



*The Metropolitan Water District of Southern California*

# NEWS RELEASE

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## OVER 200 ENTREPRENEURS ATTEND INLAND EMPIRE SEMINAR TO LEARN ABOUT BUSINESS OPPORTUNITIES

### **Event sponsored by Metropolitan, Inland Empire Utilities Agency**

More than 200 business owners and leaders joined local water officials at an Inland Empire seminar offering information about opportunities to contract with public and government agencies.

Sponsored by the Metropolitan Water District of Southern California and Inland Empire Utilities Agency, the “Connect 2 Met” seminar at the Etiwanda Gardens in Rancho Cucamonga provided entrepreneurs information on how their businesses may seek contracts with Metropolitan and other partnering governmental agencies.

The March 12 seminar—featuring Angel Santiago, Metropolitan board vice chair and IEUA representative on the MWD board, and Gilbert F. Ivey, Metropolitan chief administrative officer and assistant general manager—provided participants information about contracting opportunities and how to refine their business skills with the assistance of resource partners, including the Inland Empire Small Business Development Center.

“Metropolitan and IEUA encourage new businesses to get to know the agencies and help existing businesses grow, while providing information about contract opportunities between the water districts and small, emerging business,” said Santiago, who also serves as vice president of Inland Empire’s board.

“Just as Southern California depends on Metropolitan and local agencies like IEUA to provide reliable supplies of high-quality water, we rely on a vibrant local business community,” Santiago said.

Launched in 2001, Metropolitan’s Business Outreach Program offers incentives to local and small businesses participating in the district’s competitive contracting. Small and locally owned businesses, disabled veterans, women, minorities and economically disadvantaged enterprises are encouraged to participate in the expanding program.

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In creating the program, Metropolitan's board established a goal of using small businesses for 18 percent of total contracted dollars and a disabled veteran business enterprise target of 3 percent. Up to 40 percent of Metropolitan's contracting dollars have been awarded to small and disabled veteran businesses since the program's inception, representing a reinvestment of \$700 million into the regional economy.

In addition, Metropolitan offers Netconnect, a cooperative of public agencies for reciprocal recognition of small business certifications and sharing of databases. Netconnect allows for sharing in costs of outreach and, potentially, cooperative procurement opportunities with other participating local government agencies.

For more information on Metropolitan's Business Outreach Program and the Netconnect, visit "[www.mwdh2o.com](http://www.mwdh2o.com)."

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*The Metropolitan Water District of Southern California is a cooperative of 26 cities and water agencies serving 19 million people in six counties. The district imports water from the Colorado River and Northern California to supplement local supplies, and helps its members to develop increased water conservation, recycling, storage and other resource-management programs.*