

ANNOUNCEMENT OF FEDERAL FUNDING OPPORTUNITY

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- **Federal Agency Name(s):** Minority Business Development Agency (MBDA), Department Of Commerce
- **Funding Opportunity Title:** Native American Business Enterprise Center (NABEC) Program (formerly the Native American Business Development (NABDC) Program).
- **Announcement Type:** Initial Announcement
- **Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance (CFDA):** 11.801 Native American Business Enterprise Centers
- **Funding Opportunity Description:** The Minority Business Development Agency (MBDA) is soliciting competitive applications from organizations to operate Native American Business Enterprise Centers (NABECs) (formerly Native American Business Development Centers (NABDCs)) under MBDA's Native American Business Enterprise Center Program in the following geographic areas:

NABEC Name	Location of NABEC	Geographic Service Area
North Carolina NABEC	Cherokee/Asheville, Charlotte, Lumberton or Pembroke, NC	State of North Carolina
New Mexico NABEC	Albuquerque, Farmington or Gallup, NM	State of New Mexico
Oklahoma NABEC	Oklahoma City or Tulsa, OK	State of Oklahoma

For-profit entities (including sole proprietorships, partnerships, and corporations), non-profit organizations, state and local government entities, American Indian Tribes and educational institutions are eligible to operate NABECs.

The NABEC Program requirements set forth herein increase the business and economic impact of individual NABEC projects by requiring that project operators deploy standardized business assistance services directly to Native American and other minority-owned businesses, develop a network of strategic partnerships and provide strategic business consulting within the respective NABECs geographical service area. These requirements will be used to generate increased results with respect to financing and contracts awarded to Native American- and minority-owned businesses and are thus a key component of the NABEC Program.

In order to receive consideration under this competitive solicitation, applicants must comply with all the requirements set forth in this Announcement of Federal Funding Opportunity (FFO or Announcement). This is not a grant program to help start a business. Applications submitted must be to operate a Native American Business Enterprise Center and to provide business consultation to eligible Native American and to other minority clients. Applications that do not meet these requirements will be rejected.

Note: MBDA published a *Federal Register* notice on August 29, 2003 (68 FR 51981), as amended on September 30, 2003 (68 FR 56267), February 11, 2004 (69 FR 6644) and February 19, 2004 (69 FR 7726), soliciting competitive applications for operators of the following eight NABDCs (now NABECs): Arizona Statewide NABDC, California Statewide NABDC, Minnesota/Iowa Statewide NABDC, New Mexico Statewide NABDC, North Carolina/Cherokee/Ashville NABDC, North/South Dakota Statewide NABDC, Northwest NABDC and the Oklahoma Statewide NABDC. This competition resulted in financial assistance awards (cooperative agreements) being issued for all eight locations, with a three-year award period of January 1, 2004 through December 31, 2006.

On September 6, 2006, MBDA published a *Federal Register* notice (71 FR 52529) soliciting competitive applications for operators of four regional NABECs (in place of the eight prior NABECs) for the next three-year award period commencing January 1, 2007. However, on October 25, 2006, MBDA published a *Federal Register* notice (71 FR 62420) (i) cancelling the September 6, 2006 solicitation and (ii) amending the original competitive solicitation to extend the total project award period for all eight of the original NABECs from three years to four years. MBDA took these actions in order to provide the Agency with a sufficient opportunity to solicit input from its stakeholders regarding any proposed program changes to be implemented during the next three-year award period. Operators of five of the eight NABECs accepted MBDA's invitation to extend the original award period for an additional year, while the operators of the North Carolina/Ashville/Cherokee NABEC, New Mexico Statewide NABEC and Oklahoma Statewide NABEC declined MBDA's invitation.

This FFO solicits competitive applications for the North Carolina NABEC, New Mexico NABEC and the Oklahoma NABEC. This FFO replaces in its entirety the previously published competitive solicitations for these three NABECs, although it generally adheres to previous programmatic requirements with updates being made to the computer requirements.

- **Dates:** The closing date for receipt of applications is **Friday, June 15, 2007**. Completed applications must be received by MBDA no later than 5:00 p.m. Eastern Daylight Savings Time (EDT) at the address below for paper submission or at www.Grants.gov for electronic submission. The due date and time is the same for electronic submissions as it is for paper submissions. The date that applications will be deemed to have been submitted electronically shall be the date and time received

at Grants.gov. Applicants should save and print the proof of submission they receive from Grants.gov. Applications received after the closing date and time will not be considered. Anticipated time for processing applications is ninety (90) days from the date of publication of this FFO. MBDA anticipates that awards for the North Carolina NABEC, New Mexico NABEC and Oklahoma NABEC will be made with a start date of August 1, 2007.

- **Pre-Application Conference:** A pre-application teleconference will be held on **Friday, May 18, 2007** in connection with this solicitation. A copy of the MBDA panel evaluation tool and a summary of the questions and answers from the pre-application conference will be available through the MBDA Internet Portal at www.mbda.gov (MBDA Portal) as soon as practicable following the conference. Please visit the MBDA Portal for registration instructions. For additional information, contact the MBDA National Enterprise Center (NEC) in the geographic service area in which the project will be located (see Section I.G. of this FFO for a listing of MBDA point of contacts). Parties interested in personally attending the pre-application conference must also register with the applicable NEC. Note that picture identification is required for entry into any Federal building.
- **Additional Information and Contact:** For further information, please visit MBDA's Portal at www.mbda.gov. Paper applications and standard forms may be obtained by contacting the MBDA National Enterprise Center for the area in which the applicant is located (See section VII. Agency Contacts). Forms 424, 424A, 424B, can also be obtained at <http://www.grants.gov>. Forms CD-511, and CD-346 may be obtained at www.doc.gov/forms. The SF-LLL can be obtained at www.whitehouse.gov/omb/grants.

Responsibility for ensuring that applications are complete and received by MBDA on time is the sole responsibility of the Applicant.

Addresses:

1a) Paper Submission – If Mailed: If the application is sent by postal mail or overnight delivery service by the applicant or its representative, one (1) signed original plus two (2) copies of the application must be submitted. Completed application packages must be mailed to:

Office of Business Development – NABEC Program
Office of Executive Secretariat, HCHB, Room 5063
Minority Business Development Agency
U.S. Department of Commerce
14th Street and Constitution Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20230

Applicants are advised that Department of Commerce mail security measures may

delay receipt of United States Postal Service mail for up to two weeks. Applicants may wish to use a guaranteed overnight delivery service. Department of Commerce delivery policies for Federal Express, UPS, and DHL overnight services require the packages to be sent to the address above.

1b) Paper Submission – If Hand-Delivered: If the application is hand-delivered by the applicant or his/her representative, one (1) signed original plus two (2) copies of the application must be delivered to:

U.S. Department of Commerce
MINORITY BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT AGENCY
Office of Business Development – NABEC Program (extension 1940)
HCHB, Room 1874
Entrance #10
15th Street, NW
Washington, DC
(Between Pennsylvania and Constitution Avenues)

U.S. Department of Commerce “hand-delivery” policies state that Federal Express, UPS, and DHL overnight services submitted to the address listed above (Entrance #10) cannot be accepted. These policies should be taken into consideration when utilizing their services. MBDA will not accept applications that are submitted by the deadline but rejected due to Departmental hand-delivery policies. The applicant must adhere to these policies in order for his/her application to receive consideration for award.

2) Electronic Submission: Applicants are encouraged to submit their proposal electronically at <http://www.Grants.gov>. Electronic submissions should be made in accordance with the instructions available at Grants.gov (see <http://www.Grants.gov/ForApplicants> for detailed information). MBDA strongly recommends that applicants not wait until the application deadline date to begin the application process through Grants.gov, in some cases, the process for completing an online application may require 3-5 working days.

Application Forms and Package – Paper Submission

A completed proposal submitted by mail/overnight delivery, or hand delivery must have the following sections:

- Program Narrative
- Budget and Budget Narrative
- Standard Forms 424; 424A; 424B; and SF LLL (if not applicable, please indicate “N/A” on form);
- Department of Commerce forms CD-346 (for key individuals); CD-511; and,
- Attachments (including but not limited to: business organization documents, resumes, official transcripts for project director, position descriptions, letters of

support, signed commitment letters from proposed key staff and in-kind contributors, etc.)

Failure to include, by the deadline, a signed, original SF-424 with the paper application will result in the application being rejected and returned to the applicant. Failure to sign and submit the REMAINING FORMS with the paper application by the deadline will automatically cause an application to lose two (2) points in the overall score. Failure to submit other documents or information required may also adversely affect an applicant's overall score. MBDA shall not accept any changes, additions, revisions or deletions to competitive applications after the closing date for receiving applications, except through a formal negotiation process. MBDA may also contact applicants for additional clarifications after the final evaluation by the review panel.

Application Forms and Package – Electronic Submission

A completed proposal submitted electronically consists of the following sections:

- Program Narrative
- Budget and Budget Narrative
- Standard Forms 424; 424A; 424B; and SF LLL (if not applicable, please indicate “N/A” on form);
- Department of Commerce Form CD-511;
- Department of Commerce form CD-346 (for key individuals) (Note: The CD-346 is not available within the Grant.gov application package. However, it can be found at www.doc.gov/forms. The form can be completed and attached to the application. An *original signature copy of the CD-346* will be required before an award will be made to the successful applicant.); and,
- Attachments (including but not limited to: business organization documents, resumes, official transcripts for project director, position descriptions, letters of support, signed commitment letters from proposed key staff and in-kind contributors, CD-346, as described above, etc.)

The preferred format for electronic attachments is .pdf. Files in this format may be read by practically any computer using free reader software. This is the most prevalent format for documents that are scanned from hard-copy. However, the Department will accept electronic files in Word, Wordperfect, Lotus or Excel formats as well.

Failure to include, by the deadline, a complete application as described above, will result in the application being rejected by Grants.gov. [Note: An electronic application cannot be submitted at Grants.gov unless all required fields on all required forms are completed.] Failure to submit other documents or information by the deadline, which does not result in the rejection of an application by Grants.gov, may affect an applicant's overall score. MBDA shall not accept any changes, additions, revisions or deletions to competitive applications after the closing date for

receiving applications, except through a formal negotiation process. MBDA may also contact applicants for additional clarifications after the final evaluations by the review panel. MBDA may allow more time for applicant submission due to system problems at Grants.gov that are beyond the control of the applicant.

The electronic submission date is the date that applications will be deemed to have been submitted electronically and shall be the date and time received at www.grants.gov. Applicants should save and print the proof of submission they receive from www.grants.gov. The due date and time is the same for electronic submission as it is for hard-copy submissions. ***Applicants should plan to submit electronically several days before the deadline***, some processes (i.e. Central Contractor Registry (CCR) and verification of Authorized Online Representative) may require additional time (i.e., 3-5 working days). Doing so will help to ensure that the applicant is fully complete and is accepted by Grants.gov prior to the deadline.

FULL ANNOUNCEMENT TEXT

I. Funding Opportunity Description

A. Introduction

The Minority Business Development Agency (MBDA) is soliciting competitive applications from organizations to operate Native American Business Enterprise Centers (NABECs) (formerly Native American Business Development Centers (NABDCs)) in the following geographic areas:

NABEC Name	Location of NABEC	Geographic Service Area
North Carolina NABEC	Cherokee/Asheville, Charlotte, Lumberton or Pembroke, NC	State of North Carolina
New Mexico NABEC	Albuquerque, Farmington or Gallup, NM	State of New Mexico
Oklahoma NABEC	Oklahoma City or Tulsa, OK	State of Oklahoma

The NABEC Program requirements increase the impact of the NABEC project by requiring that project operators deploy standardized business assistance services to the Native American business public directly, develop a network of strategic partnerships and provide strategic business consulting within the geographic service area. These requirements will be used to generate increased results with respect to financing and contracts awarded to Native American and minority-owned firms and thus, are a key component of this program.

Through this NABEC Program, MBDA is improving the traditional NABEC Program, by leveraging the full benefit of telecommunications technology, including the Internet, and a variety of online computer-based resources to dramatically increase the level of service that the Centers can provide to Native American and minority-owned firms.

This Program shall also incorporate an entrepreneurial approach to building market stability and improving quality of services delivered. This strategy expands the reach of the Centers by requiring project operators to develop and build upon strategic alliances with public and private sector partners, as a means of reaching out and serving Native American and minority-owned firms with rapid growth potential within the project's geographic service area. In addition, MBDA will establish specialized advanced programs for growth assistance to clients with the capacity to grow and expand. These programs are designed to foster growth assistance to its clients. The NABEC will also encourage collaboration and referrals of clients and non-clients that meet the requirements of these specialized programs and other MBDA sponsored networks. This

will provide a comprehensive approach to serving the emerging sector of the Native American business community.

The NABEC will operate through the use of trained professional business consultants who will assist minority entrepreneurs through direct client engagements.

Entrepreneurs eligible for assistance under the NABEC Program are Native Americans, Eskimos, African Americans, Puerto Ricans, Spanish-speaking Americans, Aleuts, Asian Pacific Americans, Asian Indians and Hasidic Jews. References throughout this Announcement regarding a NABEC's provision of services and assistance to Native American clients also includes the eligible non-Native American clients listed in the preceding sentence. No service may be denied to a member of any of the eligible minority groups listed above.

MBDA's new strategic growth initiative is focused on serving emerging minority and Native American firms capable of impacting economic growth and employment. MBDA wants to ensure that NABEC clients are receiving a consistent level of service throughout its funded network. To that end, MBDA will require NABEC consultants to attend a series of training courses designed to achieve standardized services and quality expectations. Further information about the training is provided in this document under the heading of Work Requirements.

B. Background

Under the NABEC Program, MBDA has selected locations for the establishment of Centers based on the size of the population in those markets and the density of Native American-owned companies, as established by U.S. Census Bureau. While this approach to site selection continues, MBDA shall fund a consistent level of projects from prior years. The NABEC Program stands to gain from the increased use of technology, training and strategic partnering in support of its prescribed performance measures.

The NABEC Program is a mainstay of MBDA's overall business development efforts. The NABEC Program is at the core of the Agency's comprehensive strategy for addressing the needs of growing Native American firms. Under this strategy, the NABEC will be expected to provide the following four types of client services:

1. Client Assessment- This activity requires the NABEC to conduct a standardized client assessment, which includes identifying the client's immediate and long-term needs, and establishes a projected growth track. MBDA shall provide an electronic tool to support this function (see Business Needs Analyzer under the heading of Enhancing the NABECs through Technology for more details). This activity shall be conducted at the onset of service delivery. This process may also include referring the client to any of MBDA's other funded projects that specialize in specific growth assistance and/or strategic partners that are capable of continuing client growth. The referral process may occur in conjunction with NABEC direct assistance.

2. Strategic Business Consulting – This involves providing intensive business consulting services that can be delivered by two methods:
 - Personalized Consulting – defined as one-on-one business consulting services utilizing an integrative systems approach to foster the growth of minority firms (see Systems Integrated Approach under the heading Client Services).
 - Group Consulting - seminars that provide education and training to Native American entrepreneurs on important business topics. The consulting should be hands-on, practical, and streamlined in order to reflect the time constraints of the typical entrepreneur. In addition, given the proliferation of online resources from MBDA as well as others, this training should be designed to educate clients in the use of the Agency’s electronic business assistance tools and in the use of electronic commerce generally to better access suppliers, customers and information.
3. Access to Capital – This involves assisting clients to secure the financial capital necessary to start-up, and thereafter to fuel growth and expansion of their businesses. Undercapitalization has been a major contributor to the failure of business ventures in the minority community over the years. The goal of this activity is to help the entrepreneur obtain the amount of financing appropriate to the scope of the proposed business, thereby helping to ensure the greatest likelihood of success for the client in the marketplace.
4. Access to Markets – This involves assisting clients to identify and access opportunities for increased sales and revenue. Activities include conducting market analysis, identifying sales leads, bid preparation assistance, creating market promotions, and assisting in the development of joint ventures and strategic alliances.

C. Enhancing the NABECs Through Technology

Over the last several years, MBDA has developed a variety of new technology tools designed to leverage the benefits of information technology to assist the minority business community. The Agency uses a high-speed network strategy that links all of its funded projects into a single virtual organization. The goal of MBDA is to allow all funded projects to have access to this technology through the MBDA Portal.

The technology tools that will be available to the NABECs include but are not limited to the following:

- Business Needs Analyzer – a software system designed to standardize and electronically record the *Client Assessment* process. This tool assists NABEC consultants to interview and benchmark the status, needs and potential growth of its clients. The program is designed and maintained by MBDA and operated by the NABEC.

- Phoenix/Opportunity – an electronic bid-matching system that alerts participating Native American and minority-owned firms of contract and teaming opportunities directly via e-mail. Procurement leads are transmitted to registered firms on a targeted basis according to the company’s industry classification and geographic market.
- Resource Locator – a software application that allows MBEs to search for business resources interactively on the Internet. Resource Locator can help Native American and minority-owned firms identify trade associations representing their industries, government licensing and permit offices, management and technical assistance providers, and a host of other resources quickly and efficiently.
- Capital Locator – an Internet-based tool that allows NABEC consultants to inquire about, identify and locate potential financiers nearest them. This tool shall provide basic financing criteria for each identified capital resource. The tool is designed to give users the benefit of a nationwide market for identifying financing needs and products.
- Business and Market Planning – a software package designed to streamline and enhance the development of business plans, marketing plans and other strategic business documents.
- Business Analyst GIS – a software operated at an individual computer workstation that provides strategic business data through a geographically-based information system. This software will be awarded to select NABECs, based on the availability of funds and competition.

These electronic tools will help streamline the process of delivering client assistance to Native American and other minority business enterprises, free up time so that the NABEC can implement MBDA's strategic goals and generate critical outcomes as described under the heading Performance Measures.

In addition, MBDA strongly encourages the NABEC to use these electronic tools daily because of the significant value they add to the NABEC and to Native American and other minority businesses. These tools are designed to reinforce the standardization of services received throughout the MBDA extended networks.

D. Work Requirements

The work requirements specify the duties and responsibilities of each recipient operating a NABEC.

Although it is not necessary for the applicant to have an office in the geographic service area at the time of application, one must be opened and be fully operational within thirty (30) days after receipt of the award. Fully operational means that all staff are hired, all required signs are up, all items of furniture and equipment (e.g., hardware, software,

Internet services, phones, faxes, etc.) are in place, and the NABEC's doors have been fully opened to the public for service

The NABEC must be accessible to disabled persons and strategically located in the geographic service area (as defined in this Announcement) to ensure that it is: (1) close to the available public and private sector resources, and (2) within a reasonable commuting distance to the Native American business community.

The NABEC operator must provide services to eligible clients within its specified geographic service area. Each NABEC operator must contribute its efforts to help support MBDA's online business assistance network as established by Agency policies.

All NABEC consultants and its project director shall be required to attend a one-time five (5) day mandatory training session on "Implementing a System for High-Quality Service." The costs of tuition, materials, conference facilities and amenities for the training program will be covered by MBDA. However, the NABEC shall budget lodging, food and travel expenditures for its attending staff in Hanover, New Hampshire. The training shall focus on:

- Orientation to the MBDA strategy
 - Instilling the entrepreneurial mindset
 - Standardization of client intake services
- Skills and information needed to provide high-quality services to emerging firms

Successful completion of this program, which involves a competency examination, will result in certification of the NABEC staff member by MBDA. In the event that one or more NABEC staff members should fail the competency examination, the NABEC shall lose two (2) points from the assessment score during the evaluation of the project. This training may be provided a second time by the MBDA after mid-year review. The second training session will require the attendance of NABEC staff not previously trained, and/or those who failed to successfully complete the initial training program.

In addition to the initial training, the NABEC may be invited to participate in a one-time five (5) day advanced program, held in Hanover New Hampshire during the of Spring of 2008. This training session will teach NABEC staff how to transform high-potential minority businesses and put them on a high-growth trajectory. The purpose of this program is to ensure that at least one staff member in each NABEC will have the skills to nurture the growth of clients to become larger companies, thereby helping to fulfill MBDA's strategic priority. Successful completion of this program, which involves a competency examination, will result in certification of the NABEC staff member by MBDA.

The NABEC shall budget for one staff member's lodging, food and travel expenditures. The costs of tuition, materials, and registration for the advanced training program will be covered by MBDA.

The NABEC is required to perform work in three (3) basic areas. These elements are designed to increase the exposure and visibility of Native American and other eligible minority entrepreneurs (as set forth in Section I.A. of this FFO). NABEC efforts in these activities should provide quantifiable results.

1. **Market Development** – is designed to facilitate the identification of potential clients, methods to solicit potential clients and to identify, develop and leverage public and private sector resources and business opportunities for their clients:

- a) **Market Research and Development**: systematically investigate the service area market to see what business and capital opportunities exist for client development, and search for sources of capital, sales opportunities, business buy-outs and new start possibilities. As market research is conducted, the NABEC will make optimum use of the MBDA network to ensure that the information is made available to fellow NABEC operators, and to Native American firms throughout the country.
- b) **Market Promotion**: promote Native American business development in the local business community by obtaining support from the community for the utilization of Native American firms.

The NABEC will promote Native American firms to the public and private sectors to build market awareness of the capability, talent and capacity of its clients. The NABEC may utilize public service announcements and paid advertising. The NABEC may promote its clients locally to entities such as: Chambers of Commerce, business and trade associations, corporations and company trade fairs and meetings, state and local government agency purchasing departments, economic development and planning offices and business events.

The NABEC shall carry out a plan-of-action that will include, but is not limited to the following actions: (1) development of a NABEC brochure for mail-out and distribution to the public; and (2) development of an NABEC program description for inclusion on the MBDA Portal and on the NABEC web site. Note that all NABEC correspondence and publications must be consistent with MBDA and Department of Commerce communication policies (*see* the Operational Quality requirements set forth in Section I.D.3.(j) of this FFO).

The NABEC shall promote and participate in one regional NEC and one national Minority Enterprise Development (MED) Week activities. MED Week is an annual event, coordinated through MBDA that celebrates the success of minority businesses. Participation is defined as follows:

- (1) NEC MED Week – This event is held annually in late summer or early fall, in or near the MBDA NEC. It involves full participation and collaboration with the designated MBDA NEC. The NABEC shall participate in MBDA’s process of nominating their outstanding clients for various awards. The

NABEC may be asked to coordinate/host panel discussions and support its MBDA NEC. At a minimum, travel expenditures for the NABEC's program director and (at least) one staff must be included in the proposal.

- (2) National MED Week – This event is held annually in the fall in Washington, DC. It shall require at a minimum, travel expenditures for the NABEC's project director and (at least) one staff. During the 2007 National MED Week program, optional classes/seminar sessions may be offered to NABEC staff. There will be no charge for tuition or materials. At a minimum, travel expenditures for the NABEC's program director and (at least) one staff must be included in the proposal.
- c) Resource Development requires the NABEC to identify and electronically record on the MBDA Portal likely sources of the following:
- (1) Market Opportunities – e.g., public (Federal, state and local government) and private (domestic and foreign) sector contracting opportunities;
 - (2) Capital Resources - e.g., standard commercial and alternative debt (loans, lines of credit, etc.), equity (venture capital, angel, etc.), and mezzanine (near equity, subordinated debt, etc.) financing, bonds (performance and surety), and trade credit opportunities;
 - (3) Business Ownership Opportunities - e.g., franchises, licensing arrangements, mergers and buy-outs;
 - (4) Education and Training Resources - e.g., educational institution programs and other training resources; and
 - (5) Registration of MBEs – e.g., register eligible local Native American firms in MBDA's Phoenix system, which is a national electronic inventory of minority firms capable of selling their goods and services to the public and private sector. The identified and recorded resources shall be verified by MBDA prior to publishing on the MBDA Portal.
- d) Develop and Maintain a Network of Strategic Partners and Intra-Strategic Relationships -The work requirements for an award recipient under the NABEC Program include the development of key networks. The purpose for establishing strategic partners is to: assist the NABEC to achieve its goals for assisting Native American and minority businesses (as defined in this solicitation, see Performance Measures); synchronize outreach efforts between the NABEC and MBDA; and, foster collaboration among the MBDA funded network as established under the terms of the award. Each Strategic Partnership shall be documented by a written Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) that shall document the terms and conditions of the partnership. The terms and conditions should assist the NABEC in achieving its goals for assisting MBEs.

A minimum of five (5) strategic partners between the NABEC and key local entities selected by the recipient must be established within one hundred-twenty (120) days after receipt of the award. The NABEC is required to maintain these partnerships throughout the life of the award. The NABEC must replace a

Strategic Partner within forty-five (45) days after termination of a previously established partnership. The NABEC shall consult with its MBDA National Enterprise Center prior to completing the MOU. The MBDA shall have no relationship with or responsibility to the NABEC's Strategic Partners.

The Strategic Partners shall be public or private sector organizations located within the project's geographic service area. Strategic Partners may include:

- Native American and Minority Business Enterprise (MBE) programs operated by state, county or city governments;
- Chambers of Commerce or trade associations focused on the needs of the minority business community;
- Small Business Development Centers, or other college and university entrepreneurial development programs;
- Community Development Corporations (CDCs);
- Banks and financial institutions; and
- Faith-based organizations having economic development components, whose activities are not used for sectarian purposes.

Also, the NABEC shall establish Intra-Strategic Relationships with other MBDA funded programs in support of their goals for assisting Native American businesses as defined under the terms of the award. The NABEC is required to meet with other MBDA-funded programs in the NEC (in person or by phone conference) at quarterly meetings conducted by MBDA staff. The NABEC is encouraged to refer and/or accept clients from these Relationships. The Intra-Strategic Partnerships shall not be counted towards the NABDC goal of obtaining Strategic Partnerships as described above.

- e) Facilitate Matches which identify and refer eligible Native American and minority business enterprises with specific viable businesses, market and/or capital opportunities.

This function contributes to a NABEC's financing and/or procurement performance goals, and is the only NABEC market development function outside of the standard client business assistance in which a portion of a NABEC's time can be directly associated to individual clients and resource customers. This client specific time, no matter how small, is considered client assistance and may be subject to client fees. Under this function, the NABEC shall match qualified Native American entrepreneurs with identified opportunities and resources by: (1) Accessing vendor information systems, including the Phoenix/Opportunity system; (2) Providing follow-up communication to Phoenix-registered clients that receive Opportunity matches within the NABEC geographic area; (3) Maintaining a constant awareness of the Native American firms that operate within the geographic service area and their capabilities; (4) Maintaining direct contact with purchasing executives, government procurement officials, banking officials and others so that representatives of the NABEC are in a position to learn about

available business opportunities, both formally and informally; (5) Engaging in relationship brokering between purchasing organizations and individual clients capable of fulfilling their requirements; and, (6) Assisting in direct negotiations between purchasing organizations and individual clients, in appropriate cases, in order to help resolve issues, serve as an advocate for the client firm, or otherwise assist in bringing the transaction to closure.

2. **Client Services** – Provides direct client assistance to Native American and minority business enterprises on the basis of individualized professional engagements. Under these duties, the NABEC shall assist clients and individuals, which have written agreements to become clients, in establishing, improving and/or successfully maintaining their businesses. All new clients shall be entered into the Performance system and registered in the Phoenix system. The NABEC is required to enter clients and service hours into the Performance system within seventy-two (72) hours from the time of service. Clients assisted more than once during the funding period may only be counted once in that funding period.

The NABEC operator shall attend mandatory MBDA training on “Implementing a System for High-Quality Service,” which is a *systems-integrated approach* (as described below) to assist in Native American and minority business growth and development.

A systems-integrated approach is defined as a customer-based service model supported by the following functions:

- Strategy—e.g., plans for achieving sustainable competitive advantage and creating customer value
- Processes—e.g., efficient, effective ways of manufacturing products or delivering services
- Architecture—e.g., organizational and value chain (outsourcing) structure to implement the strategy and key processes
- Resources—e.g., the acquisition and management of financial, human, and technical assets
- Systems—e.g., mechanisms for control and communication, including management information systems (MIS)
- Empowerment—e.g., delegation in a way that encourages staff to pursue strategic initiatives and continuous improvement.

The NABEC shall be responsible for providing business consulting to MBEs based on these principles. Business consulting services are (as defined under this section) provided by the NABEC to eligible Native American, minority-owned firms and individuals (as referenced in Executive Orders 11625 and 12432) seeking assistance from the NABEC, including 8(a) certified and graduate firms. These client services are segments to the systems-integrated approach. They are designed to assist client firms to bridge operational and strategic gaps. They cannot provide long-term business viability without aligning all aspects of the business and its environment. Client services include, but are not limited to, the following types of assistance:

a) Client Assessment – Provides the NABEC client with a fundamental business evaluation. This process is designed to standardize services and to facilitate the client referral process among the MBDA funded network. It requires an interview to be conducted between client and NABEC consultant. This service is designed to provide -

- Background and contact information on the client;
- Client business analysis with respect to its core competency, organizational structure, market and industry placement, production of products/delivery of services, marketing plan, resources and financial viability;
- Analysis and benchmarking of the client;
- Development of an intervention plan utilizing a systems-integrated approach (as defined under Client Services) & client report; and,
- Identification of resources and referrals.

b) Functional Assistance – Provides the NABEC client with detailed business consulting services including but not limited to:

- (1) Marketing, e.g., market research, promotion, advertising and sales, sales forecasting, market feasibility studies, pricing, product and customer service, brochure design (excludes mass printing);
- (2) Financial Management, e.g., capital budgeting, general accounting, break-even analysis, cost accounting, financial planning and analysis budgeting, tax planning, business consulting (excludes bookkeeping, tax preparation, and audits);
- (3) Financial Assistance, e.g., identification, preparation and packaging of standard commercial and alternative debt (loans, lines of credit, etc.), equity (venture capital, angel, etc.), and mezzanine (near equity, subordinated debt, etc.) financing and trade credit opportunities;
- (4) Procurement Assistance, e.g., preparation and planning for the identification of private and public-sector contracting opportunities;
- (5) Operations & Quality Management, e.g.,
 - Manufacturing - plant location and site selection, plant management, materials handling and distribution, total quality management, metrication for world market, and business consulting;
 - Construction - estimating, bid preparation, bonding, take-offs, and business consulting;
 - International Trade Assistance - exporting, importing, letters of credit, bank draft, dealerships, agencies, distributorship, exporting trading companies, joint ventures, business consulting, and freight forwarding and handling;
 - Specialized Certification - ISO 9000 knowledge of program and standards, how to implement standards, how to report and properly apply for ISO 9000 Quality Systems certification;
 - Total Quality Management - process engineering, inventory control, purchasing, continuous improvement programs;

- Technology & Systems_ automation design, development and integration of technology to support infrastructure, knowledge management, data mining, performance based reporting;
- (6) Organization & Administration, e.g., human resource management, job evaluation and rating system, employee stock option programs, training, business consulting; and,
- (7) General Management, e.g., organization and structure, formulating corporate policy, feasibility studies, reports and controls, public relations, staff scheduling, legal services (excludes litigation), business planning, organizational development, bid preparation, and business consulting.

The NABEC shall not perform or engage in the day-to-day operations or make decisions for its clients.

Group training sessions are considered a form of business development services that can be provided to clients. This function may be subject to client fees and directly contributes to an NABEC's performance goals.

3. **Operational Quality** - Maintains the efficiency and effectiveness of its overall operations as well as the quality of its client services. These duties are the means by which the NABEC manages its overall operations as well as the quality of its client services. The function directly contributes to the NABEC's overall qualitative evaluation and rating as well as the successful completion of all work requirements. Under this function, the NABEC shall: (a) Execute signed work plan agreements and engagement letters with clients; (b) Formally describe the methodology that will be used in achieving the work plan objectives for each client; (c) Input progress/results to the performance database within seventy-two (72) hours from the time of service; (d) Establish procedures for collecting and accounting for all fees charged to clients (if applicable); (e) Maintain records/files for all work charged to the program and clients; (f) Obtain written acceptance and verification (with client signatures) of services provided to its clients and any financings/contracts obtained. For services reported, documentation must be in the NABEC's client files within thirty (30) days after the end of every quarter in which a client receives services; (g) Comply with all reporting requirements provided upon award; (h) Cooperate with MBDA in maintaining content for the Phoenix/Opportunity system, Resource Locator, and other online tools located at www.mbda.gov; and, (i) Promote and utilize the services and resources of other MBDA programs, sponsored efforts and/or voluntary activities; (j) The NABEC shall adhere to applicable MBDA and Department of Commerce trademark and licensing requirements for all forms of communications, including but not limited to signage, stationary and other NABEC-related publications. These requirements shall be provided at the time of award. These requirements include but are not limited to specific size, location, and font of the NABEC logo.
- Signage - Signs should be highly visible to the NABEC clients and general public. They should be prominently displayed on entrances or doors.

- Printed Materials – These items shall include the name of the NABEC on all stationery, letterhead, brochures, etc.
- Telephonic Communication - Identify the NABEC immediately upon answering the telephone. If the recipient also requires that its organization's name be given, it should be provided only after the NABEC has been verbally identified to a caller. Refer to MBDA in all advocacy and outreach efforts such as speaking engagements, news conferences, etc.

The NABEC is not authorized to use either the Department of Commerce's (DOC) official seal or the MBDA logo in any of its publications, documents or materials without specific written approval from the Department of Commerce.

The term *Native American Business Enterprise Center (NABEC)* is a trademark of the Federal Government, and the Government reserves exclusive rights in the term. Permission to use the term is granted to the award recipient for the sole purpose of representing the activities of the award recipient in the fulfillment of the terms of the financial assistance award. The Minority Business Development Agency reserves the right to control the quality of the use of the term by the award recipient. In all printed materials, such as promotional literature and stationery, whenever *Native American Business Enterprise Center*[™] is cited, [™] designation must be used.

E. Computer Requirements

MBDA requires that all award recipients meet certain requirements related to the acquisition, installation, configuration, maintenance and security of information technology (IT) assets in order to ensure seamless and productive interface between and among all grant recipients, minority-owned businesses, the MBDA Federal IT system and the public. These required assets and their configuration are hereinafter referred to as the "enterprise." The basic components of the enterprise are the desktop workstations, the server, local area network (LAN) components and a connection to the Internet.

At a minimum, each grantee shall provide one (1) desktop computer for the exclusive use of each employee delivering minority business assistance to the public under an award from MBDA. All desktop computers shall be connected to a client/server network using an Ethernet protocol enabling communication with all workstations on the award recipient's network. The server shall have a constant, high-speed broadband Internet connection. The grantee shall ensure that each of his/her employees, to include management, administrative personnel, contractors, full-time, part-time, and non-paid (volunteer) staff have a unique electronic mail (email) address that is available to the public. Each grantee shall design, develop and maintain, in accordance with the computer requirements, a presence on the Internet's World Wide Web and shall maintain appropriate computer and network security precautions during all periods of funding by MBDA. All IT requirements, as described herein, shall be met within thirty (30) calendar days after the award.

1. Network Design

At all locations where services are delivered to the eligible public as defined by Executive Order 11625, the recipient shall operate a Client Server Network that provides shared disk drives and the setup of print queues for a network printer(s) (if individual printers are not provided) for each staff person delivering services to the eligible public. MBDA shall, from time to time, specify certain configurations of the enterprise hardware and software to meet interface requirements.

Currently, MBDA recommends servers using an operating system that is fully compatible with Microsoft Windows 2000. Any server providing principal service to the desktops shall contain 40 or more gigabytes (GB) of hard drive space using two or more 9 GB+ disks configured appropriately to ensure data retention should one disk fail. At least one (1) Pentium IV class central processing unit (CPU) or any other server providing principal service to the desktops shall be used. Web servers, mail servers and/or servers maintained by a third party such as an Internet Service Provider (ISP) shall meet the minimum server specifications as stated herein.

2. Desktop Workstations

All desktop systems shall not be more than two (2) calendar years old at time of award and shall contain a Pentium IV class central processing unit (CPU), operating at speeds not less than 2.13 Gigahertz (GHz). Each desktop system shall contain a hard drive with a storage capacity of at least forty (40) GB and 512 Megabytes (MB) of RAM and a CD or DVD reader/writer. All desktop systems shall have installed an operating system fully compatible with Microsoft Windows 2000 or XP Professional Operating System, MS Office 2000 Professional or higher, Microsoft Internet Explorer 6.x, Anti-Virus software, software or hardware-based Firewall and Adobe Reader 7.0 or higher. Additionally, it is suggested that a full-page scanner, along with software fully compatible with Adobe Acrobat (Standard or Professional, 7.0 or higher) be installed on at least one workstation for the production of electronic document submissions.

3. Maintenance and Security

A network map (“as-built”) reflecting adherence to the computer and networking requirements set forth herein shall be maintained by the recipient for review by MBDA at any time. Each recipient shall designate and train one administrative person competent in the operation of an Operations System fully compatible with Windows 2000 network (or higher) and local area network (LAN) technology as described herein. From time to time, MBDA may require that certain software be loaded on servers and desktops. In any given year, the cost of this additional software may be \$300.00 per workstation and \$600.00 per server.

Every employee of the NABEC shall be assigned a unique username and password to access the network. Every employee shall be required to sign a written computer

security agreement (A suggested format for the computer security agreement will be provided at the time of award and/or on the MBDA Portal (website)). Every manager, employee, and contractor and any other person given access to the computer system shall sign the security agreement and an original copy of the signed agreement shall be kept in the NABEC files. A photocopy of the agreement shall be sent by fax to MBDA to the attention of the MBDA CIO at: (202) 482-2678, no later than thirty (30) days after receipt of the award. All subsequent new hires and associations requiring access to the NABEC or MBDA systems shall read, understand, and sign the security agreement prior to issuance of a password. No employee shall have access to any MBDA system(s) without a signed security agreement on file at MBDA.

4. Web Site

Each recipient shall create and maintain a public web site using a unique domain/address (e.g., www.center-name.com), that will conform to MBDA web standards (A comprehensive listing of MBDA web standards can be found on the MBDA Portal). MBDA Web standards may include, *but are not limited to the following*:

- The first page (Index page) of the web site shall *clearly* identify the recipient as a Native American Business Enterprise Center funded by the U.S. Department of Commerce's Minority Business Development Agency. The index page of the web site shall load on software fully compatible with Windows Internet Explorer 6.x browser software using a normal home computer with 56 Kb/s analog phone-line connection in less than five (5) seconds.
- The web site shall contain a "Contact" page with the names of all managers and employees, the business and mailing address of the NABEC, business phone and fax numbers and email addresses of the NABEC and employees, a statement referencing the services available at the NABEC, the hours under which the NABEC operates and a link to the MBDA homepage at www.mbda.gov.
- For purposes of electronically directing clients to the appropriate NABEC staff, the recipient's web site shall also contain a short biographical statement for each employee of the NABEC including management, contractors, part-time, full time, and non-paid (volunteer) personnel, providing services directly to the eligible public under an award from MBDA. This biographical statement shall contain:
 - the full name of the employee, and
 - a brief description of the expertise of the employee to include academic degrees, certifications and any other pertinent information with respect to that employee's qualifications to deliver minority business assistance services to eligible members of the public.
- No third party advertising of commercial goods and services shall be permitted on the site. All links to websites other than federal, state or local government

agencies and non-profit educational institutions must be requested, in advance and in writing, through the MBDA CIO of the Office of Information Technology, Research and Innovation and the website must provide an external link policy or notice stating that they will be redirected to an external website. Specifically, a notice similar to the following must be provided:

The appearance of hyperlinks to other sites does not constitute endorsement by the [recipient's company name] or by the Minority Business Development Agency of these web sites or the information, products or services contained therein. Regarding such external web sites, we do not exercise any editorial control over the information you may find at these locations. These links are provided consistent with [recipient's company name] stated purpose as shown on our web site. We recommend that you review the website's information collection policy or terms and conditions to fully understand what information is collected and/or provided.

- Furthermore, the approval for the placement of such links shall not be unreasonably withheld but is subject to withdrawal if MBDA determines the linked site is unsuitable. No employee of the Program Operator, nor any other person, shall use the NABEC web site for any purpose other than that approved under the terms of the agreement between the recipient and MBDA.
- Every page of the web site shall comply with Federal standards of the American With Disabilities Act, Section 508, and be reviewed by the recipient for accuracy, currency, and appropriateness every three (3) months. In addition to this, MBDA's Section 508 Officer may occasionally review the recipient's site to ensure that the web site 508 Compliant. For additional information and guidelines, please visit www.section508.gov. Appropriate privacy notices and handicapped accessibility will be predominately featured. In general, MBDA may audit the recipient's web site and recommend changes in accordance with the guidelines set forth herein.
- The recipient will also be responsible for informing the MBDA CIO of the Office of Information Technology, Research and Innovation and to the MBDA NABEC Program Manager of any changes operating changes such as location, contact information or otherwise.

5. Time for Compliance regarding IT Requirements

Within thirty (30) days after receipt of the award, the recipient shall report via email to the MBDA CIO of the Office of Information Technology, Research and Innovation and to the MBDA NABEC Program Manager that he/she has complied with all technical requirements as specified herein. Within thirty (30) days after receipt of the award, the recipient shall report the name, contact telephone number and email address of the Project Director, Network or System Administrator.

6. Performance System

All required performance reporting to MBDA shall be conducted via the Internet using the Performance system to be found at a secure web site (www.mbda.gov).

7. Data Integrity

The recipient shall take the necessary steps to ensure that all data entered into MBDA systems, and systems operated by the recipient in support of the award, or by any employee of the recipient is verified, accurate and timely.

Note, failure to adhere to sections of the Work Requirements and/or Computer Requirements may result in enforcement action under the award, including the withholding of award payments until full compliance is reached.

F. Performance Measures

In accordance with 15 CFR Parts 14 and 24, applicants selected will be responsible for the effective management of all functions and activities supported by the financial assistance award. Award recipients will be required to use program performance measures in a performance report due forty-five (45) days after the end of the second quarter and to provide an end-of-year assessment of the accomplishments of the project using these measures. The end-of-year or final performance report is due forty-five (45) days after the end of the funding year. Once the project is awarded, the evaluation criteria, along with the assigned weight value, to be used for measuring the NABEC project performance on an ongoing basis are:

1. The Dollar Value of Transactions (65);

Note: This performance measure represents the sum of the (i) Dollar Value of Completed Financial Transactions, plus (b) Dollar Value of Gross Receipts generated by the NABEC. The sum of items (i) and (ii) must meet or exceed the required "Dollar Value of Transactions" goal as provided for each NABEC in Section I.G. of this Announcement (under Geographic Service Areas and Minimum Performance Goals). When proposing the minimum goal under Dollar Value of Transactions, the applicant is given the flexibility to address the percentage breakdown for items (i) and (ii) within a specific range (*see* Section V.A.3. of this Announcement).

2. Number of jobs created (10);

3. Number of new clients (5);

4. Administrative Management & Operational Quality (20)

- Client satisfaction (5);
- Management assessment (5);
- Market promotion (1);
- Resource entries (5);
- Establish strategic partners (2);

- Facilitated matches (2).

The minimum performance goals required for the above listed performance measures for each of the solicited geographic service areas are outlined under Funding Availability sub-heading for each geographic service area. The minimum performance goals are listed on an annual basis by MBDA and will be broken out into quarterly increments by the applicant and submitted as part of their proposal.

The NABEC is required to utilize, in a good faith effort, all of its resources to achieve the stated goals. Should the NABEC exceed its performance requirements prior to the end of a funding year, the NABEC is expected to **maintain operations at full strength and continue to provide services and reach greater performance outcomes**. MBDA views the NABEC as a designated cooperative partner and an envoy to the greater Native American and minority business community. Thus, high achievement in one performance measure cannot excuse failure to reach other goals as stated in this Announcement.

- Definitions

1. Dollar Value of Transactions – The dollar value of transactions are defined as:

- (a) Dollar Value of Completed Financial Transactions which represent the total principal value of approved loans, equity financings, bonds, or other binding financial agreements secured by clients of the project, with the assistance of NABEC staff. For purposes of this performance element, eligible financial transactions are those which have a specific dollar value, and which expand its capital base/operations, or produce some other direct commercial benefit for client firms. In order to be deemed complete, a financial transaction must be documented by an executed and binding agreement between the NABEC client (firm) and a party (financier) capable of performing its obligations under the terms of the agreement.
- (b) Dollar Value of Gross Receipts which represent the total dollar value of successfully awarded contracts and/or the total principal value of executed sales/delivery contracts of services/products/intellectual rights and/or increase in sales and/or completed Mergers and Acquisitions or other binding financial considerations secured by clients of the project, with the assistance of project staff. For purposes of this performance element, Dollar Value of Gross Receipts are those transactions which have a specific dollar value, and which produce some other direct commercial benefit for client firms. In order to be deemed complete, successfully awarded contracts or mergers and acquisitions must be documented by an executed and binding agreement between the client firm and a party capable of performing its obligations under the terms of the agreement. Increase in sales must be documented through an initial client assessment and a midyear and year-end client assessment (see Client Assessment under Client Services) supported by client submitted financial documentation.

MBDA recognizes that the financial obligations evidenced by these transactions may be long-term, and require performance over an extended period. Consequently it is not necessary that the funds or other financial value specified under the agreements have actually changed hands for the project to receive credit under this performance element, so long as the agreement of the parties is documented and binding.

2. Number of Jobs Created – This is defined as the number of new full time and/or part time employment opportunities reported on the client’s payroll during the funding year. Persons on paid sick leave, paid holiday and paid vacations are included as employees as are salaried officers and executives of corporations. However, proprietors and partners of unincorporated business are not considered employees under this definition.
3. Number of New Clients – This represents the actual number of new clients in a funding year. New clients are defined as those Native American and other MBEs that complete a written engagement with the NABEC for specific services and registered with the NABEC.
4. Administrative Management & Operational Quality – Operational quality refers to the quality and effectiveness of the project operator’s delivery of client services and project scope, as evidenced by the following performance elements relating to the day-to-day management of the project:
 - a. Client Satisfaction – An MBDA consultation process with clients of the NABEC used to verify and rate the qualitative level of services rendered by the NABEC.
 - b. Management Assessment - The management assessment reflects MBDA’s own evaluation of the overall management of the NABEC project, based on the Agency’s internal review of the project’s operations. The management assessment reflects such areas as the development of written engagement letters and work plans, proper staffing, adherence to scheduled work hours, recordkeeping, successful completion of Agency training, and any other areas which MBDA may deem to be relevant in determining the overall quality of the project’s operations.
 - c. Market Promotion – This represents the total number of successfully completed activities (per reporting period) as proposed in the applicant’s response to this Announcement.
 - d. Resource Entries – This is defined as the total quantity of accurate and timely records entered into MBDA’s Portal tools (e.g., Phoenix, Opportunity, Capital Locator, Resource Locator, etc.) in support of its efforts to disseminate information electronically.

- e. Establish Strategic Partners – This represents formalized memoranda of understanding between the NABEC and its strategic partners (minimum of five (5)).
 - f. Facilitated Matches - This represents the number of minority firms directed by the NABEC to strategic partners, the MBDA funded network, and other business resources that result in a financial transaction (as described above under Dollar Value of Transactions).
- Extraordinary Performance - Support of MBDA’s Strategic Initiative

An element of MBDA’s overall mission is to advocate on behalf of all Native American and other minority firms. In part, MBDA recognizes successful efforts of NABEC operators to establish new opportunities for all Native Americana and other MBEs. Extraordinary performance by a NABEC or the NABEC operator may result in bonus points for the NABEC. The NABEC may receive up to a maximum of (5) performance bonus points (one (1) point for each fully completed initiative as defined below) in any funding period for the successful execution of the following four items:

- (a) The NABEC and/or the NABEC operator may develop and maintain a maximum of five (5) strategic initiatives designed to benefit the Native American and minority business community within the NABEC geographic area.
- (b) The strategic initiative(s) should be framed to expand market and financing opportunities for Native American and minority business enterprises in areas not previously established by MBDA or the MBDA funded network.
- (c) A desired and measurable economic impact that benefits Native American and minority business enterprises must be established and accounted for at the end of the NABEC funding year. Economic impact can be formulated by identifying the dollar value of transactions (financings, contracts/ procurements) and/or other means of economic opportunities.
- (d) The strategic initiative(s) should be documented in writing and should include
 - the name(s) and contact information of the collaborating entities;
 - responsibilities and duties of the collaborating entities;
 - the resources which each party agrees to commit to the relationship; and,
 - the goals which the initiative is to accomplish.

- Performance Standards

The year-to-date performance of an NABEC for the award will be based on the following rating system:

YEAR-TO-DATE PERFORMANCE		
Minimum Required Percent of Goals Needed for Each Rating Category	Minimum Required Points Needed for Each Rating Category	Rating Categories Rating Category
100% and above*	100** & above	Outstanding
At least 90%	90 – 99	Commendable
At least 80%	80 – 89	Good
At least 75%	75 – 79	Satisfactory
Below 75%	Below 75.	Unsatisfactory
*Not to exceed 110%		
**Not to exceed 110 Points		

G. Geographic Service Areas and Minimum Performance Goals

An operator must provide services to eligible clients within its specified geographic service area. MBDA has defined the service area for each award below. To determine its geographic service areas, MBDA uses states, counties, Metropolitan Areas (MA), which comprise metropolitan statistical areas (MSA), consolidated metropolitan statistical areas (CMSA), and primary metropolitan statistical areas (PMSA) as defined by the OMB Committee on MAs <http://www.whitehouse.gov/omb/bulletins> and other demographic boundaries as specified herein. Service to eligible clients outside of an operator's specified service area may be requested, on a case-by-case basis, through the appropriate MBDA Regional Director and granted by the Grants Officer.

The following NABEC geographic service areas are being solicited by this FFO:

1. NABEC Application: New Mexico Statewide.
Geographic Service Area: The State of New Mexico.
Award Number: 06-10-07008-01.

The recipient is required to maintain its NABEC office in **Albuquerque, Farmington or Gallup, New Mexico**. Contingent upon the availability of Federal funds, the cost of performance for the twelve (12) month funding period from **August 1, 2007 through July 31, 2008**, is estimated at \$188,000. The total Federal amount is \$188,000.

The minimum cost share of 15% is not required.

The minimum performance goals for the New Mexico NABEC award are:

Goals	New Mexico Statewide NABEC
Dollar Value of Transactions	\$13,976,471
Number of Jobs Created	64
Number of New Clients	146
Strategic Partners	5
Resource Entries	285
Facilitated Matches	7

2. NABEC Application: Oklahoma Statewide.
 Geographic Service Area: The State of Oklahoma.
 Award Number: 06-10-07009-01.

The recipient is required to maintain its NABEC office in **Oklahoma City or Tulsa, Oklahoma**. Contingent upon the availability of Federal funds, the cost of performance for the twelve (12) month funding period from **August 1, 2007 through July 31, 2008**, is estimated at \$235,000. The total Federal amount is \$235,000.

The minimum cost share of 15% is not required.

The minimum performance goals for the Oklahoma Statewide NABEC award are:

Goals	Oklahoma Statewide NABEC
Dollar Value of Transactions	\$20,117,647
Number of Jobs Created	93
Number of New Clients	210
Strategic Partners	5
Resource Entries	356
Facilitated Matches	11

For further information and for a copy of the New Mexico Statewide NABEC and/or Oklahoma Statewide NABEC application package, please contact:

Mr. John Iglehart
 Regional Director
 Dallas National Enterprise Center
 Minority Business Development Agency
 U.S. Department of Commerce
 1100 Commerce Street
 Room 726
 Dallas, TX 75242
 Tel. 214-767-8001

3. NABEC Application: North Carolina Statewide.
 Geographic Service Area: The State of North Carolina.
 Award Number: 04-10-07005-01.

The recipient is required to maintain its primary NABEC office in **Cherokee/Asheville, Charlotte, Lumberton or Pembroke, North Carolina**. Contingent upon the availability of Federal funds, the cost of performance for the twelve (12) month funding period from **August 1, 2007 through July 31, 2008**, is estimated at \$188,000. The total Federal amount is \$188,000.

The minimum cost share of 15% is not required.

The minimum performance goals for the North Carolina NABEC award are:

Goals	North Carolina Statewide NABEC
Dollar Value of Transactions	\$13,976,471
Number of Jobs Created	64
Number of New Clients	146
Strategic Partners	5
Resource Entries	285
Facilitated Matches	7

For further information and for a copy of the North Carolina Statewide NABEC application package, please contact:

Mr. John Iglehart
Acting Regional Director
Atlanta National Enterprise Center
Minority Business Development Agency
U.S. Department of Commerce
401 W. Peachtree Street, NW
Suite 1715
Atlanta, GA 30308
Tel. 404-730-3300

H. Funding Priorities

Preference may be given during the selection process to applications addressing the following MBDA funding priorities:

1. A scope of work for the project exceeding the minimum Work Requirements set forth in Section I.D. of this FFO;
2. Performance goals for the project exceeding the minimum Performance Goals set forth in Section I.G. of this FFO; or
3. An innovative approach (consistent with overall NABEC program requirements) to limit barriers to market and capital access for Native American and other eligible minority-owned businesses.

II. Award Information

A. Funding Availability and Award Period

MBDA anticipates that a total of approximately \$611,000 will be available in FY 2007 for financial assistance awards under this competition. The amount of financial assistance for each NABEC award is based upon minority population, the size of the market and the need for MBDA resources in the respective geographical service areas. The anticipated start date for all awards under this competition is August 1, 2007 and the total award period is anticipated to be twelve (12) months (*e.g.*, August 1, 2007 through July 31, 2008).

Publication of this FFO does not obligate MBDA or the Department of Commerce to award any specific cooperative agreement or to obligate all or any part of available funds.

B. Type of Funding Instrument

Financial assistance awards in the form of cooperative agreements will be used to fund this program. MBDA's substantial involvement with recipients will include performing the following duties to further the NABEC's objectives:

1. Post-Award Conferences

MBDA shall conduct post-award conferences for all new NABEC awards to ensure that each NABEC has a clear understanding of the program and its components. The conference will: (1) Provide an MBDA Directory of Business Resources; (2) Orient NABEC program officers; (3) Explain program reporting requirements and procedures; (4) Identify available resources that can enhance the capabilities of the NABEC; and (5) Provide detailed information about MBDA's business and other information systems.

The NABEC shall budget for the mandatory participation of the (a) award recipient (operator) and (b) project director to attend. The budget shall include all travel expenditures; to its respective National Enterprise Center (see section VII, Agency Contacts for further information).

Failure to hire a project director within thirty (30) calendar days may result in enforcement action under the award, including the withholding of award payments until full compliance is reached.

2. Training

MBDA shall conduct various qualitative training sessions for the NABEC staff. The training sessions are designed (in part) to improve communications, understandings, client service delivery, performance and reporting. The following training sessions are planned for the program funding year:

- (1) "Implementing a System for High-Quality Service" - A systems integrated approach to client services, including client assessment and functional assistance (initial 5-day training), and possible advanced training (5-day follow-up training), and
- (2) MBDA Portal tools including (but not limited to) Performance, Resource Locator, Capital Locator, Business Plan, Phoenix and Opportunity System. We anticipate that the training will be provided at MBDA's annual National conference. Training sessions may be offered each funding year based on the availability of funds. Locations for the training sessions are subject to change.

3. Networking, Promotion and Information Exchange

MBDA shall provide the following: (1) Access to business information systems, which support the work of the NABEC as described in the Enhancing the NABECs Through Technology section. This information will be provided by MBDA's Office of Information Technology. The specific information systems and access to them will be provided at the time of the award for a particular NABEC; (2) Sponsor one national and at least one NEC conference; (3) Expand the Phoenix data bank of Native American and minority-owned firms by requiring other MBDA-funded programs to provide additional entries; (4) Promote the exchange of business opportunity information within the MBDA funded system using the Capital Locator, Resource Locator, Phoenix and Opportunity system on the MBDA Portal located at www.mbda.gov; (5) Work closely with the NABEC to establish a system in which procurement and contract opportunities can be shared with the network of NABECs. This system will include opportunities identified throughout the MBDA network using the Phoenix and Opportunity system located at www.mbda.gov; (6) Help promote special events to be scheduled at the local community, state and national levels in celebration of MED Week, which occurs annually; and (7) Identify Federal, state and local governments, and private sector market opportunities to the NABEC using the Capital Locator, Resource Locator, Phoenix and Opportunity system on the MBDA Portal located at www.mbda.gov.

4. Project Monitoring

MBDA will systematically monitor the performance of the NABEC. MBDA will conduct performance assessments of the 1st Semi-Annual performance period (first and second calendar quarters), 2nd Semi-Annual performance period (third and fourth calendar quarters) and Year-End performance period. These assessments are based on the NABEC's timely submission of its required Narrative Reports. The 1st Semi-Annual performance period will cover August 1, 2007 – January 31, 2008 only. The 2nd Semi-Annual performance period will cover February 1 – July 31, 2008. The year-end performance period will cover August 1, 2007 through July 31, 2008.

MBDA will also assess the NABEC's performance for the first quarter performance period (first calendar quarter) and the cumulative third quarter performance period (first through third calendar quarter). All data recorded in the Performance System shall be reviewed and analyzed. MBDA shall provide a written report of findings. MBDA shall conduct only the cumulative third quarter assessment (second through third quarter) in the first program year.

MBDA will conduct an on-site review of the NABEC to verify the Center's performance/claims, including (but not limited to) review of client files, fees billed (if applicable), cost share requirements (if proposed) and overall operations. MBDA may also conduct a review of reported assistance by interviewing the clients assisted by the Center.

MBDA will assess each Center's effectiveness in providing business development services to its respective minority business communities. MBDA will then provide a report of findings and recommendations for improvement as a result of evaluations and

monitoring visits. MBDA will approve qualifications of key NABEC staff and respond in a timely manner to correspondence requesting MBDA action.

MBDA may, upon unsuccessful performance by a NABEC, conduct a NABEC consultation. This consultation (which may be referred to as an advisement) is designed to assist a failing Center through collaborative support. The NABEC may be called upon to develop a performance improvement plan based on MBDA’s findings, suggestions and recommendations.

III. Eligibility Information

A. Eligible Applicants

For-profit entities (including sole-proprietorships, partnership, and corporations), and non-profit organizations, state and local government entities, American Indian Tribes, and educational institutions are eligible to operate NABECs.

B. Cost Sharing or Matching Requirements

It is not required that an applicant for an award to operate an NABEC propose a cost-share contribution. Cost sharing is the portion of the project cost not borne by the Federal Government. However, an applicant may propose a cost-share contribution in any of the following four means or a combination thereof: (1) client fees; (2) cash contributions; (3) non-cash applicant contributions; and/or (4) third party in-kind contributions.

The NABEC may charge client fees for services rendered (if proposed). The fees may range from \$10 to \$60 per hour based on the gross receipts of the client’s business ranging from \$0 to \$5 million and above. The NABEC must comply with the following policy restrictions when charging client service fees: (1) client fees charged for one-on-one assistance must be based on a rate of \$100 per hour, (2) the NABEC must set fee rates based on the following chart:

Gross Receipts of Client	Base Rate for Services Rendered	Percent of Cost Borne by Client	Client Fee Per Hour
\$0 – 99,999	\$100.00	10%	\$10.00
\$100,000 – 299,999	\$100.00	20%	\$20.00
\$300,000 – 999,999	\$100.00	30%	\$30.00
\$1 Million – 2,999,999	\$100.00	40%	\$40.00
\$3 Million – 4,999,999	\$100.00	50%	\$50.00
\$5 Million and Above	\$100.00	60%	\$60.00

3) If the NABEC chooses to contribute a cost-share amount, it must contribute cash for uncollected fees that were included as part of the cost sharing contribution committed for this award, (4) if the NABEC chooses to contribute a cost-share amount, client fees

applied directly to the award's cost sharing requirement must be used in furtherance of the program objectives, and (5) fees must be charged to all eligible clients regardless of minority group identification.

IV. Application and Submission Information

A. Address to Request Application Package

Electronic application packages are available at: <http://www.mbda.gov> . Paper applications may be obtained by contacting the specified MBDA National Enterprise Center (NEC) for the geographic service area (Section I.G; see also Section VII, Agency Contacts) in which the project will be located or visit MBDA's Minority Business Internet Portal at www.mbda.gov. Standard forms may be obtained by (1) contacting MBDA as described above; (2) by downloading Standard forms at <http://www.whitehouse.gov/omb/grants> or <http://www.Grants.gov>, and Department of Commerce forms at www.doc.gov/forms. If an applicant files electronically, all application materials and forms are available at the Grants.gov website.

B. Content and Form of Application Submission

Applications may be submitted electronically or in paper format. Instructions for submitting electronically are posted at www.Grants.gov. Paper applications must be submitted by delivering an original and two copies to the listed submission address as set forth below in Section IV.F.

A completed application consists of: Program and Budget Narratives; Standard Forms 424, Application for Federal Assistance; 424A, Budget Information-Non-Construction Programs; and 424B, Assurances-Non-Construction Programs; SF-LLL (Rev. 7-97)(if applicable); Department of Commerce Forms, CD-346, Applicant for Funding Assistance; and CD-511, Certification Regarding Lobbying and required attachments.

1. Proposal Format

The structure of the proposal should contain the following headings, information, and narrative discussions of evaluation criteria, in the following order:

- I. Cover Page
- II. Table of Contents
- III. Program Narrative
 - a. Applicant Capability – Include a resume setting forth the qualifications of the project director as part of the application, along with a copy of a college transcript, as appropriate. Position descriptions and qualification standards for all staff should be included as part of the application. Applicants must

provide a copy of their Articles of Incorporation, by-laws and IRS 501(c)(3) non-profit letter or other evidence of non-profit status.

- b. Resources - Include original commitment letters from those resources listed and indicate their willingness to work with the applicant. These resources can include such items as facilities, equipment, voluntary staff time and space, and financial resources. One to two letters of support (with contact information) from prior assisted larger minority firms and community organizations should be included from those resources willing to work with the applicant.
- c. Techniques and Methodologies - The applicant's proposal shall include a specific plan-of-action detailing how the work requirements will be met and how those techniques will be implemented. MBDA requires the applicant to provide a quarterly breakdown of the goals.
- d. Costs – If proposed, include how client fees will be used to meet the cost-share.

Applicants are reminded that costs must be proposed for the following required travel:

- 1. Post Award Conference – 1-2-day travel in or near the MBDA NEC.
- 2. Regional NEC Conference – 1-2-day travel in or near the MBDA NEC.
- 3. MBDA National Conference – 4 days of travel (location to be determined).
- 4. NEC MED Week Conference – 1-2 days of travel in or near the MBDA NEC.
- 5. National MED Week – 3-4 days of travel to Washington, DC, for the Project Director and at least one staff member.
- 6. “Implementing a System for High-Quality Service” – 5-days mandatory training session for the Project Director and all NABEC consultants and held in Hanover, NH.
- 7. “Advance” training program – 5-days invitational training session for the NABEC Project Director or consultant, held in Hanover, NH.

IV. Forms

Note: Applicants must submit project plans, computer requirement proposal and budgets (e.g. SF 424, SF 424A and detailed budget narrative) for the entire twelve (12) month award period, i.e., August 1, 2007 – July 31, 2008.

Pages of the proposal should be numbered consecutively, including attachments.

V. Application Forms and Package

Forms include Standard Forms 424, Application for Federal Assistance; 424A, Budget Information-Non-Construction Programs; and 424B, Assurances-Non-Construction Programs; SF-LLL (Rev. 7-97)(if applicable); Department of Commerce Forms, CD-346, Applicant for Funding Assistance (when filing electronically, include CD-346 as an attachment as described below); and CD-511, Certification Regarding Lobbying.

VI. Attachments

Include the identified attachments above in sections IV.B.1.III.a., b., c., and d. (Note: The CD-346 is not available within the Grant.gov application package for electronic filing. However, it can be found at www.doc.gov/forms. The form can be completed and attached to the application. An original signature copy of the CD-346 will be required before an award will be made to the successful applicant.)

2. Application Forms and Package

Application Forms and Package – Paper Submission

A completed proposal submitted by mail/overnight delivery, or hand delivery must have the following sections:

- Program Narrative
- Budget and Budget Narrative
- Standard Forms 424; 424A; 424B; and SF LLL (if not applicable, please indicate “N/A” on form);
- Department of Commerce forms CD-346 (for key individuals); CD-511;and
- Attachments as identified above in sections IV.B.1.III a., b., c., and d.(including but not limited to: business organization documents, resumes, official transcripts for project director, position descriptions, letters of support, signed commitment letters from proposed key staff and in-kind contributors, etc.)

Failure to include, by the deadline, a signed, original SF-424 with the paper application will result in the application being rejected and returned to the applicant. Failure to sign and submit the REMAINING FORMS with the paper application by the deadline will automatically cause an application to lose two (2) points in the overall score. Failure to submit other documents or information required may also adversely affect an applicant's overall score. MBDA shall not accept any changes, additions, revisions or deletions to competitive applications after the closing date for receiving applications, except through a formal negotiation process. MBDA may also contact applicants for additional clarifications after the final evaluation by the review panel.

Application Forms and Package – Electronic Submission

A completed proposal submitted electronically consists of the following sections:

- Program Narrative
- Budget and Budget Narrative
- Standard Forms 424; 424A; 424B; and SF LLL (if not applicable, please indicate “N/A” on form);
- Department of Commerce Form CD-511;
- Department of Commerce form CD-346 (for key individuals) (Note: The CD-346 is not available within the Grants.gov application package. However, it can be found at www.doc.gov/forms. The form can be completed and attached to the application. An original signature copy of the CD-346 will be required before an award will be made to the successful applicant.); and
- Attachments as identified above in sections IV.B1.III.a., b., c., and d. (including but not limited to: business organization documents, resumes, official transcripts for project director, position descriptions, letters of support, signed commitment letters from proposed key staff and from third-party contributors, CD-346 as described above, etc.)

The preferred format for electronic attachments is .pdf. Files in this format may be read by practically any computer using free reader software. This is the most prevalent format for documents that are scanned from hard-copy. However, the Department will accept electronic files in Word, Wordperfect, Lotus or Excel formats as well.

Failure to include, by the deadline, a complete application as described above, will result in the application being rejected by Grants.gov. [Note: An electronic application cannot be submitted at Grants.gov unless all required fields on all required forms are completed.] Failure to submit other documents or information by the deadline, which does not result in the rejection of an application by Grants.gov, may affect an applicant's overall score. MBDA shall not accept any changes, additions, revisions or deletions to competitive applications after the closing date for receiving applications, except through a formal negotiation process. MBDA may also contact applicants for additional clarifications after the final evaluations by the review panel. MBDA may allow more time for applicant submission due to system problems at Grants.gov that are beyond the control of the applicant.

The electronic submission date is the date that applications will be deemed to have been submitted electronically and shall be the date and time received at www.grants.gov. Applicants should save and print the proof of submission they receive from www.grants.gov. The due date and time is the same for electronic submission as it is for hard-copy submissions. Applicants should plan to submit electronically several days before the deadline as some processes (i.e. Central Contractor Registry (CCR)) may require 3-5 working days. Doing so will help them to ensure that the applicant is completed before submitting online.

If problems occur while using www.grants.gov, the applicant is directed to (a) print any error message received, and (b) call Grants.gov directly at 1-800-518-4726 for immediate

assistance. Grants.gov hours of operations are Monday-Friday, 7:00 a.m. to 9:00 p.m. Eastern Standard Time (except for Federal holidays).

Additional Information and Contact: For further information, please visit MBDA's Minority Business Internet Portal at www.mbda.gov. Paper applications and standard forms may be obtained by contacting the MBDA National Enterprise Center (NEC) for the area in which the applicant is located (see section VII. Agency Contacts). Forms 424, 424A, 424B, and SF-LLL can also be obtained at <http://www.whitehouse.gov/omb/grants>, or <http://www.grants.gov>. Forms CD-511, and CD-346 may be obtained at www.doc.gov/forms.

C. Submission Dates and Times

The closing date for receipt of applications is **Friday, June 15, 2007**. Completed applications must be received by MBDA no later than 5:00 p.m. Eastern Daylight Savings Time (EDT) at the address below for paper submission or at www.Grants.gov for electronic submission. The due date and time is the same for electronic submissions as it is for paper submissions. The date that applications will be deemed to have been submitted electronically shall be the date and time received at Grants.gov. Applicants should save and print the proof of submission they receive from Grants.gov. Applications received after the closing date and time will not be considered. Anticipated time for processing is ninety (90) days from the date of publication of this FFO.

D. Intergovernmental Review

Applications under this program are not subject to Executive Order 12372, "Intergovernmental Review of Federal Programs."

E. Funding Restrictions

Construction is not an allowable activity under the NABEC Program.

Management Fee: For profit (commercial) organizations may negotiate a management fee, but such fees shall not exceed 7% of the total estimated direct costs (Federal plus non-Federal shares) for the proposed award. In very limited circumstances non-profit organizations may negotiate a management fee (not to exceed 7% of the total estimated direct costs for the proposed award); however, Department of Commerce policy discourages payment of a management fee to non-profit organizations. In accordance with 15 C.F.R. § 24.22, state and local governments (or their subgrantees) may not receive a management fee from Department of Commerce grant funds. For this purpose, a management fee is characterized as a fee or profit over and above the direct and indirect costs related to the scope of work funded under the award. The management fee may not be included as part of indirect or overhead charge.

Indirect Costs: The total dollar amount of the indirect costs proposed in an application under this program must not exceed the indirect cost rate negotiated and approved by the

cognizant Federal agency prior to the proposed effective date of the award or 100 percent of the total proposed direct costs dollar amount in the application, whichever is less. A copy of an approved indirect cost rate must be included in the application package if indirect costs are proposed.

F. Other Submission Requirements

Responsibility for ensuring that applications are complete and received by MBDA on time is the sole responsibility of the Applicant.

Addresses:

1a) Paper Submission – If Mailed: If the application is sent by postal mail or overnight delivery service by the applicant or its representative, one (1) signed original plus two (2) copies of the application must be submitted. Completed application packages must be mailed to:

Office of Business Development – NABEC Program
Office of Executive Secretariat, HCHB, Room 5063
Minority Business Development Agency
U.S. Department of Commerce
14th Street and Constitution Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20230

Applicants are advised that Department of Commerce mail security measures may delay receipt of United States Postal Service mail for up to two weeks. Applicants may wish to use a guaranteed overnight delivery service. Department of Commerce delivery policies for Federal Express, UPS, and DHL overnight services require the packages to be sent to the address above.

1b) Paper Submission – If Hand-Delivered: If the application is hand-delivered by the applicant or his/her representative, one (1) signed original plus two (2) copies of the application must be delivered to:

U.S. Department of Commerce
MINORITY BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT AGENCY
Office of Business Development – NABEC Program (extension 1940)
HCHB, Room 1874
Entrance #10
15th Street, NW
Washington, DC
(Between Pennsylvania and Constitution Avenues)

U.S. Department of Commerce “hand-delivery” policies state that Federal Express, UPS, and DHL overnight services submitted to the address listed above (Entrance #10) cannot be accepted. These policies should be taken into consideration when utilizing their services. MBDA will not accept applications that are submitted by the deadline but

rejected due to Departmental hand-delivery policies. The applicant must adhere to these policies in order for his/her application to receive consideration for award.

2) Electronic Submission: Applicants are encouraged to submit their proposal electronically at <http://www.Grants.gov>. Electronic submissions should be made in accordance with the instructions available at Grants.gov (see <http://www.Grants.gov/ForApplicants> for detailed information). MBDA strongly recommends that applicants not wait until the application deadline date to begin the application process through Grants.gov.

V. Application Review Information

A. Evaluation Criteria

Proposals will be evaluated and applicants will be selected based on the following criteria. An application must receive at least 70% of the total points available for each evaluation criterion, in order for the application to be considered for funding. The maximum total number of points that can be earned is 105, including a maximum of 5 bonus points for projects with a non-Federal cost share.

1. Applicant Capability (45 points)

The applicant's proposal will be evaluated with respect to the applicant firm's experience and expertise in providing the work requirements listed. Specifically, the proposals will be evaluated as follows:

- Native American Community - experience in and knowledge of the Native American and minority business sector and strategies for enhancing its growth and expansion (5 points);
- Business Consulting - experience in and knowledge of business consulting of Native American and minority firms (10 points);
- Financing - experience in and knowledge of the preparation and formulation of successful financial transactions (5 points);
- Procurements and Contracting - experience in and knowledge of the public and private sector contracting opportunities for Native American and minority businesses (5 points);
- Financing Networks - resources and professional relationships within the corporate, banking and investment community that may be beneficial to Native American and minority-owned firms (5 points);
- Native American Advocacy - experience and expertise in advocating on behalf of Native American businesses, both as to specific transactions in which a Native

American business seeks to engage, and as to broad market advocacy for the benefit of the Native American community at large (5 points); and

- **Key Staff** - assessment of the qualifications, experience and proposed role of staff who will operate the NABEC. In particular, an assessment will be made to determine whether proposed staff possess the expertise in utilizing information systems as contemplated under the heading entitled, “Computer Requirements” (10 points).

2. Resources (20 points)

The applicant’s proposal will be evaluated according to the following criteria:

- **Resources** - discuss those resources (not included as part of the cost-sharing arrangement) that will be used. (10 points);
- **Partners** - discuss how you plan to establish and maintain the network of five (5) Strategic Partners (5 points);
- **Equipment** - discuss how you plan to accomplish the computer hardware and software requirements (5 points).

3. Techniques and Methodologies (25 points)

The applicant’s proposal will be evaluated as follows:

- **Performance Measures** - relate each performance measure to the financial, information and market resources available in the geographic service area to the applicant and how the goals will be met. Specific attention should be placed on the Dollar Value of Transactions (as described under Definitions). This goal represents the sum of (a) Dollar Value of Completed Financial Transactions and (b) Dollar Value of Gross Receipts. When proposing the minimum goal under Dollar Value of Transactions, the applicant is given the flexibility to address the percentage breakdown for items (a) and (b) above within a specific range – not more than 60% and not less than 40%. The applicant should consider existing market conditions and its strategy to achieve the goal. The applicant may vary the percentage breakdown for items (a) and (b) above as long as the sum meets the required goal as provided by MBDA in this Announcement (as described under Geographic Service Areas). (15 points);
- **Plan of Action** – provide specific detail on how the applicant will start operations. NABECs have thirty (30) days to become fully operational after an award is made. Fully operational means that all staff are hired, all signs are up, all items of furniture and equipment are in place and operational, all necessary forms are developed (e.g., client engagement letters, other standard correspondence, etc.), and the center is ready to open its doors to the public (5 points);

- Work Requirement Execution Plan - The applicant will be evaluated on how effectively and efficiently all staff time will be used to achieve the work requirements (5 points).

4. Proposed Budget and Supporting Budget Narrative (10 points)

The applicant's proposal will be evaluated on the following sub-criteria:

- Reasonableness, allowability and allocability of costs. All of the proposed expenditures must be discussed and the budget line item narrative must match the proposed budget. Fringe benefits and other percentage item calculations must match the proposed line item on the budget (5 points); and
- Performance Based Budget. Discuss how the budget is related to the accomplishment of the work requirements and the performance measures. Provide a budget narrative that clearly shows the connections (5 points).

Bonus for Non-Federal Cost Sharing (maximum of 5 points): Non-Federal cost sharing is not required under the NABEC program. However, applicants will be awarded bonus points to the extent that the proposed overall project budget includes non-Federal contributions, measured as a percentage of the overall project budget (*i.e.*, Federal and non-Federal shares). Specifically, a maximum of five (5) bonus points will be awarded based on the following scale: more than 0% - less than 5% - 1 point; 5% or more – less than 10% - 2 points; 10% or more – less than 15% - 3 points; 15% or more – less than 20% - 4 points; and 20% or more - 5 points. The non-Federal contributions (if proposed) may consist of either or a combination of cash and/or in-kind contributions and must be adequately identified and documented in the application (*see* Section III.B. of this FFO).

B. Review and Selection Process

1. Initial Screening

Prior to the formal paneling process, each application will receive an initial screening to ensure that all required forms, signatures and documentation are present.

2. Panel Review

Each application will receive an independent, objective review by a panel qualified to evaluate the applications submitted. MBDA anticipates that the review panel will be made up of at least three independent reviewers who are Federal employees who will review all applications based on the above evaluation criteria. Each reviewer will evaluate and provide a score for each proposal. In order for an application to be considered for funding, it shall need to achieve 70% of the available points for each evaluation criterion. Failure to achieve the minimum required points will deem the application as unsuccessful.

3. Final Recommendation

The MBDA National Director makes the final recommendation to the Department of Commerce Grants Officer regarding the funding of applications, taking into account the selection criteria as outlined in this Announcement and the following:

- A. Evaluations and rankings of the independent review panel;
- B. Funding priorities as set forth in Section I.H. of this Announcement. The National Director (or his designee) reserves the right to conduct a site visit (subject to the availability of funding) to applicant organizations receiving at least 70% of the total points available for each evaluation criterion, in order to make a better assessment of the organization's capability to achieve the funding priorities; and
- C. Availability of funding.

VI. Award Administration Information

A. Award Notices

The notice of award (CD-450) is signed by the Department of Commerce Grants Officer and is the authorizing document. It is provided by overnight mail to the appropriate business office of the recipient organization. MBDA will notify unsuccessful applicants by postal mail. Those proposals that are not ultimately selected for funding will be retained by MBDA for a period of three years.

B. Unsuccessful Competition

On occasion, competitive solicitations or competitive panels may produce less than optimum results, such as competition resulting in the receipt of no applications or in the receipt of only unresponsive or unsuccessful applications. If the competition results in only one application, it may or may not require additional action from MBDA depending upon the competitive history of the area, the quality of application received, and the time and cost limits involved. In the event that any or all of these conditions arise, MBDA shall take the most time and cost-effective approach available that is in the best interest of the Government. This includes, but is not limited to: (1) re-competition; (2) re-paneling; and (3) negotiation.

C. Administrative and National Policy Requirements

Administrative and national policy requirements for all Department of Commerce awards are contained in the Department of Commerce Pre-Award Notification Requirements for Grants and Cooperative Agreements published in the Federal Register on December 30, 2004 (69 FR 78389). You may obtain a copy of these notices by contacting the agency contact under section VII, or by going to the website at: www.access.gpo.gov/su_docs/aces140.html.

D. Reporting

Financial reports are to be submitted to the Department of Commerce Grants Officer on a quarterly basis. A final financial report is due within ninety (90) days after expiration of the award. Performance (Narrative) reports are to be submitted to the Federal Program Officer within forty-five (45) days after the end of the second quarter. A year-end or final performance report is due forty-five (45) days after the end of each funding year.

All new clients shall be entered into the Performance System and registered in the Phoenix System. The NABEC is required to enter clients and services into the Performance System within seventy-two (72) hours from the time of service.

VII. Agency Contacts

General NABEC information can be obtained through the applicable National Enterprise Center listed in Section I.G. of this FFO. In addition, prospective applicants can also contact:

Mr. Efrain Gonzalez
Program Manager
Office of Business Development
Minority Business Development Agency
U.S. Department of Commerce
14th and Constitution Ave., NW
Room 5075
Washington, DC 20230
202-482-1940

VIII. Other Information

- **KEY POINTS TO REMEMBER: The Federal amount is not negotiable!** The full amount of Federal funds designated for the award must be used in its entirety in the proposal.
- **All proposed costs must be accompanied by written narrative.** Read the budget narrative requirements in the application kit carefully. All costs must be explained in writing.
- **Indirect Costs.** The indirect cost policies contained in 2 C.F.R. part 220 (2006) (OMB Circular A-21, “Cost Principles for Educational Organizations), 2 C.F.R. part 225 (2006) (OMB Circular A-87, “Cost Principles for State, Local and Indian Tribal Governments) and 2 C.F.R. part 230 (2006) (OMB Circular A-122, “Cost Principles for Nonprofit Organizations) will apply to MBDA awards for its business development programs. Indirect costs are those costs proposed for common or joint objectives and which cannot be readily identified with a particular cost objective.

Therefore, if the MBDA award is to be the sole source of support for the applicant organization, all costs are direct costs and no indirect costs should be proposed.

Organizations with indirect costs that do not have an established indirect cost rate negotiated and approved by a cognizant Federal agency may still propose indirect costs. For the recipient to recover indirect costs, however, the proposed budget must include a line item for such costs. Also, the recipient must prepare and submit a cost allocation plan and indirect cost rate proposal as required by applicable regulation cited above. The allocation plan and the rate proposal must be submitted to the Department's Office of Acquisition Management and Financial Assistance within 90 days from the effective date of the proposed award.

- **Audit Costs.** Audits shall be performed in accordance with audit requirements contained in Office of Management and Budget Circular A-133, Audits of States, Local Governments, and Non-Profit Organizations, revised June 27, 2003. OMB Circular A-133 requires that non-profit organizations, government agencies, Indian tribes and educational institutions expending \$500,000 or more in federal funds during a one-year period conduct a single audit in accordance with guidelines outlined in the circular. Applicants are reminded that other audits may be conducted by the Office of Inspector General.
- **Limitation of Liability.** In no event will the MBDA or the Department of Commerce be responsible for proposal preparation costs if these programs fail to receive funding or are cancelled because of Agency priorities. Publication of this Announcement does not oblige the Agency to award any specific project or to obligate any available funds.