

Exporting Project Federal Funding Opportunity (FFO) Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) – Competition ID: MBDA-OB-2016-2004601

The list of Frequently Asked Questions and answers are intended to provide information about the Minority Business Development Agency, our programs, and our upcoming grant competition. The information also provides basic guidance on preparing an application for the grant competition, also referred to as the Federal Funding Opportunity (FFO).

UPDATED: June 23, 2016

Who is the Minority Business Development Agency?

The Minority Business Development Agency (MBDA) is a bureau of the U.S. Department of Commerce and leads Federal Government efforts to promote the growth and global competitiveness of America's growing minority business enterprise (MBE) community. Through MBDA's services MBEs are better equipped to create jobs, contribute to local economies, and sustain America's position as a world economic leader. MBDA's programs and initiatives are focused on providing increased access to capital, contracts, and markets.

What is the MBDA Exporting Project?

The MBDA Exporting Project provides technical assistance and business development services to minority business enterprises (MBEs). The technical assistance and business development services are provided through federal financial awards to generate increased financing, contract opportunities, greater access to new and global markets for MBEs. The project also identifies, screens, promotes, and refers MBEs to exporting resources. In addition, the services provided will assist MBEs in creating and retaining jobs.

Can an entity apply for more than one of the Export Project Awards?

Yes, an entity/applicant can apply for more than one of the Export Project Awards. However, it is important to note that MBDA seeks to continue to expand its footprint nationally with the Export Project grants in regions that have a high density of minorities and MBEs. It is recommended that any applicant that is interested in applying for more than one block of the \$250,000 grant should prepare a strong value proposition for the coverage that they will provide and the economic impact to MBEs in the proposed region(s). Coverage can include a satellite office(s) in multiple locations/states where MBDA does not have a presence or can complement a location where MBDA presently has a Business Center presence. Applicants will need to apply under the single Competition ID: MBDA-OB-2016-2004601 and clearly delineate how funding for locations will be used.

Who does the MBDA Export Project support?

MBDA Business Center customers and clients include businesses that are owned and operated by these ethnic minorities: African Americans, Hispanic Americans, Asian and Pacific Islander Americans, Native

Americans (including Alaska Natives, Alaska Native Corporations and Tribal entities), Asian Indian Americans and Hasidic Jewish Americans.

Where are current MBDA Business Centers located?

Currently, MBDA Business Centers are located throughout the United States. Each Center is strategically located in an area with significant minority populations and minority-owned firms. MBDA Business Centers do not limit their services by geographic region and may serve minority businesses located anywhere in the United States, the District of Columbia, and Puerto Rico.

Who is eligible to run an MBDA Export Project?

For-profit entities (e.g., sole-proprietorships, partnerships, limited liability companies and corporations), non-profit organizations, state and local government entities, Native American tribes, and educational institutions are eligible to apply to operate MBDA Business Centers.

Who is not eligible to receive MBDA funding?

The MBDA Business Center program is not a grant to start or expand an individual business.

When can I apply for the MBDA Export Project Funding?

The anticipated timeline is mid to late June and closes on July 5, 2016.

How do I prepare to submit an application?

1. The First Step

Become familiar with MBDA programs. Having institutional knowledge of MBDA and its recent efforts, impacts, and performance are key. You can learn more about our previous programs at www.mbda.gov. Take particular note of reading our most current Annual Performance Report.

2. The Second Step

Register on the MBDA website to receive notifications and be on the lookout for postings related to the FFO. All announcements will be posted to www.grants.gov.

3. The Third Step

Once the federal funding opportunity (FFO) is announced, carefully read it and plan to participate in the pre-application conference (information will be in the FFO).

4. The Fourth Step

If you have decided to compete for the FFO, please initiate the following administrative procedures as soon as practicable:

1. Dun and Bradstreet

The D&B number is used as the best way for the federal government to identify and track organizations and companies that receive grants through federal government programs. A D&B number can be obtained online or over the phone at 1-866-705-5711.

2. [System for Award Management \(SAM\)](#)

The SAM is the official U.S. government system that consolidated the capabilities of several government-wide registries including the Central Contractor Registration (CCR) System. You must register your business with at www.sam.gov to do business with the federal government.

3. [Grants.gov](#)

This is the final step in the application process, and cannot be completed unless the applicant has registered with each of the stated entities above.

5. **The Fifth Step**

Write the proposal for submission and submit.

After the application is submitted, what is the review process?

The panel review process begins with an initial screening to verify that all required forms and documentation are received by the deadline. Each application then goes through an independent merit review by a panel of no less than three experts, of which at least one panel member will be an MBDA employee. Each application is reviewed based on the criterion published in the *Announcement of the Federal Funding Opportunity*. The panel will review, evaluate, and provide a score for each application.

Following the panel review, the final scores will be assessed by the Associate Director and Chief of the Office of Business Development, Headquarters. The Associate Director will provide a written memorandum to the MBDA National Director, and the final recommendations are provided to the Department of Commerce Grants Program Manager who ultimately awards the selected applicant.

How long does this process take?

The specific timeline will be included in the FFO. Typically, the anticipated time for processing awards is approximately 150 days after the closing date. MBDA will notify unsuccessful applicants in writing after the final selections have been made and the offers have been accepted. Further instructions on how to apply are provided in the FFO.

Is my organization a good candidate to operate an MBDA Exporting Project?

Awarded organizations are commonly referred to as Project Operators. Project Operators are key partners in achieving MBDA's mission and assisting minority-owned firms as they strive to grow to size, scale, and capacity to compete both domestically and internationally. An applicant can best determine for itself if it has the capability or capacity to deliver the program goals as detailed in the FFO.

How are the MBDA Export Projects evaluated?

Metrics used for evaluation may include jobs created and retained, contracts awarded, and financial transactions. For additional information, please visit www.mbda.gov and www.federalregister.gov.

What is the difference between a grant and a cooperative agreement?

The key difference between a grant and a cooperative agreement is that under a cooperative agreement, the Federal agency has substantial involvement in the operation of the center and the technical assistance provided.

For Additional Information

- Visit www.mbda.gov on a regular basis for updates
- Register on www.grants.gov for upcoming notices
 - Key in CFDA 11.802 Minority Business Resource Development

Related Resources

- June 6, 2016 Pre-Application Conference: Access Presentations and Recordings
 - <https://www.mymeetings.com/nc/join.php?i=PWXW8619360&p=FFO&t=r> – Recording
 - <http://www.mbda.gov/sites/default/files/060616-PreApplicationConference-Revised.pdf> - Presentation