



March 6, 2012

Dear Honorable Leaders:

The Department of Commerce's Office of Legislative and Intergovernmental Affairs (OLIA) will serve as the focal point in the consultation with Tribal governments on policy, regulatory and legislative issues that have a direct impact on Native American and Alaska Native governments and organizations. Please be assured that the Department of Commerce respects our relationship with Native American governments and has made all programs and services within its 12 bureaus available to members of tribal communities.

By letter, dated February 3, 2012, I introduced myself to your tribal government as the Senior Advisor on Native American Affairs and as the Department of Commerce's Tribal Consultation Official.

I am coordinating and scheduling tribal consultations with the Minority Business Development Agency (MBDA), Office of Business Development (OBD) regarding the business development services available to Native American organizations through MBDA. MBDA is the only Federal agency created specifically to foster the establishment and growth of minority business enterprises (MBEs). MBDA actively promotes the strategic growth and expansion of Minority Business Enterprises (MBEs) by offering management and technical assistance through a nationwide network of 40 business centers. Among these 40 business centers there are six Native American Business Enterprise Centers (NABECs) specifically designed to serve the Native American and Alaska Native population.

The MBDA will be conducting two webinars seeking input from tribal leaders on the redesign of their NABEC program. Please note that registration is required for the webinars. Information on how to register may be viewed on MBDA's website at <http://www.mbda.gov>. The topics to be discussed during the webinars regarding the NABEC program are attached to this letter. I hope that you will review the information, participate in the webinars and provide feedback. Your consultation regarding the redesign of the NABEC program is vital in MBDA plan a new structure and program for each center that will meet the current needs of Native American, Alaska Native and minority business enterprises.

The two national webinars will be held according to the following schedule.

Tuesday, March 13, 2012, 3:00 – 4:00 ET
2:00 – 3:00 CT
1:00 – 2:00 MT
12:00 – 1:00 PT
11:00 – 12:00 AKT

Registration for the March 13th webinar may be accessed directly via the following URL:

<https://www.mymeetings.com/nc/join.php?i=PW6862819&p=7403577&t=c>

Thursday, March 15, 2012, 3:00 – 4:00 ET
2:00 – 3:00 CT
1:00 – 2:00 MT
12:00 – 1:00 PT
11:00 – 12:00 AKT

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Link to registration for the webinars may also be found on MBDA's website at www.mbda.gov.

If you would like to submit written comments on the redesign of NABEC program, please provide submit your comments no later than **Friday, March 16, 2012** to:

Dee Alexander, Senior Advisor on Native American Affairs
Office of Legislative and Intergovernmental Affairs, Room 5422
U.S. Department of Commerce
1401 Constitution Avenue NW
Washington, DC 20230

You may also send comments via email at dalexander@doc.gov, or to hhoofnagle@mbda.gov.
If you have questions, please contact me at (202) 482-0789 or Holden Hoofnagle, Chief, Office of Business Development at (202) 482-3937.

Please extend this invitation to other key tribal officials and I look forward to your tribe's participation and input.

Sincerely,



Dee Alexander, Cheyenne-Arapaho

Senior Advisor on Native American Affairs

Department of Commerce

Encl.

Request for Tribal Input on:

(1) Redesign of the Minority Business Development Agency's (MBDA) Native American Business Enterprise Centers (NABEC)

Tribal views and recommendations on all proposed changes to the current Native American Business Enterprise Centers (NABECs) are welcome. This paper is designed merely to provide background information and to inform tribes about this program geared to the American Indian and Alaska Native population and other minority owned businesses.

Overview

MBDA is the only Federal agency created specifically to foster the establishment and growth of minority business enterprises (MBEs). MBDA actively promotes the strategic growth and expansion of MBEs by offering management and technical assistance through a nationwide network of 40 business enterprise centers. Among these 40 business centers there are six Native American Business Enterprise Centers (NABECs) specific to the Native American and Alaska Native population.

The NABEC Program is a key component of MBDA's overall business development assistance program and promotes the growth and competitiveness of "eligible Native American and minority-owned businesses." For this purpose, businesses that are owned or controlled by the following persons or groups of persons are eligible to receive business assistance services under the NABEC Program: Native Americans (including Alaska Natives, Alaska Native Corporations and Tribal entities), African Americans, Asian Indian Americans, Asian and Pacific Islander Americans, Hasidic Jewish Americans, and Hispanic Americans.

NABEC services include, but are not limited to, initial consultations and assessments, business technical assistance, and access to federal and non-federal procurement and financing opportunities. Specific performance requirements and metrics are used by MBDA to evaluate each project and are a key component of the NABEC program.

The purpose of the webinars is to consult with tribal governments on the redesign of the MBDA's NABEC program. MBDA would like to see a more cohesive program involving collaboration among the NABECs MBDA Business Centers and MBE's to achieve the same program goals and to expand into the promotion of export initiatives and international deals in alignment with President Obama's National Export Initiative (NEI).

Background

There are currently six NABEC’s in the following locations: Mesa, Arizona, El Monte, California, Albuquerque, New Mexico, Tulsa, Oklahoma, Seattle, Washington and Bismarck, North Dakota. In addition, the Mesa, Arizona NABEC has a satellite office located in Anchorage, Alaska.

Each NABEC has a geographic area designated to the state where it is located, with the exception of the NABEC located in Seattle Washington, which has a geographic area covering Washington, Oregon and Idaho, and the NABEC located in Bismarck, North Dakota which covers the states of North Dakota and South Dakota.

Federal funding for centers range from \$200, 000 to \$297,500. Each center has a required cost share of 10 percent of total project cost. Target clients have revenues over \$500,000. All six centers are under a three-year cooperative agreement expiring on August 2012. MBDA anticipates that the current NABEC program will be redesigned with an anticipated start date of September 1, 2012.

Applicants eligible to operate a NABEC are Native American and Alaska Native controlled non-profit organizations, Native American Tribal Entities, Alaska Native Tribal Entities and Tribal Colleges and Universities.

Proposed Changes for Native American Business Centers

MBDA proposes to redesign the current NABEC program as MBDA Business Centers specifically designed to serve American Indian and Alaska Native entities. The proposed changes for the current NABEC program are described in the tables below.

1. Program Objectives

NABEC	MBDA Business Center
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Promote the maintenance and growth of Native American Business Enterprises (NABE) and minority business enterprise (MBE) firms, primarily by providing management and technical assistance services• Program focuses on securing client contract and financing transactions that range from low to high dollar value	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Expand the growth and global competitiveness of NABE and MBE firms by providing contract sourcing, financial brokering and business development services• The program focuses on securing large public/private contracts and financing transactions, and facilitating entry to global markets through greater and stronger strategic partnerships• Focus on deal making

2. Target Clients

NABEC	MBDA Business Center
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Eligible NABE and MBE firms with revenues over \$500K or with high-growth potential 	Special emphasis will be placed on NABE and MBE firms with one or more of the following characteristics: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Revenues over \$1M Participation in high-growth industries Export capacity or potential
Centers will continue to serve NABEs and MBEs of all sizes; start-ups and smaller firms served electronically and/or by strategic partner (via referral)	

3. Branding Initiatives

NABEC	MBDA Business Center
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Separate program logo required Center maintains individual websites 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Separate program logo required Center to market itself to NABEs and MBEs as “MBDA Business Centers” Center will not be required to maintain an individual website; MBDA will host center webpage on agency portal
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Trade Mark (“TM”) cited Publication guidance for signage, stationery and publications Communication guidance 	

4. Major Program Services

NABEC	MBDA Business Center
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identification of bid and financing opportunities Estimating and bid preparation assistance Loan and bond preparation and packaging assistance Market research and development 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop pool (“pipeline”) of contracting and financing opportunities Direct matching of opportunities with qualified/vetted NABEs and MBEs and facilitation of negotiations in closing deals Assist NABEs and MBEs in accessing global market opportunities; driven by MBDA partnerships/ and relationships with ITA, Ex-Im Bank, OPIC, USAID and others Identify and secure alternative sources of capital for NABEs and MBEs Promote the advantages of achieving size and scale, and educate on benefits of strategic alternatives (i.e., mergers, acquisitions, joint ventures, and/or divestitures) Provide service referrals to NABES and MBEs of all sizes
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Client assessment Strategic business consulting Leveraging of strategic partners 	

5. Strategic Partners

NABEC	MBDA Business Center
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Establish relationships with a minimum of 5 entities Assist the center achieve non-federal cost share goals 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Establish relationships that directly lead to transactions, jobs or assisting target NABEs and MBEs achieve size and scale and/or globalization with a minimum of 5 entities Focus on direct programmatic impact of each partnership Partnerships should assist the center achieve performance goals, including, but not limited to, serving as a referral source to assist start-up and early stage NABESs and MBEs Strategic Partners should provide a service and/or opportunity to NABEs and MBEs served by the center
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Synchronize outreach efforts Foster collaboration 	

6. Locations

Current NABEC Locations	Current Federal allocation	Future MBDA Business Center Locations	Proposed Federal Allocation
*Arizona	\$203,000	Mesa, Arizona (or) Scottsdale, Arizona (or) Tucson, Arizona	\$250,000 - \$300,000
California	\$298,000	Bakersfield, California (or) Fresno, California (or) Modesto, California (or) El Monte, California (or) Sacramento, California (or) San Diego, California	\$250,000 - \$300,000
New Mexico	\$200,000	Albuquerque, New Mexico (or) Farmington, New Mexico (or) Santa Fe, New Mexico	\$250,000 - \$300,000
North/South Dakota	\$203,000	Bismarck, North Dakota (or) Rapid City, South Dakota	\$250,000 - \$300,000
Oklahoma	\$235,000	Oklahoma City, Oklahoma (or) Tulsa, Oklahoma	\$250,000 - \$300,000
Washington	\$213,000	Anchorage, Alaska	\$250,000 - \$300,000
6 Centers Total		6 Centers Total	
*Arizona NABEC is located in Mesa, Arizona and currently has a satellite office in Anchorage, Alaska			

Views Requested

The Department looks forward to receiving tribal views on the redesign of the Native American Business Enterprise Centers programs administered by the Minority Business Development Agency. The deadline for submitting all comments is **March 16, 2012**.

Below please find the schedule for the following national webinars to answer any questions and to seek your input.

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