



Philadelphia Development Partnership

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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PHILADELPHIA ORGANIZATION AWARDED NATIONAL TECHNOLOGY GRANT TO BENEFIT CITY MICROENTERPRISE DEVELOPMENT

PHILADELPHIA, PA (April 30) – The Philadelphia Development Partnership is one of nine recipients nationwide of the 2003 Microenterprise Development Program grant initiative launched by the Hewlett -Packard Company. As part of this initiative, PDP will receive between \$150,000 and \$300,000 in equipment, cash, services and technical support.

The Philadelphia Development Partnership (PDP) is a non-profit organization that provides small loans and business training and support services to microenterprises in the greater Philadelphia region. Hewlett Packard (HP) is a leading global provider of computer technologies, services and solutions to consumers and businesses. A microenterprise is a business with five or fewer employees that generates less than \$50,000 in annual revenues and has initial capital needs of less than \$35,000. PDP's primary audiences are low-income and minority microentrepreneurs in the inner city neighborhoods of Philadelphia and Chester City. The organization serves over 350 clients per year, among them child care providers, specialty gift merchants, hair and nail stylists, bakers, caterers, contractors and professional service providers.

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“The grant from HP will enable us to develop an online community and educational resource to help bridge the ‘digital divide’ for low-income entrepreneurs,” says Leslie Benoliel, PDP’s executive director.

Through PDP’s unique and innovative peer lending program called Community Capital Works (CCW), microentrepreneurs can access loans starting as small as \$500 without putting up collateral or revealing their credit histories. The program works; since 1999, PDP has disbursed 110 loans and boasts a healthy 95 percent repayment rate. CCW is the only peer lending program operating in Pennsylvania today.

HP received 527 applications for its Microenterprise Development initiative from microenterprise and community development organizations from all over the country and conducted a rigorous three-phase review process. Grant announcements were made on March 24, 2003. HP Program Manager for Philanthropy and Education, Camilla Nelson, said “We purposefully selected organizations that are diverse in size, client base and geography to establish a portfolio of recipients that will provide HP with a broad base for learning opportunities to benefit the microenterprise development industry moving forward.”

The HP initiative strives to make microenterprise development agencies more effective and assist them in providing their clients with access to technology and associated training. By partnering with these agencies, HP seeks to build long-term productive capacity in these organizations and the communities they serve and to assist the microenterprise industry in the U.S. by supporting best practices in the use of technology for microenterprise development.

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This is the third time that PDP, the region's largest provider of loans and business development services to low-income microentrepreneurs, has successfully competed for a national grant. "The announcement could not have come at a better time as PDP, like most non-profit organizations across the country, is facing a tough funding environment in this uncertain economy," says Benoliel.

PDP's technology vision, created in partnership with Osiris Group, Inc., a management consulting firm that provides resource and program development services to both companies and non-profits, includes strategies to reduce the barriers between neighborhood microentrepreneurs and the information and skills they need to improve their businesses.

PDP, an affiliate of the Greater Philadelphia Urban Affairs Coalition, was one of seven organizations nationwide to be awarded a multi-year grant in 1998 from the Charles Stewart Mott Foundation for a national demonstration project. PDP also received funding support from the U.S. Small Business Administration under the Program for Investment in Microenterprise (PRIME) in 2001 and 2002.

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