposes, would not appear to be needed. Staff certainly would entertain any suggestions as to other types of forums or other events that would benefit small businesses.