

## **IPR Center launches community-based initiative to help small business protect themselves against intellectual property theft, other fraud**

**WASHINGTON** - Today, on World Intellectual Property (IP) Day, the National Intellectual Property Rights Coordination Center (IPR Center) in partnership with Michigan State University's Center for Anti-Counterfeiting and Product Protection (A-CAPP), U.S. Chamber of Commerce, and the Better Business Bureau announced the launch of "IP Protect." This joint initiative provides resources – free of charge - to aid small to mid-size businesses in protecting themselves against IP theft, fraud and cyber security awareness.

"When we talk about intellectual property protection, too often the focus is solely on large companies that have dedicated personnel, and resources protecting their brand. Start-ups and small to mid-size businesses typically lack those resources or expertise which leaves them particularly vulnerable to IP theft, cyber intrusion and fraud," said IPR Center Director Steve Francis. "IP Protect is all about protecting local communities one small business at a time." According to the U.S. Small Business Administration, in 2020, small businesses made up 99.9% of U.S. companies (37.1 million) and employed 47.1% of the workforce (60.6 million). While large organizations have personnel and departments dedicated to IP protection, start-ups, small businesses, and medium-sized companies are often left without the expertise and resources to protect their intellectual property, leaving them particularly vulnerable to IP exploitation and loss.

"Small businesses are the backbone of the American economy. As communities stir back to life, small business owners are rightly focused on the renewed hope of growth. Offering support to these enterprises to protect their hard-earned intellectual property is not only the right thing to do, it is how we will collectively fuel economic development. We commend the National IPR Center for launching the IP Protect Program." said David Hirschmann, President and CEO, Global Innovation Policy Center, U.S. Chamber of Commerce.

IP Protect is designed to increase awareness and provide resources for small businesses about safeguarding all aspects of their intellectual property. By building relationships with public and private partners, the program connects local Homeland Security Investigations (HSI) offices and special agents with small to mid-size businesses to assist them in the prevention, recognition, detection, and resolution of attempted IP theft and all aspects of brand protection. IP Protect provides a trusted point of contact for inquiries, questions, and assistance to deal with preemptive protection and any ensuing fraud.

"There are 400,000 BBB Accredited Businesses across North America – most of which are small and mid-sized," said Kip Morse, CEO of the International Association of Better Business Bureaus. "We thank DHS, its agencies and its partners for highlighting the critical role that IP plays in the success of a business, and we look forward to carrying this important message forward to the millions of businesses that turn to BBB for helpful information."

IP Protect will provide small businesses with the following resources:

- Direct points of contact for assistance or reporting tips related to IP theft, fraud, cyber intrusions, website fraud, and trade secret violations.
- Cyber-attack security & data breach protection and response guidance.
- Brand protection best practices.

- Image and content rights protection guidance (video, image, music).
- Software development protection.
- Guidance on trademark registration steps and resources.

A small sample of the resources and educational materials available to small to mid-size businesses through the IP Protect initiative, can be found on the A-CAPP Center's [website](#).

By identifying at-risk organizations, raising awareness, establishing community partnerships, and providing resources, IP Protect seeks to reduce IP threats at the local level and connect businesses to the combined resources of all partners.

“Small and medium sized businesses face notable risks to their intellectual property due to their limited resources to detect and counter their exposure. Developing initiatives like IP Project, along with effective and economical tools and guides, can be a critical resource to support their protection.” A-CAPP Center Director Jeff Rojek

Small businesses interested in participating in the program can visit [IPRCenter.gov](http://IPRCenter.gov) or contact their local [HSI office](#).

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#### **About National Intellectual Property Rights Coordination Center**

The National Intellectual Property Rights Coordination Center, working collaboratively with its public and private sector partners, stands at the forefront of the United States government's response to combatting global intellectual property theft and enforcing intellectual properties rights violations. The IPR Center was established to combat global intellectual property theft – and, accordingly, has a significant role policing the sale and distribution of counterfeit goods on websites, social media, and the darkweb. To report IP theft or to learn more about the IPR Center, visit [IPRCenter.gov](http://IPRCenter.gov).

#### **About the Center for Anti-Counterfeiting and Product Protection**

The A-CAPP Center is an independent, interdisciplinary evidence-based hub whose activities focus on research, education and outreach designed to assist in protecting brands and products of all industries worldwide. The A-CAPP Center falls under the College of Social Science. Learn more at [a-capp.msu.edu](http://a-capp.msu.edu).