

WORKSHOP GIVES TIPS FOR BUSINESSES Small-business owners will learn how to get big contracts

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Author: LINDA MCINTOSH, U-T

A free workshop to help small-business owners get contracts with government and public agencies, prime contractors and large corporations is slated for July 25 in Poway. The "Meet the Buyers" seminar run by the North San Diego Small Business Development Center hosted by MiraCosta College, covers how the contract procurement process works and ways to connect with buyers.

The center helped San Diego-area small businesses win \$17.9 million in contracts between January 2013 and April this year.

The workshop will be led by Cheryl Brown, the center's procurement specialist, with a panel of experts from government, public agencies and large companies.

Topics include where to find jobs, bid process, certifications and marketing. After the panel discussion, participants can meet the speakers and representatives from organizations interested in connecting with small-business owners.

Attendees will learn about opportunities through local, state and federally funded projects, for example, SANDAG's Mid-Coast Corridor Transit Project, which extends trolley service from Old Town to University City.

About a quarter of the California state's contracts and just under a quarter of federal contracts are earmarked for small businesses, the center reported.

Among the organizations expected to participate are the San Diego Airport Authority, San Diego Unified School District, SANDAG, **Department of General Services**, Sundt Construction Inc., North County Transit District and San Diego County along with Camp Pendleton/Miramar, MTS, Turner Construction and SDG&E Business Services.

Special guests include Assemblyman Brian Maienschein, Poway Mayor Don Higginson and representatives from Congressman Scott Peters' office.

The center was opened 15 years ago by MiraCosta College at 1823 Mission Ave. near the college's Community Learning Center. Since then the center has given workshops and one-on-one consulting to thousands of small-business owners on how to start a business and grow it. The center has counseled 8,543 clients and put on 1,688 workshops for more than 21,420 participants and helped start 304 businesses.

The center is funded partly by the Small Business Administration and local organizations.

The workshop is from 10:30 a.m. to 1 p.m. at Poway City Hall, Council Chambers, 13325 Civic Center Drive. There is no cost to attend; space is limited.

Another workshop is scheduled for Aug. 15 in Carlsbad.