

MBDA Business Center Program

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NOTICE OF FUNDING OPPORTUNITY

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Federal Agency Name(s): Minority Business Development Agency (MBDA), Minority Business Development Agency (MBDA), Department of Commerce

Funding Opportunity Title: MBDA Business Center Program

Announcement Type: Initial

Funding Opportunity Number: MBDA-OBD-2022-2007282

Federal Assistance Listings Number: 11.805, MBDA Business Center (MBC)

Dates: Complete applications will be accepted in Grants.gov up to 11:59 p.m. Eastern Time on June 6, 2022. Applications received after this time will not be reviewed or considered.

Funding Opportunity Description: This notice requests applications from qualified organizations to operate MBDA Business Centers in six states, Arkansas, Indiana, Oregon, South Carolina, Wisconsin and Utah. The Business Centers will facilitate the growth and job creation in minority business enterprises in their locales by providing expert technical assistance to minority business enterprises consistent with the terms of this Notice of Funding Opportunity. These programs align with the Minority Business Development Agency (MBDA) strategic mission goals to support minority business enterprises (MBEs) and the Administration's strategic priority to advance racial equity and support for underserved communities through the Federal government.

Pre-Application Teleconference: MBDA will conduct a series of pre-application teleconferences from 2:00-3:00pm Eastern time on the following dates with focus areas noted below:

- April 28 – General competition information, key changes from previous competitions and key dates, live Question and Answer session
- May 3 – Program priorities and objectives with examples, live Question and Answer session
- May 10 – Budget pitfalls to avoid and best practices, live Question and Answer session
- May 17 – Measuring success and performance, live Question and Answer session

Participants must register at least 24 hours in advance of the teleconference. Please visit the MBDA website at www.mbda.gov to register and view recordings of the teleconferences, as well as other additional information.

FULL ANNOUNCEMENT TEXT

I. Funding Opportunity Description

A. Program Objective

The Minority Business Development Agency (MBDA), a bureau of the U.S. Department of Commerce, assists minority business enterprises (MBEs) through its MBDA Business Center Program.

The Program supports a national network of Business Centers that provide high quality, technical assistance to MBEs. Business Centers provide counseling and mentoring to MBEs, assist MBEs to access capital, contracts and grants, facilitate the growth of MBEs by promoting trade, and support MBEs to create and retain jobs. The goal of these Business Centers is to further MBDA's core objective of promoting the growth and global competitiveness of America's MBE community.

MBDA is soliciting competitive applications from eligible entities to operate MBDA Business Centers as described in this Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO). MBDA anticipates awarding a total of approximately \$2,100,000 pursuant to this NOFO for cooperative agreements issued for the operation of a business center in each of the following states:

Arkansas
Indiana
Oregon
South Carolina
Wisconsin
Utah

The states were selected as those states that do not currently have a Business Center or Specialty Center and also have the highest number of MBEs in rank order (Source: Census 2017 Non-Employer and Employer Classifiable Firms). MBDA will evaluate applications based on the applicant's demonstrated ability to serve the community and states in which they are located. However, a Business Center may provide services to minority business enterprises located in any U.S. state or territory.

IMPORTANT: You must have physical office space in the state for which you apply.

B. Program Priorities

Centers must offer a wide array of assistance. This can be accomplished through a mixture of direct services or referral to other qualified organizations. The Business Centers

must offer programming and services across three categories: business development, capacity-building and navigation, described below.

Business Development: The Business Center must assist clients to increase revenues and profits. The Business Center is encouraged to focus on opportunities that increase MBE participation in public and private large-scale investments and high-growth industries, specifically, infrastructure, advanced manufacturing, innovation and emerging technologies.

Business Centers may support MBEs in activities including, but not limited to:

- o Contracting Assistance: providing information and assistance to MBEs pursuing federal, state, local, and private sector prime contract and subcontract opportunities.
- o Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act Procurement: providing information and assistance to MBEs pursuing federal, state, local and private sector prime contract and subcontract opportunities related to the 2021 Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act.
- o Accessing supply chains: providing information and assistance to MBEs pursuing opportunities to participate in global supply chains.
- o Export promotion: helping MBEs identify and develop potential export markets, participate in trade shows, and connect with U.S. Export Assistance Centers.

Capacity Building: The Business Center is required to provide MBEs with one-on-one business counseling. The goals of these services may be to improve operational efficiencies, increase resources, build scale, manage risk, increase liability thresholds, strengthen management teams, facilitate access to financing, increase profits and owner equity, and integrate new technology and equipment. Business Centers may support MBEs in activities including, but not limited to:

- o Access to capital: increasing awareness of basic credit practices and credit requirements; assisting in the development of business plans, financial packages, and credit applications.
- o Management Counseling: assistance and resources relating to management, technological and technical assistance, financial, legal, and marketing services, and services related to workforce development.

Navigation: The Business Center must facilitate referrals and connections to an ecosystem of organizations that can support MBE growth and competitiveness. Referral organizations can include but need not be limited to: Federal agencies or programs, including those distributed through state, local, non-profit, and private sector entities; state and municipal governments; major employer firms; chambers of commerce and other local economic development organizations; financial institutions; and community-based organizations. Business Centers must develop, cultivate, and maintain a network of strategic partnerships that foster access by MBEs to economic markets, capital, contracts, or other resources that facilitate their

growth. As part of their network, Business Centers are required by law to establish or continue a referral relationship with at least one community-based organization. A community-based organization is a public or private nonprofit organization of demonstrated effectiveness that is representative of a community or significant segments of a community; and provides educational or related services to individuals in the community.

Note: The Business Center must have at least one referral organization with a physical presence in the same state where the Business Center is located.

Business Centers are expected to provide one-on-one technical assistance services to MBEs to support the broad goals of Business Development, Capacity Building and Navigation. They also should ensure that they are developing targeted programming and services specific to the needs of the MBEs in the Center's service area. A Business Center should therefore have a sophisticated knowledge of the needs of targeted MBEs and a plan for how the Business Center will provide programming and services to meet those needs.

For example: A Business Center may target services to construction firms seeking to scale operations. The Business Center might propose to focus business development services on state and local procurement opportunities, and provide technical assistance focused on bonding. Alternatively, a Business Center may target services to local MBEs in the service sector and may target technical assistance to operations and workforce development.

Performance Measures and Goals

MBDA will measure each Business Center's performance. MBDA has defined performance measures and minimum numerical goals that it expects each Business Center to meet. These goals are listed below. Because the awards are for three years and 10 months, the periods for achieving and reporting on the goals will begin with a 10-month period and then shift to an annual period.

Applicants should develop workplans that allow them to achieve and report on these minimum performance goals. Applicants may propose alternative numerical goals within each of the performance measures below, but any deviation below the numerical targets set below requires justification. MBDA is more likely to permit a deviation if it is grounded in facts and data about the specific needs of the MBEs in the region the applicant proposes to serve.

While applicants may propose different numerical targets for a given performance measure, applicants may not propose different measures. Section VII.B.(c).3 provides more detail on the process for proposing alternative numerical goals. Appendix A defines each performance measure.

Measures & minimum goals:

Customers Reached

- First 10 months – 2,500
- First full-year reporting period goal (i.e., goal for months 11 through 22 of the award) - 3,600
- Second full-year reporting period goal – 4,320
- Third full-year reporting period goals – 5,184

Number of MBEs Served

- First 10 months – 83
- Subsequent-year annual goals – 100, including 50 new clients

Client Gross Revenue Generated

- First 10 months – \$62,500,000
- Subsequent-year annual goals – \$75,000,000

Percent Clients that Increase Profits

- First 10 months – 42%
- Subsequent-year annual goals – 50%

Value of Financing, Capital & Bonding

- First 10 months – \$20,833,333
- Subsequent-year annual goals – \$25,000,000

Number of Jobs Created or Retained

- First 10 months – 208
- Subsequent-year Annual Goals – 250

Strategic Facilitated Actions

- First 10 months – 21
- Subsequent-year annual goals – 25

Strategic Partners

- First 10 months – 8
- Subsequent-year annual goals – 10

Minority Business Enterprises. For the purposes of the Business Center program and these performance measures, a minority business enterprise, or MBE, is a business enterprise that is at least 51% owned and controlled by one or more socially or economically disadvantaged individual; and the management and daily business operations of which are controlled by one or more socially or economically disadvantaged individuals. A socially or economically disadvantaged individual is an individual who has been subjected to racial or ethnic prejudice or cultural bias (or the ability of whom to compete in the free enterprise system has been impaired due to diminished capital and credit opportunities, as compared to others in the same line of business and competitive market area) because of the identity of the individual as a member of a group, without regard to any individual quality of the individual that is unrelated to that identity.

It is presumed that the term “socially or economically disadvantaged individual” includes an individual who is Black or African-American, Hispanic or Latino, American Indian, Alaska Native, Asian, Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander, Asian Indians, and Hasidic Jews.

C. Program Authority

The statutory authority for this program is the Minority Business Development Act (“MBDA Act”), 15 U.S.C. §§ 9501-9598, specifically, §§9521-26 and 9598.

II. Award Information

A. Funding Availability

MBDA expects to expend approximately \$2.1 million in fiscal year (FY) 2022 funds for the financial assistance awards under this NOFO to cover the first budget period, which will last 10 months, of the selected projects. MBDA anticipates making six awards under this NOFO. The funding amount for each award in FY 2022 will be approximately \$350,000. MBDA anticipates that up to \$7.56M will be available in FY 2023 through FY 2025 to support continuation of the program for the subsequent budget periods (12 months each) of the selected projects. This translates into approximately \$420,000 for each center in each of those budget periods.

Receipt of any prospective funding also is contingent upon the availability of appropriated funds, satisfactory performance, and continued relevance to program objectives and will be at the sole discretion of MBDA. In addition, MBDA may terminate an award, and thereby decline to fund future years, for failure to comply with the terms and conditions of the award or if an award no longer effectuates MBDA’s program goals or priorities.

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

B. Project/Award Period

MBDA expects to issue awards for a total term of three years and ten months from September 1, 2022 – June 30, 2026, with an initial 10-month budget period from September 1, 2022 to June 30, 2023. Subsequent budget periods will extend for 12-month terms, as outlined below.

Year 1 (FY 22) - \$350,000 10 months, September 1, 2022 - June 30, 2023

Year 2 (FY 23) - \$420,000 12 months, July 1, 2023 - June 30, 2024

Year 3 (FY 24) - \$420,000 12 months, July 1, 2024 - June 30, 2025

Year 4 (FY 25) - \$420,000 12 months, July 1, 2025 - June 30, 2026

C. Type of Funding Instrument

Funding will be through a cooperative agreement. After the award is made, MBDA will be substantially involved in the activities of the Business Center, including by:

(1) providing training relating to the MBDA Business Center Program;

(2) requiring that the operator and staff of each Business Center:

- attend a conference with MBDA to establish the services and programs that the Business Center will provide, in carrying out the requirements before the date on which the Business Center begins providing those services and programs, as well as other required training(s);
- receive necessary guidance relating to carrying out the requirements of the Business Center Program; and
- work in coordination and collaboration with MBDA to carry out the MBDA Business Center

Program and other MBDA programs;

(3) facilitating connections between Business Centers and—

(A) Federal agencies other than MBDA, as appropriate; and

(B) other institutions or entities that use Federal resources, such as small business development centers, women's business centers, procurement technical assistance centers and entities participating in the Hollings Manufacturing Extension Partnership Program;

(4) monitoring projects carried out by the Business Center; and

(5) establishing and enforcing administrative and reporting requirements for each Business Center.

III. Eligibility Information

A. Eligible Applicants

Eligible applicants include:

- Private sector entities, defined as entities that are not public sector entities. This includes, for example, for-profit entities of any type and non-profit entities, and may include quasi-governmental entities that are not agents of the state, but does not include the Federal Government, any Federal agency, or any instrumentality of the Federal Government.
- Public sector entities, defined as States, agencies of a State, political subdivisions of a

State, or agencies of a political subdivision of a State

- Native entities, which means a Tribal Government; an Alaska Native village or Regional or Village Corporation, as defined in or established pursuant to the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act (43 U.S.C. 1601 et seq.); a Native Hawaiian organization, as that term is defined in section 7517 of title 20; the Department of Hawaiian Home Lands; and the Office of Hawaiian Affairs.
- Institutions of higher education

B. Cost Sharing or Matching Requirement

A non-federal cost share of 33% of the Federal funding is required for each budget period. A Business Center may meet the matching requirement by using (i) cash or in-kind contributions, without regard to whether the contribution is made by a third party; or (ii) Federal funds received from other Federal programs, if those programs allow funding to be used for cost sharing purposes.

A Business Center may, but is not required to, generate revenue from fees for service, client fees, membership fees, or other appropriate fees approved by MBDA. Any income the Center generates in operating the Business Center may be used towards the matching requirement, unless the matching requirement is met from other cash or in-kind sources. Any income generated in excess of the matching requirement must be used to carry out the activities of the Business Center authorized by the award (2 C.F.R. 200.307(e)(2)). MBDA cautions against charging fees at a level where the Center cannot accomplish the mission of providing robust service to a range of MBEs.

In-kind contributions must be documented and must be eligible project costs and meet applicable Federal cost principles and other requirements of the Uniform Administrative Requirements, Cost Principles, and Audit Requirements for Federal Awards at 2 C.F.R. Part 200.

If an applicant uses other Federal funds to satisfy the matching requirement, it will be required to submit an attestation of the usage toward this grant.

The MBDA Under Secretary may make a determination, based upon a demonstration by the applicant of substantial need, that the applicant shall not be required to provide the full 33% match with respect to the funding to be provided. To qualify for a waiver, an applicant must submit a request with the application, including justification for the waiver and the amount being sought.

C. Other Criteria that Affect Eligibility

None.

IV. Application and Submission Information

A. Address to Request Application Package

All application materials and forms are available at the Grants.gov website (<http://www.grants.gov>). Helpful competition materials such as FAQs will be made available on the MBDA website (www.mbda.gov).

B. Content and Form of Application

Applicants for MBDA Business Center program must be complete and follow the format described in this NOFO. A complete application packet consists of the following forms and required submissions described below. Applications that fail to include all the necessary elements may not be reviewed or considered and may be disqualified.

(1) Title Page (One (1) page limit)

At a minimum, the application title page must provide the applicant's name, address, telephone number, email address, date of submission, and the Funding Opportunity Number. Applicants must also provide the following additional information: project's title, total budget, start and end dates, and the names, affiliations, complete mailing addresses, email addresses, and telephone numbers of all key persons affiliated with the proposal.

(2) Table of Contents (One (1) page limit)

Under the Table of Contents, applicants must outline the full contents of the application and provide corresponding page numbers. All pages of the application must be consecutively numbered.

(3) Applicant Narrative (Ten (10) page limit)

A detailed narrative with defined sections as described below.

a) **Project Description:** The applicant must fully describe and explain what is being proposed, demonstrating knowledge of the community that the applicant proposes to serve and the ability to conduct effective outreach to that community to advance the goals of an MBDA Business Center.

(1) **Executive Summary:** Provide an executive summary of the project of no more than 250 words.

(2) **Location and Market Needs:** Indicate the specific geographic service area, location for the proposed Business Center, and data-based description of the needs of the MBEs in the

service area, including MBE market size and growth trends, main industries, and an analysis of current support eco-system gaps and strengths. Applicant is encouraged to provide or reference external sources of data and research.

(3) Program Activities: Provide a detailed description of the evidence-driven services, programs and activities that the applicant proposes to undertake. First, this section must describe how the applicant proposes to offer a broad array of programs and services to support the broad goals of Business Development, Capacity Building and Navigation described above in Section I.B. Second, this section must also describe the targeted programming and services that the applicant proposes to meet the specific needs of the MBEs in the Center's region. These targeted proposals should reflect the needs of MBEs described in the "Location and Market Needs" section of the Project Description above.

(4) Project Implementation Timeline: Provide a timeline over the entire period of performance with progressive milestones demonstrating how the applicant will accomplish the project. Please include operational processes and procedures that will be deployed to accomplish the business development objectives and ensure customer satisfaction and financial solvency. Include a detailed plan for the first 120 days describing the start-up activities of Center operations that includes all compliance requirements (reference Appendices C, D E & F).

(5) Strategic Partners: Identify and describe strategic alliances/partnerships and how they will contribute to the proposed Business Center, such as with financial institutions, trade associations, and municipal and state governments. Applicants should demonstrate relationships with and knowledge of the community that will be served. If the applicant proposes to leverage one or more third parties to carry out a substantial portion of the proposed project, the applicant will need to describe the third party and its role as well as provide proof of commitment by the third party, such as a memorandum of understanding or letter of commitment, in the Supporting Documents section of the proposal. At a minimum the applicant must provide proof of one referral relationship to a community-based organization. The term "community-based organization" means a public or private non-profit organization of demonstrated effectiveness that is representative of a community or significant segments of a community and provides educational or related services to individuals in the community.

(6) Outreach and Marketing: The applicant must describe the specific data-driven marketing strategies it will use to reach large numbers of MBEs, recruit MBE clients, and expand visibility of the services offered by the proposed Business Center. This strategy should explain how it will be executed in the relevant languages of the MBE community it intends to serve.

b) **Applicant Capability:** The applicant must present information describing its experience and qualifications to operate a Business Center. The application must include the following information.

(1) **Applicant Profile:** A concise summary of the applicant's organization, its mission and programs, experience with similar projects or services as those proposed, and a list of previous or current projects or services relevant to the proposal.

(2) **Applicant Background:** An overview that emphasizes the applicant's knowledge of strategies for enhancing growth, expansion, and capacity building of businesses; and accomplishments dealing with the specific issues facing MBEs, including information that demonstrates experience in: increasing business participation in large-scale contracts, grants, procurements; accessing financing, legal assistance, and/or established supply chains; engaging in joint ventures, teaming arrangements, mergers and acquisitions, public and private large-scale investments and high-growth industries, specifically, infrastructure, supply chain development, advanced manufacturing, and innovation and emerging technologies; workforce development; facilitating large-scale transactions in global markets.

(3) **Organizational Structure, Biographies or Resumes for Major Participants:** A chart showing the applicant's organizational structure, including a functional statement noting the duties and/or responsibilities of all units that will comprise the organization during the period for which the proposal applies. Applicants must also provide a brief narrative outlining the reporting structure and/or governance of the Business Center and the financial operation of the organization. The applicant must provide in the Supporting Documents section of the application a bio or resume showing relevant experience of the applicant's key leader(s), for example President/CEO to oversee the success of the proposed project, as well as for the key project personnel who will lead the project.

(4) **Proof of Capability:** Applicants also are encouraged to provide proof of capability such as, but not limited to, public records of accomplishments, public citations, and/or letters of referrals/recommendations as attachments in the proposal.

c) **Project Goals and Objectives:** The applicant must provide a breakdown of the proposed annual goals in 6-month increments. For the first ten-month period the breakdown should be the first 120 days and subsequent 6 months. If the applicant is proposing to deviate from the minimum baseline provided for each award period, a data-driven justification should be provided. For the breakdown of the goals, the applicant should provide:

(1) A detailed description of the methodology or evidence and assumptions that were used to construct and propose the breakdown.

(2) Identification of key assumptions and/or risks that may impact the applicant's ability to meet or exceed the goals, as well as proposed contingency plans and/or strategies for adjusting performance to a satisfactory level if an applicant falls short of their goals.

(4) Supporting Documents

The applicant may provide additional information that supports the proposed project. This should include any memorandum of understanding, commitment letters, or other evidence of existing strategic partnerships, as well as biographies or resumes of the applicant's key leaders and key project personnel. It may also include literature cited in the proposal, which may support scoring under the Applicant Narrative – Project Description criterion as noted above.

(5) Standard Forms (SF) and Budget Narrative for 3 years and 10 months

The applicant must provide the required SF, attachments, and budget information as described in the section below.

(a) Standard Application Forms. Please refer to the application package available through

Grants.gov. Please review each form to determine which is required with a submission. Each applicant may not be required to submit all forms listed, depending on the project type or the applicant type.

(i) Signed SF-424: Must be signed by the authorized representative. Electronic signatures submitted through Grants.gov satisfy this requirement. One form will cover all funding periods.

(ii) SF-424A: Budget Information-Non-Construction Programs. Must be submitted for all budget periods.

(iii) Signed SF-424B: Assurances for Non-Construction Programs. Budget Narrative must be completed and submitted for all non-construction applications. Must be signed by the authorized representative.

(iv) SF-LLL: Disclosure of Lobbying Activities.

(v) Signed Commerce Department (CD)-511: Certification Regarding Lobbying. Certification regarding debarment, suspension, and other responsibility matters, drug free workplace requirements, and lobbying. Must be signed by the authorized representative.

(b) Budget Narrative. The applicant must provide a detailed justification for all budget items in sufficient detail to enable the proposal reviewers to evaluate the appropriateness of the funding requested (e.g., staffing, infrastructure, work activities, materials and supplies, equipment, etc.). The budget justification must be broken-out and detailed using the same budget categories as the SF-424A. All total costs on the Budget Narrative must match the SF-424 and SF 424-A exactly. The SF-424, SF-424A and Budget Narrative must have the same correct Federal and non-Federal (if applicable).

If the applicant will charge fees or generate income in connection with the operation of the project, it must provide a description of the types of fees it proposes to charge. Fees that are not a fee for service, client fee, or membership fee must be approved by MBDA.

(d) Required Travel Item(s). Each applicant must include in its budget forms and narrative travel costs for (2) key personnel to attend the events included below. In the event that the COVID-19 pandemic continues to cause limitations on travel and gatherings, the events will be virtual.

Minority Enterprise Development Week

National Training Conference

NOAA Grants Management Workshop (Years 1&3)

Please refer to section VIII "Other Information" of this NOFO for additional information pertaining to required travel.

(e) Indirect Cost Rate Agreement (as applicable). Applicants requesting an indirect cost rate are required to submit a copy of their current and signed indirect cost rate agreement with the application package. If an applicant does not have a current indirect cost rate established by a cognizant Federal agency, provide a statement to this effect. If a successful applicant includes indirect costs in the budget and has not established an indirect cost rate with a cognizant federal agency, the applicant will be required to obtain such a rate in accordance with Section B.06 of the Department of Commerce Financial Assistance Standard Terms and Conditions, dated November 12, 2020.

Alternatively, in accordance with 2 CFR § 200.414(f), a non-Federal entity that does not have a current negotiated indirect cost rate may elect to charge a de minimis rate of 10 percent of modified total direct costs. Applicants proposing a 10 percent de minimis rate pursuant to 2 C.F.R. § 200.414(f) must note this election as part of the budget and budget narrative portion of the application.

Indirect costs proposed under the award must be clearly identified as a separate budget line-item.

Costs must be consistent with the Uniform Guidance: Administrative Requirements, Cost Principles, and Audit Requirements for Federal Awards (Uniform Guidance), 2 CFR Part 200.

(6) Format Requirements

All pages should be single-spaced and should be composed in at least 11-point font with one-inch margins on 8-1/2 inch x 11 inch paper. The total proposal shall not exceed 20

pages, including the title page, table of contents, applicant narrative, literature cited, budget narrative, letters of support or letters of commitment (if any), and organizational structure. The following items are not included in the 20-page limit: resumes/bios of key personnel and required forms. Failure to follow the requirements may result in the rejection of the application. Any PDF or other attachments that are included in an electronic application must meet the above format requirement when printed.

C. Unique Entity Identifier and System for Award Management (SAM)

Each applicant (unless the applicant is eligible for an exception under 2 CFR § 25.110(b), (c), or (d) is required to:

- Register in the System for Award Management (SAM), before submitting an application;
- Provide a valid unique entity identifier in the application; and,
- Continue to maintain an active SAM registration with current information at all times during which the applicant has an active Federal award or an application or plan under consideration by MBDA (or any other Federal agency).

MBDA may not make a Federal award to an applicant until the applicant has complied with all applicable unique entity identifier and SAM requirements. If an applicant has not fully complied with the requirements by the time MBDA is ready to make the award, MBDA may determine that the applicant is not qualified to receive a Federal award and use that determination as a basis for making an award to another applicant.

Entities that do not have a unique entity identifier (UEI) by July 1, 2022 at 11:59:59 Eastern Time (E.T.) will be ineligible to receive an award. See section D, below, for application submission options for entities that have not received a UEI by the June 6, 2022 application deadline but have requested and received a ticket number from SAM related to the processing of their request for a UEI.

D. Submission Dates and Times

All proposals must be received on or before June 6, 2022 at 11:59:59 pm Eastern Time (E.T). Applications may be submitted starting from the publication date of this NOFO up to the deadline above. Applications received after this time will not be reviewed or considered for funding. Applications must be submitted electronically via Grants.gov. The electronic submission will receive a date and time stamp at and will be processed after it is fully uploaded. Applicants should anticipate receiving confirmation of successful submission within forty-eight (48) hours. It is imperative that applicants obtain this confirmation as proof of successful submission. Waiting to submit an application until the end of the competition period puts an application at risk; be sure to allow ample time.

Applicants that are unable to submit their application electronically on grants.gov because they have not received a Unique Entity Identifier (UEI) from SAM may email their complete application to mbdagrants@mbda.gov by the submission deadline. Applicants may only use

this alternate email application submission method if they have not yet received a UEI but have applied for a UEI and have received an Electronic Verification System (EVS) ticket number from sam.gov related to the processing of their request for a UEI. Applicants that choose to submit their applications via the alternate email submission method **MUST** include their SAM EVS ticket number in the body of the transmittal email with their application. **Applicants are responsible for ensuring the completeness of their application.**

Applicants that use the alternate email submission method are encouraged to email mbdagrants@mbda.gov as soon as SAM issues a final UEI number. Applicants **MUST** submit their final assigned UEI number via email to mbdagrants@mbda.gov and clearly indicate the name of the applicant entity in that email no later than July 1, 2022 at 11:59:59 pm Eastern Time (E.T.). Applicants that fail to obtain a UEI and provide the UEI to MBDA by the established deadline of July 1, 2022 will not be eligible to receive an award.

E. Intergovernmental Review

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

F. Funding Restrictions

Any income the Center generates in operating the Business Center may be used towards the matching requirement, unless the matching requirement is met from other cash or in-kind sources. Any income generated not used for the matching requirement must be used to carry out the activities of the Business Center authorized by the award (2 C.F.R. 200.307(e)(2)).

G. Other Submission Requirements

In order to submit an application through Grants.gov, an applicant must register for a Grants.gov user ID and password. Note that this process can take between three to five business days or as long as four weeks if all steps are not completed correctly. The most up-to-date instructions for application submission via Grants.gov can be found at <https://www.grants.gov/web/grants/applicants/apply-for-grants.html>. Applicants already registered with Grants.gov do not need to re-register; however, all registered organizations must keep their System for Award Management (SAM) registration up-to-date through sam.gov or their applications will not be accepted by Grants.gov.

New Grants.gov Users

New Grants.gov users should note that the registration process can be lengthy, requires interaction with multiple organizations not affiliated with MBDA, and requires confirmation at each step. Applicants should register as organizations, not individuals. The process requires the applicant to appoint one or more Authorized Organization Representatives (AOR). The AORs registered at Grants.gov are the only officials with the authority to submit applications for an applicant. An applicant may authorize multiple AORs for Grants.gov. Below are instructions for registering as an organization:

- Obtain a DUNS Number: Call 1-866-705-5711 or access the Dun & Bradstreet website <http://fedgov.dnb.com/webform> (1-2 business days).
- Register with SAM: Access <https://www.sam.gov>. The applicant needs to identify the authorizing official of its organization and an Employer Identification Number (EIN) (7-10 business days).
- Create Grants.gov Username and Password: Complete the Authorized Organization Representative (AOR) profile and create a username and password. The applicant will need to use its organization's DUNS Number (same day).
- Authorize the AOR: Request approval, then the applicant's E-Biz POC must log in to Grants.gov to confirm the AOR (same day).
- Track AOR Status: Log in to Grants.gov and look at the Applicant welcome box for your current status (same day).
- Download an application package: Use Funding Opportunity Number MBDA-OB-2022-2007282 and Download a Grant Application Package (same day).

- Complete your application package: Write your proposal and fill out ALL the required forms, fields, and certifications (allow 3 days).
- Submit your application package: Access your completed application package, ensure all the necessary information is entered, check the package for errors, then click the "Save & Submit" button on the cover page (3 days).
- Track my application package: Enter the tracking number you received after Step 8 and click the "Submit Tracking Number(s)" button. Note, confirmation of successful submission may require 48 hours (allow 2 days).

Electronic Submission

The electronic submission date is the date that applications have been submitted electronically and received by Grants.gov. Proof of timely submission shall be the official date and time that www.Grants.gov receives your application. You must save and print the proof of submission from/on www.Grants.gov. If problems occur while using www.Grants.gov, the applicant is advised to (i) print any error message received and (ii) call www.Grants.gov at 1-800-518-4726 for immediate assistance.

The time it takes to completely upload an application will vary depending on a number of factors, including the size of the application, the speed of the applicant's Internet connection, and the time it takes Grants.gov to process the application. If Grants.gov rejects the application, the applicant must resubmit the entire application and receive a date and time stamp from Grants.gov. The Grants.gov time stamp will be considered the date and time of submission receipt. Before beginning to apply through Grants.gov, please review the application instructions posted at Grants.gov.

If you experience a grants.gov "systems issue" (technical problems or glitches with the grants.gov website) that you believe threatens your ability to complete a submission, you must (i) print any error message received and (ii) call the Grants.gov Contact Center at 1-800-518-4726 for immediate assistance. Ensure that you obtain and document a case number regarding your communications with grants.gov.

Important note: problems with an applicant organization's computer system or equipment are not considered "systems issues." Similarly, an applicant's failure to: (i) complete the required registration, (ii) ensure that a registered AOR submits the application, or (iii) receive an email message from grants.gov are not considered systems issues. A grants.gov "systems issue" is an issue occurring in connection with the operations of grants.gov system, such as the temporary loss of the service by grants.gov due to unexpected volume of traffic

or failure of information technology systems, both of which are highly unlikely. Confirmation of successful submission requires 48 hours. Applicants are advised to review the Grants.gov tutorial to minimize risk of an unsuccessful submission. Please visit <http://www.grants.gov/web/grants/applicants/applicant-tools-and-tips.html>.

Throughout the review and selection process, MBDA reserves the right to seek clarification in writing from applicants whose applications are being reviewed. MBDA may additionally ask applicants to clarify application materials or modify budgets or other specifics necessary to comply with Federal requirements.

www.grants.gov

V. Application Review Information

A. Evaluation Criteria

Each application will be evaluated based on criteria included below. The number of points that can be earned for each category of criteria is listed below, with 100 points the maximum total that can be earned.

1. Impact of the Proposed Project (40 points)

This criterion considers the effectiveness of the proposed project, including:

- the quality of the proposed services and their alignment to the needs of the MBEs to be served (10 points)
- the quality of the analysis of the local MBE needs (8 points)
- the quality and feasibility of the project implementation timeline (4 points)
- the breadth and quality of the applicant's strategic partners and alliances (6 points)
- the effectiveness of the applicant's proposed outreach and marketing plans, including how well it is supported by data (5 points); and
- the quality of the analysis in the Project Goals and Objectives section of the application, including the contingency plans, and in particular how well the analysis reflects the MBE market to be served and project implementation timeline. (7 points)

2. Applicant Capability (30 points)

This criterion assesses whether the applicant and its personnel possess the experience, background, and qualifications to accomplish the project, including

- the quality of the knowledge, experience and demonstrated track record of the applicant in enhancing growth, expansion, and capacity building of businesses, with extra weight given to experience with MBEs and specific examples of success (25 points)
- the knowledge, experience, and qualifications of the key project personnel (5 points)

3. Applicant Budget (30 points)

This criterion evaluates the budget to determine if it is realistic and commensurate with the project needs and time frame.

Total Available Application Points 100

All applications must adhere to the submission guidelines provided in this section and section IV.B.1.a), “A Complete Application.” Omissions will result in the deduction of points from the final score according to the table below up to and including disqualification of the entire application.

Mandatory Item:	(Failure to Adhere Shall Result In)
- Title Page	(5 Point Deduction)
- Table of Contents	(5 Point Deduction)
- Applicant Narrative	(Disqualification)
- Budget Narrative	(Disqualification)
- Required Standard Forms (SF) and Attachments	(Disqualification)

All project proposals will be evaluated, and applicant(s) will be selected based on the level at which the proposal addresses the evaluation criteria above, less any points deducted for failure to include the mandatory items noted above.

B. Review and Selection Process

1. Initial Screening – Prior to the formal review process, each application will receive an initial administrative screening to ensure that all required forms, signatures, and documents are present. An application will not be evaluated by the review panel if:

- a) The application is received after the closing date;
- b) The application package is not complete;
- c) The project fails to address program objectives and priorities (see Section I);
- d) The principal purpose of the activities in the application is to provide a direct benefit or service to MBDA.

2. MBDA Merit Review Panel - Each responsive application will receive an independent, merit review by a panel (Merit Review Panel) qualified to evaluate the applications submitted based on the published criteria. The Merit Review Panel will consist of at least three (3) individuals, all of whom could be a combination of full-time federal employees and/or non-federal civilians. Each reviewer shall evaluate and provide individual scores for each proposal based on the criteria set out in this Section (see Application Review Information, above) for a maximum of 100 points. The Merit Review Panel may discuss the application(s) but will not provide a consensus on scores for each applicant. Each application

will be reviewed against the criteria individually.

Prior to review by the Merit Review Panel, MBDA will sort all applications into groups according to geographic service area. The Merit Review Panel will review and rank the applications within each geographically designated group such that each group will have its own final ranking.

Applications will be ranked by averaging the scores of all reviewers for each application. Applicants may receive written follow-up questions during the review process from the MBDA program office relative to requested clarifications of items contained in the applicant's proposal. The Chairperson of the Merit Review Panel will be responsible for averaging reviewers' scores, collating reviewer comments, and completing an overall evaluation form that documents the scores and comments of the merit reviewers. Applications that receive an overall average of 75 points or more will be considered for funding. Applications that receive an average score of 60 to 74 points will be given consideration for funding only if there are no proposals that score above 75 points. Applications that receive fewer than 60 points will not be considered for funding.

C. Selection Factors

The ranked applications will be forwarded to the Program Manager for review for completeness and then forwarded to the Selecting Official.

The Under Secretary of Commerce for Minority Business Development, or their designee, is the Selecting Official and makes the final recommendation to the Grants Officer regarding the funding of applications under this NOFO. The Selecting Official will recommend funding for applications evaluated as meritorious based on the final ranking according to each geographic service area group as prepared by the Merit Review Panel; however, the Selecting Official may recommend an application for an award outside of the rank order established by the Merit Review Panel based on one or more of the following selection factors:

- The extent to which the application meets the overall objectives and priorities of the MBDA Business Center Program as provided in Section I.A and B;
- The performance of the applicant under previous Federal financial assistance awards, as well as the performance of any third parties the applicant identifies who will be responsible for carrying out a substantial portion of the project;
- The availability of funds;
- The extent to which the application demonstrates an effective plan to ensure MBEs benefit from the investments flowing from the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act

D. Anticipated Announcement and Award Dates

Anticipated time for processing awards is approximately one hundred forty (140) days from the receipt of applications. MBDA anticipates that the awards under this NOFO will be made with start dates of September 1, 2022. Successful applicants may be eligible for pre-award costs (see 2 C.F.R. § 200.458).

VI. Award Administration Information

A. Award Notices

The notice of award (CD-450) is executed by the Department of Commerce Grants Officer and is the authorizing document. It is generally provided electronically via the Grants Online system to the Authorized Representative of the recipient organization. The Authorized Representative for a successful applicant will receive instructions from MBDA on how to access the Grants Online system to accept the award.

MBDA will notify unsuccessful applicants, in writing, after a final selection has been made and after an offer has been accepted. Those applications that are not ultimately selected for funding will be retained by MBDA for a period of three (3) years after which they will be destroyed.

On occasion, competitive solicitations or competitive panels may produce less than optimum results, such as a competition resulting in the receipt of no applications or a competition resulting in all unresponsive applications received.

B. Administrative and National Policy Requirements

1. Department of Commerce Pre-Award Notification Requirements For Grants And Cooperative Agreements – the Department of Commerce Pre-Award Notification Requirements for Grants and Cooperative Agreements, published in the Federal Register on December 30, 2014, effective December 26, 2014 (79 FR 78390) are applicable to this solicitation and may be accessed online at:

<https://www.federalregister.gov/documents/2014/12/30/2014-30297/department-of-commerce-pre-award-notification-requirements-for-grants-and-cooperative-agreements>

2. Awards made under this NOFO are subject to the Department of Commerce Financial Assistance Standard Terms and Conditions. This document will be provided in the award package. This document can be found at:

<https://www.commerce.gov/sites/default/files/2020-11/DOC%20Standard%20Terms%20and%20Conditions%20->

%2012%20November%202020%20PDF_0.pdf

3. Uniform Administrative Requirements, Cost Principles, and Audit Requirements: Through 2 C.F.R. § 1327.101, the Department of Commerce adopted Uniform Administrative Requirements, Cost Principles, and Audit Requirements for Federal Awards at 2 C.F.R. Part 200, which apply to awards in this program. Refer to <http://go.usa.gov/SBYh> and <http://go.usa.gov/SBg4>

4. Review of Risk - After Applications are proposed for funding by the Selecting Official, the Grants Office will perform administrative reviews, including an assessment of risk posed by the applicant under 2 C.F.R. 200.206. These may include assessments of the financial stability of an applicant and the quality of the applicant's management systems, history of performance, and the applicant's ability to effectively implement statutory, regulatory, or other requirements imposed on non-Federal entities. Special conditions that address any risks determined to exist may be applied. Applicants may submit comments to the Federal Awardee Performance and Integrity Information System (FAPIIS) about any information included in the system about their organization for consideration by the awarding agency.

C. Reporting

1. Reviews - Subject to the availability of funds, the centers are funded for a total term of three years and ten months. MBDA will conduct performance assessments after the initial four months from the start date of the project during the first budget period. For subsequent budget periods, MBDA will conduct performance assessments every six months.

MBDA will monitor the project throughout the funding award period and maintain open communications with key project staff. As such, the Center is required to enter client information, client services rendered and client outcomes within three (3) business days of an activity or outcome. The level of monitoring will be dependent on the awarded applicant's proposed breakdown of measures, milestones (e.g., outputs and outcomes), and goals.

2. Reporting Requirements - The project is required to provide the following reports:

a) Financial Reports – The financial report shall include details on the use of Federal funds and contributions of non-Federal funds (if proposed). The financial reports are to be submitted to the Department of Commerce via Grants Online on a periodic basis. The periodic reports are due forty-five (45) days after the end of the initial four-month period and every six-month period thereafter. The final report is due within ninety (90) days after the expiration of each budget period.

b) Progress Report – Progress reports are to be submitted to the Department of Commerce via Grants Online a periodic basis. The periodic reports are due forty-five (45) days after the end of the initial four-month period and every six-month period thereafter. The final report is due within ninety (90) days after the expiration of each budget period.

The periodic reports must include data and information to determine project progression and success. MBDA will rely on these reports, data, and information as evidence for success stories, future program design, policy recommendations, and/or statistical purposes.

Note: failure to submit reports in a timely manner may result in MBDA award enforcement and/or delayed access to Federal funds.

c) Federal Funding Accountability and Transparency Act of 2006 Reporting - The Federal Funding Accountability and Transparency Act of 2006, 31 U.S.C. 6101 note, includes a requirement for awardees of applicable federal grants to report information about first-tier sub-awards and executive compensation under Federal assistance awards. All awardees of applicable grants and cooperative agreements are required to report to the Federal Sub-award Reporting System (FSRS) available at www.FSRS.gov on all sub-awards over \$30,000. Please see the OMB guidance published at 2 CFR Parts 170 and 200, which can be accessed at http://www.ecfr.gov/cgi-bin/text-idx?tpl=/ecfrbrowse/Title02/2cfr200_main_02.tpl.

d) Restrictions Governing Making Grants to Corporations Convicted of Felony Criminal Violations and/or Unpaid Federal Tax Liabilities - In accordance with current Federal appropriations law, execution by an applicant of the Representation by Corporations Regarding an Unpaid Delinquent Tax Liability or a Felony Conviction Under Any Federal Law will be required in a format requested by NOAA before any award will be made under this NOFO.

VII. Agency Contacts

Prospective applicants may contact:

Ms. Nakita Chambers

MBDA Program Manager

U.S. Department of Commerce

Email: nchambers@mbda.gov

Tel: 202-482-0065

VIII. Other Information

A. Conferences

1. Pre-Application Teleconference

MBDA will conduct a series of pre-application teleconferences at 2:00-3:00pm on the following dates with focus areas noted below:

- April 28 – General competition information, key changes from previous competitions and key dates, live Question and Answer session
- May 3 – Program priorities and objectives with examples, live Question and Answer session
- May 10 – Budget pitfalls to avoid and best practices, live Question and Answer session
- May 17 – Measuring success and performance, live Question and Answer session

Participants must register at least 24 hours in advance of the teleconference. Please visit the MBDA website at www.mbda.gov to register and view recordings of the teleconferences, as well as other additional information.

2. Post Award Teleconference

MBDA shall conduct a mandatory post-award virtual conference to ensure that the successful applicant has a clear understanding of the project award, terms, conditions, and expectations. During the post-award teleconference, MBDA will: introduce Federal officers, orient the project operator and key project staff, explain project reporting requirements and procedures, identify available Federal resources that can enhance the capabilities of the project, and provide detailed information about MBDA's virtual marketing/promotion resources, branding and logo requirements, and other online systems.

3. National Minority Enterprise Development (MED) Week Conference

The project operator and key project staff will be required to attend the MED Week conference unless otherwise noted by MBDA. MED Week is a national recognition of the success and contributions of minority business enterprises to the U.S. economy. The President of the United States designates the specific dates on which MED Week falls. MBDA conducts an annual conference featuring workshops, seminars, and business matchmaking activities that inform minority business attendees of new opportunities and information related to contracts, capital, and markets. MBDA MED Week hosts a celebratory awards program in recognition of MBE clients that have made significant economic impact and minority business advocates that have supported supplier diversity. The location of MED Week varies annually in major cities across the country.

Note: applicants must include expenses to accommodate (2) individuals to travel to MED Week in the proposed budget, including travel and registration. In the event that the COVID-19 pandemic continues to cause limitations on travel and gatherings, the conference will be

virtual.

4. MBDA National Training Conference

The project operator and key project staff will be required to attend the MBDA National Training Conference (NTC), unless otherwise noted by MBDA. The NTC is typically a 2-3-day conference designed to review key MBDA initiatives among all MBDA sponsored programs and MBDA staff. Specialized programmatic training as well as formal meetings and/or trainings with the Program Manager and the Grants Management Unit are also offered at this event. The NTC is held once a year, depending on the availability of funds. The location of this event varies.

Note: applicants must include expenses related to the NTC in the proposed budget to accommodate (2) individuals to travel, including travel (no conference registration costs). The duration of the conference is approximately 2-3 days. In the event that the COVID-19 pandemic continues to cause limitations on travel and gatherings, the conference will be virtual.

5. NOAA Grants Management Workshop

The project operator and key project staff will be required to attend the NOAA Grants Management Workshop, unless otherwise noted by MBDA. The NOAA Grants Management Workshop is a 2-3-day conference designed to review key Financial Assistance from NOAA/GMD.

Note: In the event that the COVID-19 pandemic continues to cause limitations on travel and gatherings, the workshop will be virtual.

B. Collaboration with MBDA

MBDA shall work collaboratively with each award recipient and Center staff to serve the minority business community. The Center operator and staff are encouraged to support MBDA by communicating the mission and values of the MBDA to the minority business community. Collaboration with MBDA will include items such as: issuance and adherence to the Center Service Optimization manual, Center operational review site visits, promotion of MBDA sanctioned events and conferences, annual nomination of minority businesses for MED Week recognition, inclusion of MBDA to project-lead activities, submission of project success stories and/or profiles for MBDA social media promotion, and co-promotion of project and MBDA lead activities.

MBDA expects to further support the Business Center by:

Providing the brand identity for the Business Center to include logo, branding guidelines, naming conventions, and templates for collateral materials, business cards, and letterhead, as well as providing website standards for design and content

Assistance with facilitating and fostering relationships as well as understanding the mechanics around how to work with a range of key public and private sector stakeholders at the local, state, and federal levels and private sector

Assigning a program analyst to support the Center with:

Project monitoring and advisement

Key staff requisite background and skills guidance

Ensuring that the pipeline of deal flow with potential contracts and financing deals is current and up to date in Salesforce

Establishing a year-to-date performance scorecard and dashboards

Providing program information, guidance, and support

Providing program accountability with respect to client engagement, client attestation, and awarded transaction verification

Providing a cloud-based customer relationship management system, user training and support

Providing support to use the Department of Commerce electronic grants system

Providing strategic business development and partnership support

Providing support that fosters collaboration amongst the MBDA national network including facilitation of collaborative relationships within the national network, MBDA CRM, and the exchange of public and private sector business opportunity information and more

C. Past Performance and Non-Compliance with Award Provisions

Unsatisfactory performance under prior federal awards may result in an application not being considered for funding. Failure to comply with any or all of the provisions of an award may have a negative impact on future funding by the Department of Commerce (or any of its operating units) and may be considered grounds for any or all of the following actions: establishment of an account receivable, withholding payments under any Department of Commerce awards to the recipient, changing the method of payment from advance to reimbursement only, imposition of other special award conditions, suspension of any active Department of Commerce awards, and termination of any active Department of Commerce awards.

D. Limitation of Liability

Funding for awards listed in this NOFO is contingent upon the availability of appropriations. In no event will MBDA or the Department of Commerce be responsible for preparation costs for the Applicant's proposal. All budget periods under the award to support the continuation of the project are subject to the availability of funds. Publication of this NOFO does not

obligate MBDA or the Department of Commerce to award any specific project or to obligate any available funds.

E. Audit Costs

Audits shall be performed in accordance with audit requirements contained in the Uniform Administrative Requirements, Cost Principles and Audit Requirements found in 2 CFR Part 200, Subsection F. Recipients expending \$750,000 or more in federal funds during the recipient's fiscal period must conduct a single audit in accordance with guidelines outlined in 2 CFR §§ 200.500-.520. For-profit organizations not covered by the audit requirements in 2 CFR §§ 200.500-.520 are subject to the audit requirements set forth in the terms and conditions of the award. Recipients that expend less than \$750,000 during the recipient's fiscal year in Federal awards are exempt from Federal audit requirements for that year, except as noted in 2 CFR § 200.503, but records must be available for review or audit by appropriate officials of the Federal agency, pass-through entity, and Government Accountability Office (GAO). Applicants are also reminded that other audits may be conducted by the Department of Commerce Office of Inspector General and by other authorized federal agencies.

F. Right to Use Information

The applicant acknowledges and understands that information and data contained in applications for financial assistance, as well as information and data contained in financial, performance, and other reports submitted by applicants, may be used by the Department of Commerce—either through its staff or by hiring a third-party—in conducting reviews and evaluations of its financial assistance programs. For this purpose, applicant information and data may be accessed, reviewed and evaluated by Department of Commerce employees, other Federal employees, Federal agents and contractors, and/or by non-Federal personnel, all of whom enter into appropriate confidentiality and nondisclosure agreements covering the use of such information. As may be provided in the terms and conditions of a specific financial assistance award, applicants are expected to support program reviews and evaluations by submitting required financial and performance information and data in an accurate and timely manner and by cooperating with Department of Commerce and external program evaluators. In accordance with 2 C.F.R. § 200.303(e), applicants are reminded that they must take reasonable measures to safeguard protected personally identifiable information and other confidential or sensitive personal or business information created or obtained in connection with a Department of Commerce financial assistance award.

G. Freedom of Information Act Disclosure

Department of Commerce regulations implementing the Freedom of Information Act

(FOIA), 5 U.S.C. Sec. 552, are found at 15 C.F.R. Part 4, Public Information. These regulations set forth rules for the Department regarding making requested materials, information, and records publicly available under FOIA. Applications submitted in response to this Notice of Funding Opportunity may be subject to requests for release under FOIA. In the event that an application contains information or data that the applicant deems to be confidential commercial information that should be exempt from disclosure under FOIA, that information should be identified, bracketed, and marked as Privileged, Confidential, Commercial or Financial Information. In accordance with 15 CFR § 4.9, the Department of Commerce will protect from disclosure confidential business information contained in financial assistance applications and other documentation provided by applicants to the extent permitted by law.

Appendix A

Program Performance Measures and Performance Ratings

1. Performance Measures

The MBDA Business Center performance shall be evaluated according to the criteria below. These goals shall determine performance achievements and outcomes that result in direct benefit(s) to the clients served and alignment to the program priorities. Applicants should plan projects that allow them to achieve and report the goals articulated in their applications.

Specifically, performance ratings will be assigned by MBDA in proportion to the Center operator's satisfaction of the performance goals set forth in the application and incorporated into the terms and conditions of the award. The performance measures are defined below.

Customers Reached: the number of customers reached through marketing and outreaching including (but not limited to) social media, email campaigns, website visitors, phone campaigns, and other promotional campaigns that build awareness of the Center and its services. Customers are broadly defined and can be persons, business entities and other organizational entities. The number of customers will include email campaign open rates, number of website visitors, virtual and in-person event attendance, and other digital /E-service counts not affiliated with MBEs served. Following the initial ten-month performance period, annual performance goals for

Customers Reached shall increase 20% each year. Attendance rosters from in-person and virtual events, open rates of email campaigns, and other e-service delivery methods should be measured and reported in semi-annual and annual reports.

Number of MBEs Served: the actual number of MBEs served during a funding period. This measure shall include MBEs that are served with and without a client engagement (as documented via an MBDA-provided client engagement form). An MBE without a client engagement must complete a minimum intake package. An MBE client must complete an engagement package with the center for services (i.e., a client engagement form, client attestation form, client verification form, and client internal transaction verification attestation form). Note, the center may only take credit for performance if the MBE completes a minimum intake package or client engagement package. Additional instructions (i.e., handbook) for intake process will be provided at the Post Award conference. After the first ten-month period, 50% of clients each year must be new to the Center.

Gross Revenue Generated: the total dollar value of sales achieved directly related to the assistance provided by the center to the engaged client. Gross revenue generated shall include one or more income generating event(s) such as (but not limited to) overall sales, service agreements, task orders, product requests that result in sales, successfully awarded contracts, and/or the total principal value of executed sales/delivery contracts of services/products/ intellectual rights and/or other binding financial considerations secured for clients of the center.

MBDA recognizes that the financial obligations evidenced by transactions may be long-term and require the delivery of goods and services over an extended period. In some cases, the agreements may have been awarded as indefinite demand indefinite quantity (IDIQ) contracts. Consequently, it is not necessary that the funds or other financial value specified under these agreements have actually changed hands for the center operator to receive credit. In the case of multi-year and multiple-year awards (base and option years) and IDIQ contracts, the full contract value, including option years, can be claimed in the year the contract was signed. The period for claiming the amount of multi-year and multiple-year awards cannot exceed the performance period of the cooperative agreement.

Percent Clients that Increase in Profits: the percentage of clients that report a net increase in profits (net financial gain) achieved as a result of the assistance provided by the center to the engaged client, from one period to another. The net financial gain is reported by the client as affirmation to the quality of service provided by the Center that results in additional profits for the MBE client. The financial gain profit is generally derived from gross revenue less expenses, related to the operations of the business center.

Value of Financing, Capital, & Bonding: includes the total principal value of approved loans, lines of credit, trade credit, subordinated debt, surety bonding, bonds used to raise capital for MBEs, leases (property and equipment), specialized industry financing (e.g., equipment

financing), export letters of credit, equity investments, capital formation, assets under management or other binding financial agreements secured by clients of the center, with the assistance of the center staff. For purposes of this performance element, eligible financial transactions are those that have a specific dollar value and that expand the client's capital base/operations or that produce some other direct and immediate commercial benefit to the client.

Number of Jobs: includes new jobs created and retained jobs as a result of the assistance provided by the Business Center.

New Jobs Created - are the number of new full time and/or part time employment opportunities reported on the client's payroll during the funding period.

Retained Jobs - are the number of existing full time and/or part time employee positions retained and reported on the client's payroll during the funding period. Job retention pertains to maintaining the status quo of persons employed by the client in lieu of subjective and objective decisions made by the client to reduce its work force due to economic conditions, lack of capital, failure to secure necessary contracts and/or sales (documentation will be needed to show that the client did not reduce the workforce as a result of the Center operations). Note, persons on paid sick leave, paid holiday, and paid vacations are included as employees, as are salaried officers and executives of corporations.

Strategic Alliances – The number of formal partnerships established by the Center in support of program mission and program priorities including non-federal cost sharing, business and legal assistance to MBEs served. Centers will be awarded one point per strategic partnership or alliance. The center must maintain active strategic partners or alliances to ensure that points will be awarded for performance.

Strategic Facilitated Actions – The number of MBEs served in Designated Federal Areas*, or awards stemming and/or related to Designated Federal Programs**, or MBE referrals to designated Federal programs and/or MBDA special initiatives. The Center may only receive 1 credit point for each MBE client/customer under this criterion.

*Designated Federal Areas include: HUB Zones, Enterprise Zones, Empowerment Zones, Promise Zones, Qualified Opportunity Zones

**Designated Federal Programs include programs, investment opportunities, contract opportunities and financing opportunities related to: Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA) programs, American Rescue Plan (ARP) Act programs, MBDA Initiative(s) and other Federal or State workforce development programs.

Strategic Partners – The number of unique partners associated with the strategic facilitated actions or transactions, as well as referral partners who are key members of the local business development ecosystem. Centers will be awarded one point per strategic partners, regardless of the number of facilitated actions or transactions.

2. Performance Goals

Performance Goals for each performance period will be the baseline minimum goals (see Program Priorities, Performance Measures and Goals), unless otherwise defined through the applicant’s proposal. Each performance measure is assigned maximum allowable points for 100% completion of the goal. MBDA will assign points based on the actual number achieved as a percent of the goals for each performance period, with relative weights set forth below.

Business Center Performance Points Table Scale

- Customers Reached – 10 points
- Number of MBEs Served – 15 points
- Gross Revenue Generated – 15 points
- Percent Clients that Increase Profits – 15 points
- Value of Financing, Capital & Bonding – 15 points
- Number of Jobs – 10 points
- Strategic Alliances – 10 points
- Strategic Facilitated Actions – 10 points

MBDA Business Center Performance Scale

Ratings	Goal Met	Points Assigned	Goal Met	Points Assigned
Outstanding	100%	100.0	100%	100.0
Commendable	90% - 99.9%	90.0 – 99.9	90% - 99.9%	90.0 – 99.9
Good	80% - 89.9%	80.0 – 89.9	80% - 89.9%	80.0 – 89.9
Satisfactory	75% - 79.9%	75.0 – 79.9		
Unsatisfactory	0% - 74.9%	74.9 & Below		

*In the first ten-month performance period, the threshold for unsatisfactory will be 69.9% & below and will revert to the scale above for the remainder of the performance periods.

Failure to maintain at least a “Satisfactory” performance rating may result in designation of

the Center award recipient as high risk and/or placed on a Performance Improvement Plan (PIP), assignment of special award conditions, and other further action under the award, up to and including award termination.

MBDA Business Centers must continue to operate during the entire performance period.

Appendix B

Business Center Trademark and Licensing Requirements

The “MBDA Business Center” logo and the phrase “MBDA Business Center” are trademarks of the Minority Business Development Agency (MBDA), U.S. Department of Commerce. MBDA reserves exclusive rights in the use of the “MBDA Business Center” logo, the phrase “MBDA Business Center,” and all associated marks and representations (hereafter “MBDA trademarks”). The financial assistance award (“Award”) from MBDA includes the terms of this Appendix covering the trademark and licensing requirements for use of the MBDA trademarks. By signing the Award, the operator of the MBDA Business Center agrees to the terms and conditions related to the use of the MBDA trademarks as stated in this Appendix.

This appendix covers only the MBDA trademarks referenced above and does not authorize an MBDA Business Center to use the Department of Commerce seal or the MBDA Headquarters logo on any electronic or printed communications for any purpose.

Grant of License: Pursuant to the acceptance of the terms of the Award, MBDA (hereafter “Licensor”) grants to the operators of each MBDA Business Center (hereafter “Licensee/Center”) a non-exclusive, royalty-free right to use the MBDA trademarks for the following purposes:

1. Business materials and products – business cards, letterhead, folders, programs, bulletins, and newsletters.
2. Event and workshop signage – flyers, publications, and signs announcing events sponsored or organized by or on behalf of the Licensee/Center. Licensee/Center must be an active participant in the event.
3. Electronic communications – email signature blocks, webpages, announcements, and signs regarding events sponsored or organized by or on behalf of the Licensee/Center.
4. Center signs and markers – signs and print information to indicate or describe the

location of the Licensee/Center or an event sponsored or organized by the Licensee/Center.

The MBDA trademarks may be used to advertise the Licensee/Center's participation on a per event basis in collaboration with a third party.

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Appendix C

Information Technology and Computer Requirements

MBDA requires that all Center operators meet certain requirements related to the acquisition, installation, configuration, maintenance, and security of information technology (IT) assets. Requirements must be met within thirty (30) calendar days after receipt of the award. The Center operator and staff will access MBDA's Salesforce Customer Relationship Management Platform ("Performance System") to conduct daily operations.

The Center operator must ensure that each Center employee (e.g., business development consultants/specialist) performing business development activities has access to IT computing devices capable of logging into the Performance System (web or mobile app),

and other tools support by MBDA.

A Center operator's failure to adhere to the MBDA Business Center program computer requirements as set forth herein may result in enforcement action under the award, including but not limited to, the withholding of award payments until full compliance is reached.

A. Computer/Mobile Device Configuration Requirements. The Performance System is a Cloud-based Software-as-a-Service (SaaS) offering. At a minimum, Center computer systems and mobile devices must meet the minimum configuration specifications required to access the Salesforce Platform. The following are the minimum hardware, software, and access configuration requirements required for center computer systems and mobile devices:

1. Computer or mobile device must have an active Internet connection.
2. System Requirements and Supported Browsers:
(<https://help.salesforce.com/s/articleView?id=000355671&type=1>)
3. Technical Requirements for Lightning Experience (Web Client)
(https://help.salesforce.com/s/articleView?id=sf.technical_requirements.htm&type=5)
4. Requirements for the Salesforce Mobile App:
(https://help.salesforce.com/s/articleView?id=sf.salesforce_app_requirements.htm&type=5)
5. MS Office, compatible web browser, Anti-Virus software, software or hardware-based Firewall and Adobe Reader. Additionally, it is suggested that a full-page scanner, along with software fully compatible with Adobe Acrobat (Standard or Professional) be installed on a minimum of one workstation for the production of electronic document submissions.

B. Website Technical Configuration Requirements: Appendix D (Website Requirements) requires that the Center create and maintain a public website using a unique domain/address. The Center will ensure that the supporting web hosting service complies with the security requirements outlined in Appendix F (Computer & Information Security Requirements). The Center website must also be compliant with the MBDA web standards found in Appendix D (Website Requirements).

C. Time for Compliance Regarding IT Requirements: Within thirty (30) calendar days after receipt of the award, the Center operator shall report via email to the Federal Program Officer and the MBDA Business Center Program Management Supervisor that he/she has complied with all technical requirements as specified herein (a checklist will be provided at the Post Award Conference). Within thirty (30) calendar days after receipt of the award, the operator shall report the name, contact telephone number, and email address of the Center director, Network or System Administrator.

D. 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 (<https://mbda2.my.salesforce.com/>).

Appendix D

Website Requirements

Website: The Center operator shall create and maintain a public website using a unique domain/address (e.g., www.City-MBDACenter.com), that will conform to MBDA web standards, which may include, but are not limited to the following:

1. The first page (Index page) of the website shall clearly identify the Center as an MBDA Business Center funded by the U.S. Department of Commerce's Minority Business Development Agency." The website shall load in less than three (3) seconds on software fully compatible with commonly used Internet browsers (e.g., Chrome, Explorer, etc.).
2. Center operators are encouraged to create a responsive web design (RWD); a web development approach that allows dynamic changes to the appearance of the website depending on the screen size and orientation of the device being used. RWD offers an optimized browsing experience, can improve the website's rankings in search engines, and works well on a desktop (or laptop), a tablet, and a mobile phone's browser.
3. The website design should include a "translator plugin" or other translations services to provide content in additional languages.
4. The website shall contain a "Contact" page with the names of all Center employees, the business and mailing address of the Center, business phone and fax numbers and email addresses of the Center a statement referencing the services available at the Center, the hours under which the Center operates and a link to the MBDA homepage at www.mbda.gov.
5. 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 Office of Public Affairs, 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 [Center operator's company name] or by the Minority Business Development Agency of these websites or the information, products or services contained therein. Regarding such external websites, we do not exercise any editorial control over the information you may find at these locations. These links are provided consistent with [Center operator's company name] stated purpose as shown on our website. 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.

6. 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 Center operator, nor any other person, shall use the Center website for any purpose other than that approved under the terms of the agreement between the Center operator and MBDA.

7. Every page of the website shall comply with Federal standards of the Americans With Disabilities Act, Section 508, and be reviewed by the Project for accuracy, currency, and appropriateness every three (3) months. In addition, MBDA's Section 508 Officer may occasionally review the project website to ensure that it is Section 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 Center website and recommend changes in accordance with the guidelines set forth herein.

8. The Center operator will also be responsible for informing their assigned MBDA Program Analyst and the MBDA Program Management Supervisor of any changes in operations such as location, contact information or otherwise.

A comprehensive listing of Department of Commerce's social media and web standards can be found at <https://www.commerce.gov/about/policies/social-media#technologies>.

Appendix E

Social Media and Email Requirements

The Center operator shall maintain a minimum of one (1) MBDA Business Center "corporate" social media account (e.g., Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, or LinkedIn). The Center operator shall also maintain appropriate computer and network security precautions outlined in Appendix E (Center Computer Security Requirements) during all periods of funding by MBDA. All IT requirements, as described herein, shall be met by the Center

operator within thirty (30) calendar days after the award.

The Center operator shall also ensure that each of the Center employees (including management, administrative personnel, contractors, full-time, part-time, and non-paid volunteer staff) have a unique email address that is available for regular communications. The designated email address(es) must be able to interface with the Salesforce Platform or any other technology platforms implemented by MBDA.

Appendix F

Computer & Information Security Requirements

MBDA requires that all Center operators meet certain requirements related to the acquisition, installation, configuration, maintenance, and security of information and technology. Requirements must be met within thirty (30) calendar days after receipt of the award. Customer call centers will access MBDA services using the Salesforce Customer Relationship Management Platform.

A Center operator's failure to adhere to the MBDA Business Center program computer and information security requirements as set forth herein may result in enforcement action under the award, including but not limited to, the withholding of award payments until full compliance is reached.

Security: Centers will create a configuration report to detail security products and security configuration settings implemented to meet the computer and networking security requirements set forth herein. This report shall be maintained by the Center operator for review by MBDA at any time.

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 \$600.00 or higher per mobile workstation and \$1,000.00 or higher per server. Applicants should include amounts for potential software upgrades for outer years in their proposed budget.

Computer/Mobile Device Security Configuration Requirements. At a minimum, Center computer systems and mobile devices must meet the following security configuration specifications:

- Anti-Virus software
- Software or hardware-based Firewall

User Access Controls: Every employee of the Center shall be assigned a unique username and password to access the computing device and enterprise. Every Center employee shall be required to sign a written computer security agreement (the computer security agreement will be provided at the time of award). Every Center manager, employee, and contractor and any other person given access to the enterprise shall sign the security agreement and an original copy of the signed agreement shall be kept in the MBDA Business Center files. A photocopy of the signed agreement shall be submitted to MBDA, no later than thirty (30) calendar days after receipt of the award. The original agreement shall be maintained on file by the Center operator. All subsequent new hires and associations requiring access to the Center or MBDA systems shall read, understand, and sign the security agreement prior to issuance of a password no more than fourteen (14) calendar days after the start of their employment. No Center employee shall have access to any MBDA system(s) without a signed security agreement on file at MBDA.

Personally Identifiable Information (PII) and Business Identifiable Information (BII): The Center must ensure that measures are in place to protect Personally Identifiable Information (PII) and Business Identifiable Information (BII). PII is defined as information which, when disclosed, could result in harm to the individual whose name or identity is linked to the information. BII is defined in the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) as “trade secrets and commercial or financial information obtained from a person [that is] privileged or confidential.” Commercial or financial information is considered confidential if it is both customarily and actually treated as private by its owner and provided to the government under an assurance of privacy, to the extent permitted by law. The following non-exhaustive list includes examples of PII and BII:

- Place of birth
- Date of birth
- Mother’s maiden name
- Biometric information
- Medical information, except brief references to absences from work
- Personal financial information
- Credit card or purchase card account numbers
- Passport numbers
- Potentially sensitive employment information, e.g., personnel ratings, disciplinary actions, and results of background investigations
- Criminal history
- Any information that may stigmatize or adversely affect an individual.
- Social Security Numbers (SSNs), including truncated SSNs that include only the last four digits, are sensitive regardless of whether they are associated with an individual. If it is

determined that such transmission is required, then secure methods must be employed.

- Home address and phone numbers
- Personal email addresses (not used for business purposes)
- Trade secrets
- Financial or Commercial business information

The Center must configure systems to protect the PII/BII contained in the system from unauthorized access. The Center should employ best-practice techniques to protect confidentiality of sensitive PII and BII information. A Center, when it designs, develops, or operates a system of records on individuals or entities, or otherwise collects or has access to PII or BII in the performance of this grant shall, prior to taking such action, comply with the following requirements:

1. The Center shall have established policies and procedures in place to safeguard MBDA client PII/BII. The policies and procedures shall describe the Center's process for identifying, assessing, and mitigating privacy risks associated with PII/BII. The policies and procedures shall also describe training that will be provided to Center staff and consultants on their roles and responsibilities for safeguarding MBDA client PII/BII and incident management of suspected or confirmed loss of MBDA client PII/BII in accordance with OMB's Recommendations for Identity Theft Related Data Breach Notification, September 20, 2006, and OMB Memorandum M-17-12, Preparing for and Responding to a Breach of Personally Identifiable Information, January 3, 2017.
2. The Center shall also ensure that all processes, procedures and equipment associated with PII/BII comply with all laws, regulations, and MBDA security incident reporting mandates and timelines as defined by National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST) Special Publication (SP) 800-61 Revision 2 and the United States Computer Emergency Readiness Team (US-CERT) Federal Incident Notification Guidelines, as well as U.S. government policies developed to safeguard the confidentiality, integrity and availability of MBDA data that may contain PII/BII. In support of these requirements, the Center shall have:
 - a. Policies, procedures, and mechanisms designed to restrict access to MBDA data exclusively to authorized personnel.
 - b. Policies, procedures, and mechanisms that prevent transmission or disclosure of MBDA data to an unauthorized party.
 - c. Policies, procedures, and mechanisms that ensure MBDA data on portable devices are encrypted using methods compliant with Federal Information Processing Standard 140-3.
 - d. Policies, procedures, and mechanisms that ensure any sensitive MBDA data

transmitted across public networks (i.e., the Internet or email) by Business Center staff and Center consultants are protected using encryption that is compliant with Federal Information Processing Standard 140-3.

- e. Annual assessments to the MBDA demonstrating that the policies, procedures, and mechanisms required by continuing to be functional, that the Center is compliant with these requirements, and that these requirements are effective.
- f. Copies of its privacy policies to MBDA Headquarters at the time of award. The Center shall also provide a copy of the policies and procedures (or otherwise make such policies and procedures available) to all its staff and consultants.
- g. Ensure that those individuals adhere to the Center's policies and procedures relating to PII/BII and to MBDA-prescribed policies and procedures for the safe handling of MBDA PII/BII, including privacy and MBDA security training requirements and privacy incident management.
- h. Immediate alerts to MBDA of any event, including the suspected or confirmed loss of MBDA PII/BII, that could potentially affect the privacy rights of individuals or that violates any federal law, regulation, mandate, or requirement as defined in NIST 800-122 by contacting the MBDA designated point of contact. The Center shall act in accordance with its policies and procedures in the event of any suspected loss of MBDA PII/BII and shall support the MBDA's investigation and resolution of reported incidents as requested by the MBDA. For purposes of this Clause, a "suspected loss of PII/BII" shall be interpreted liberally to mean any situation in which the loss of PII/BII or unapproved access to PII/BII is deemed a reasonable possibility.