

SMALL BUSINESS SUPPORT

Outreach

The impact of Ex-Im Bank's financing is particularly significant for small businesses, which are directly involved in approximately 86 percent of the Bank's transactions. Small businesses are the biggest users of the Bank's export credit insurance and working capital guarantee products, and exports benefiting from these products have grown.

Ex-Im Bank works with small businesses at the local level through its five regional offices that provide assistance and conduct direct outreach to companies. The Bank also works through a nationwide network of nearly 40 City/State Partners – state and local organizations that provide information and assistance on the Bank's financing. Ex-Im Bank works with 120 delegated authority lenders in 28 states that can directly commit Ex-Im Bank's guarantee on working capital loans. Insurance brokers in every state can assist with Ex-Im Bank's export credit insurance applications.

Ex-Im Bank participates in approximately 30 trade shows and sponsors more than 50 exporter seminars every year, including events involving small businesses and exporters of environmentally beneficial goods and services. The Bank is also reaching out to more women- and minority-owned companies.

Technology Improvements

Ex-Im Bank is developing several Internet-based applications for its insurance and working capital guarantee products. As of the end of FY 2002, customers can apply on-line for letters of interest, and online applications for Ex-Im Bank's working capital guarantee are also available through selected delegated authority lenders. The Bank is also working on automating its insurance application and processing.

Benefit to Small Business Suppliers

The U.S. Commerce Department has found that nearly three-fourths of all jobs supported by manufactured exports are generated indirectly by suppliers. Many U.S. small businesses benefit from Ex-Im Bank transactions involving larger companies. The Bank's 13 largest users have more than 35,000 suppliers throughout the country, many of which are small businesses. Ex-Im Bank is currently developing a process to capture data on the large number of U.S. small businesses that benefit indirectly from the Bank's support as suppliers.