

Entrepreneurship Education Program for Formerly Incarcerated Persons

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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: Entrepreneurship Education Program for Formerly Incarcerated Persons

Announcement Type: Initial

Funding Opportunity Number: MBDA-OBDD-2020-2006457

Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance (CFDA) Number: 11.802, Minority Business Resource Development

Dates: Full applications will be accepted in Grants.gov up to 11:59 p.m. Eastern Daylight Savings Time on May 22, 2020. Applications received after this time will not be reviewed or considered for funding under this Announcement.

Funding Opportunity Description: The purpose of this notice is to request applications for special projects and programs associated with the Minority Business Development Agency's (MBDA) strategic plans and mission goals, as well as to provide the general public with information and guidelines on how MBDA will select proposals and administer discretionary Federal assistance under this Broad Agency Announcement (BAA or Announcement).

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## FULL ANNOUNCEMENT TEXT

### I. Funding Opportunity Description

#### A. Program Objective

The Minority Business Development Agency (MBDA) will provide Federal assistance to support innovative projects seeking to promote and ensure the inclusion and use of minority enterprises. This Announcement is a mechanism to encourage new activities, education, outreach, innovative projects or sponsorships that are not addressed through other MBDA programs. The funds to be awarded by this program are not congressionally directed funds or designated for existing funded awards.

Entrepreneurship Education Program for Formerly Incarcerated Persons – MBDA is committed to leveraging its capabilities to help the Administration meet its goal and efforts to reduce crime, enhance public safety, and increase opportunities to improve the lives of all Americans. The recidivism rate in the United States is high, with about 68% of released prisoners getting arrested for a new crime within 3 years, according to the Bureau of Labor Statistics (2014). Researchers have linked recidivism to unemployment, education, and inability to reintegrate into society after prison.

A study by the Bureau of Justice reported that just 12.5% of employers are willing to consider job applications from people who have been convicted of a crime (2016). Due to the increasing challenges that formerly incarcerated minority persons face in trying to re-enter the workforce, there is a need to equip them with skills and a network to start their own businesses.

MBDA anticipates making three (3) awards under this initiative at \$300,000 each for a total of \$900,000 in FY2020. Subject to the availability of funds, MBDA anticipates awarding an additional \$900,000 in FY2021, for a total of \$1,800,000.

#### B. Program Priorities

MBDA, a bureau of the U.S. Department of Commerce, leads Federal Government efforts to promote the growth and global competitiveness of minority business enterprises (MBEs). MBDA has established key priorities designed to overcome the unique challenges faced by minority business enterprises (MBEs). MBDA is now initiating new approaches to serve MBEs that compliment Presidential priorities and U.S. Department of Commerce (DOC) strategic goals. The DOC's strategic goals include: 1) accelerating American leadership through commercial space activities, foundational research investments, and

intellectual property protection; 2) enhancing job creation through increased exports and foreign direct investment; 3) strengthening U.S. economic and national security; 4) fulfilling Constitutional requirements and supporting economic activity with reliable data; and 5) excellence in the delivery of customer-centric services.

In order to facilitate the growth and global competitiveness of America's growing minority business enterprise (MBE) community, MBDA seeks to fund innovative projects – to support formerly incarcerated individuals – with entrepreneurship assistance including (but not limited to): (1) educational programs and workshops; (2) entrepreneurial training; and (3) coaching assistance. Businesses that are owned or controlled by the following persons or groups of persons are the businesses that are considered MBEs for the purpose of pilot or demonstration projects designed to overcome their challenges: African American, Hispanic American, American Asian and Pacific Islander, Native American (including Alaska Natives, Alaska Native Corporations, and Tribal entities), Asian Indian American, and Hasidic Jewish Americans.

Projects must be located in any U.S. state or U.S. territory.

1. Agency Requirements for the Initiative

- a. Alignment to MBDA Mission – Each proposed project should align, complement and support MBDA's mission to promote the growth and global competitiveness of America's growing minority business enterprise (MBE) community.
- b. Service Location - MBDA seeks to fund Projects located in any U.S. State or U.S. Territory.
- c. Performance - Funded projects must align with the MBDA program objectives and priorities (I.A. and I.B. above). Proposed projects must include a measure or determination for success that demonstrates the impact of the proposal. Applicants must propose to use reliable evidence and data to measure progress, outcomes, and impact. The proposed performance criteria must be included in the award recipient's semi-annual and annual reports. MBDA will use the award recipient's submitted reports, data and information to determine Project success. MBDA may also use the reports, data, and information as evidence for future program design, policy recommendations, and/or statistical purposes.
- d. Innovation - Applicants are encouraged to use innovative approaches to address the unique challenges faced by MBEs under this MBDA initiative.

MBDA reserves the right to retain datasets and reports produced through the collection of

performance data and information generated by the awarded Project.

### C. Program Authority

In the Fiscal Year 2020 appropriations bill, Congress authorized MBDA to foster, promote, and develop minority business enterprises, through grants, contracts and other agreements with public or private organizations. See Consolidated Appropriations Act of 2020, Pub. L. No. 116-93 (December 20, 2019). MBDA is authorized pursuant to Executive Order 11625 to provide financial assistance to public and private organizations so that they may render technical and management assistance to minority business enterprises and defray all or part of the costs of pilot or demonstration projects conducted by public or private agencies or organizations which are designed to overcome the special challenges of minority business enterprises.

## II. Award Information

### A. Funding Availability

MBDA anticipates or expects to award a total of approximately \$1,800,000 to fund the financial assistance awards under this Announcement. Federal funding in the amount of \$900,000 in FY2020 appropriated funds is available at this time for Year 1 of the awards. MBDA anticipates spending \$900,000 in FY2021 for Year 2 of the awards. The funding amounts referenced in this Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO) are subject to the availability of appropriated funds. Publication of this Notice does not obligate the U.S. Department of Commerce or MBDA to award any specific grant or cooperative agreement or to obligate all or any part of available funds.

### B. Project/Award Period

Applications should be submitted for a two (2) year award period. MBDA will issue awards for a two-year term from September 1, 2020 through August 31, 2022. Receipt of any prospective funding also is contingent upon the availability of funds from Congress and continued relevance to program objectives and will be at the sole discretion of the Department of Commerce.

### C. Type of Funding Instrument

Selected applicant(s) will receive funding through a grant. After the award is made, MBDA staff may assist or guide the Project by means of a post-award conference.

### III. Eligibility Information

#### A. Eligible Applicants

Eligible applicants may be for-profit entities (including but not limited to sole-proprietorships, partnerships, limited liability companies, and corporations), non-profit organizations, institutions of higher education, commercial organizations, state and local government entities, quasi-government entities, Indian Tribal governments, Tribal entities, and Native Hawaiian entities in any U.S. State or U.S. Territory.

#### B. Cost Sharing or Matching Requirement

Cost sharing is not required unless it is determined by the applicant that the Project can only be funded with matching/cost sharing funds. Applicants are encouraged to leverage non-Federal matching/cost sharing funds.

#### 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 can be found on the MBDA Internet Portal ([www.mbda.gov](http://www.mbda.gov)). Applicants may also obtain a paper copy of the application forms by making a request to the agency contact, Nakita Chambers (see Agency Contacts, for contact information).

#### B. Content and Form of Application

**General Requirements.** Each applicant's proposal must describe in detail the specific agency initiative the proposal is designed to address (see Section I.B. Program Priorities) as well as meet content requirements below. The application must provide sufficient information for the agency to make a determination on the merit of the proposal.

**Content Requirements:**

1. A Complete Application - An application must be submitted for each proposal addressing an initiative under this Announcement. Applications should include the elements for each section as described below in order to be eligible for the maximum consideration. Applications that fail to include all the necessary elements may not be reviewed or considered and may be disqualified (see Section V. Application Review Information). A complete application should contain the following:

a. 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, the Funding Opportunity Number, and the proposed MBDA initiative the proposal addresses. Applicants are also encouraged to 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 persons affiliated with the proposal.

b. Table of Contents (One (1) page limit)

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

c. Applicant Narrative (Ten (10) page limit)

A detailed narrative with defined sections as described below.

i. Project Synopsis (Two (2) paragraph limit) It is critical that the project synopsis state the MBDA priorities that are being addressed through the applicant's proposed Project in the first line. The MBDA initiative(s) are identified and described in Section I.B. Program Priorities of this Announcement. The project synopsis must accurately summarize the Project being proposed and convey all essential elements of the activities.

ii. Project Description. The applicant should fully describe and explain the project being proposed, including:

a) a description of the proposed Project that thoroughly explains the approach, methodology, implementation and operation of the proposal over the entire period of performance;

b) an approach that clearly demonstrates innovation, creativity, cost-efficiency, a strong likelihood of achieving the desired outcome, and the capability of being deployed in the near term (2-3 months of award) and of having an impact in the near term (6-12 months of award) or long term (within 1-2 years of award);

- c) a concept of operations that clearly describes a process, method, or model upon which the Project will meet specific objectives (i.e., defined measures), outputs and outcomes or goals;
- d) a description of specific work requirements from beginning to end and how the proposed Project will accomplish the stated initiative;
- e) success indicators using defined and relevant measure(s) and goal(s) as proposed by the applicant; and
- f) a description of how the Project will be able to adapt to any operational and/or performance challenges.

iii. Applicant Capability. The applicant must present information describing the experience and qualifications of the organization to carry out the proposal. The application should include the following information.

- a) Organizational Outline. A concise outline of what the applicant organization does, a discussion of experience with similar projects or services as those proposed, and an explanation of experience dealing with the specific subject matter involved with the MBDA initiative the proposal covers, and a list of previous or current projects or services relevant to the proposal.
- b) Organizational Background. An organizational background that emphasizes the applicant's knowledge of the minority business sector and strategies for enhancing its growth, expansion and capacity building related to the MBDA initiative under this Announcement.
- c) Organizational Structure. A chart showing the applicant's organizational structure during the period for which the proposal applies, along with a functional statement noting the duties and/or responsibilities of all units that comprise the organization. Applicants must also provide a brief narrative background statement outlining the financial operation of the organization.
- d) Organizational Value. A section that highlights the applicant's organizational value to partner with MBDA and other relevant and established/proposed partnerships. If the applicant proposes to leverage third-party partnerships and their respective resources to accomplish the proposed Project under this Announcement, the applicant will need to provide proof of commitment by the third party as an attached document in the proposal.
- e) Biographies or Resumes for Major Participant(s). The applicant should provide a one-page bio or resume showing only relevant experience of the major Project participants. Major participants can be defined as the organization leader, financial management officer, and/or Project manager/daily supervisor of the proposed Project.
- f) Proof of Capability. Applicants are also encouraged to provide proof of capability such as (but not limited to) public records of accomplishments, public citations, and/or letters of

referrals as attachments in the proposal.

iv. **Project Goals and Objectives.** The applicant must provide a detailed list of Project components and a statement of objectives for each component. This statement must include:

- a) clear objectives and specific approaches to achieving its Project description and those objectives;
- b) an implementation schedule that specifically outlines the coordination of all Project components, organizational activities, timelines, relevant measures with expected outputs, projected outcomes and impact; and
- c) annual goals and a break-out of the goals in six-month increments.

d. **Supporting Documents (Three (3) page limit)**

**Literature Cited (if applicable).** The applicant may provide additional information that supports the proposed Project. Literature Cited (if submitted) may support scoring under the Applicant Narrative – Project Description criterion as noted above.

e. **Standard Forms (SF) and Budget Narrative**

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

1) **Standard Application Forms.** Please refer to the application package available through [www.Grants.gov](http://www.Grants.gov). Please review each form to determine which are required with a submission. Each applicant may not be required to submit all forms listed, depending on the project type or the applicant type.

- a) **Signed SF-424.** The SF-424 must be signed by the authorized representative. Electronic signatures submitted through [grants.gov](http://grants.gov) satisfy this requirement. One form will cover all funding periods.
- b) **SF-424A. Budget Information-Non-Construction Programs.**
- c) **SF-424B. Assurances for Non-Construction Programs.** Budget Narrative Must be completed and submitted for all non-construction applications.
- d) **SF-LLL Disclosure of Lobbying Activities.**
- e) **Commerce Department (CD)-511. Certification Regarding Lobbying.** Certification regarding debarment, suspension and other responsibility matters, drug free workplace requirements and lobbying.

2) **Budget Breakout.** The applicant must submit the SF-424 (application package) and initial breakout via the SF-424A form (SF-424A non-construction, as appropriate). The

applicant must indicate matching funds if provided in the appropriate areas of the SF-424 and SF424A. Costs must align.

3) Budget Narrative. (Five (5) page limit). The applicant must provide justifications for all budget items in sufficient detail to enable the proposal reviewers to evaluate the appropriateness of the funding requested. The budget justification must be broken-out and detailed using the same budget categories as the SF-424A. Costs must align.

All of the applicant's proposed expenditures for the Project must be broken-down into their individual units and discussed. The budget narrative must match the proposed line item budget (as found in the SF-424A). The budget narrative must also align with work activities, goals, staffing, and other proposed resources. Fringe benefits and other percentage item calculations must match the SF-424A, for the proposal year.

4) Required Travel Item(s). Each applicant should include travel costs for key personnel to attend the following three items:

- i. MBDA's post award conference (held via teleconference)
- ii. Minority Enterprise Development Week
- iii. MBDA National Training Conference

All costs included in the proposed budget must be allowable, allocable and reasonable. Each item of cost must be accompanied by a sufficiently detailed description in the budget narrative and align with the SF-424A to enable proposal reviewers to determine if the cost is allowable, allocable and reasonable. One-word descriptions and lump sum amounts are not adequate for justifying costs or narrative descriptions. Each budget item should be broken out and described fully so that there is no ambiguity or question regarding its relevance or reasonableness to the Project and its objectives.

The Office of Management and Budget (OMB) Uniform Guidance will be used to determine allowable costs and will apply to the entire amount of the award, including both the federal and non-federal costs. See Uniform Guidance: Administrative Requirements, Cost Principles, and Audit Requirements for Federal Awards (Uniform Guidance), 2 CFR Part 200 (2015).

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

## 2. 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 a Federal awarding agency which has an exception from the requirements of 2 CFR § 25.110(b) or (c), or an exception approved by the MBDA under 2 CFR § 25.110(d)) is required to:

1. Register in SAM before submitting an application;
2. Provide a valid unique entity identifier in the application; and,
3. Continue to maintain an active SAM registration with current information at all times during which it 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.

#### D. Submission Dates and Times

All proposals must be received on or before May 22, 2020 at 11:59 pm Eastern Daylight Time. Applications may be submitted on a rolling basis starting from the publication date of this Announcement up to the deadline above. Applications received after this time will not be reviewed or considered for funding. Applications must be submitted electronically via [www.grants.gov](http://www.grants.gov). The electronic submission will receive a date and time stamp at [www.grants.gov](http://www.grants.gov) 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.

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 [www.grants.gov](http://www.grants.gov) to process the application. If [www.grants.gov](http://www.grants.gov) rejects the application, the applicant must resubmit the entire application and receive a date and time stamp from [www.grants.gov](http://www.grants.gov). The [www.grants.gov](http://www.grants.gov) time stamp will be considered the date and time of submission receipt. Before beginning to apply through [www.grants.gov](http://www.grants.gov), please review the application instructions posted at [www.grants.gov](http://www.grants.gov) and in this Announcement.

1. Grants.gov Registration - To submit an application through [www.grants.gov](http://www.grants.gov), you must register for a user ID and password. This process can take between three to five business days and up to four weeks if all steps are not completed correctly. Information about the registration process can be found at [http://www.grants.gov/applicants/get\\_registered.jsp](http://www.grants.gov/applicants/get_registered.jsp). Before applying, your organization needs to register with Grants.gov, which requires appointing one or more Authorized Organization Representatives (AOR). Below are instructions for registering as an organization.

Applicants should register as organizations, not individuals. You must register an Authorized Organizational Representative (AOR) for your organization. The AORs registered at [www.grants.gov](http://www.grants.gov) are the only officials with the authority to submit applications for your organization. Your organization may authorize multiple AORs for [www.grants.gov](http://www.grants.gov) purposes.

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

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 service by grants.gov due to unexpected volume of traffic or failure of information technology systems, both of which are highly unlikely.

The preferred format for electronic attachments is PDF. This is the most prevalent format for documents that are scanned from hard-copy. However, the Department will accept electronic files in Word or Excel formats.

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>.

3. Returning Grants.Gov Users - Organizations already registered with Grants.gov do not need to re-register, but the organization must maintain a current System for Award Management (SAM) registration (formerly Central Contractor Registration (CCR)). If the applicant’s SAM registration is not up-to-date the application will not be accepted by Grants.gov. An applicant’s CCR username will not work in SAM. Applicants must create a new SAM user account to renew or update registration. To obtain additional information and to verify that all required registrations are current, please visit [www.sam.gov/portal/public/SAM](http://www.sam.gov/portal/public/SAM). SAM is the official U.S. Government system that consolidated the capabilities of CCR Federal Agency Registration (FedReg), Online Representations and Certifications Application (ORCA), and Excluded Parties List System (EPLS).

#### E. Intergovernmental Review

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

#### F. Funding Restrictions

Applicants requesting an indirect cost rate (IDC) 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 Facilities and Administrative (Indirect) Cost Rate Agreement that was negotiated and approved by the Department of Commerce (or by the applicable cognizant Federal agency), please provide a statement to this effect. The applicant must prepare and submit a cost allocation plan and rate proposal or a negotiated indirect cost rate as required by 2 CFR Part 200 “Uniform Administrative Requirements, Cost Principles and Audit Requirements for Federal Awards.” See 2 CFR § 200.414. The

allocation plan and the rate proposal must be submitted to MBDA (or applicable cognizant Federal agency) within ninety (90) days from the award start date.

Alternatively, in accordance with 2 CFR § 200.414(f), a non-Federal entity that has never received a 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) should 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.

#### G. Other Submission Requirements

Potential applicants should begin registration early, as the complete registration process takes between three business days and three weeks. Before applying for a funding opportunity, your organization needs to register with grants.gov and assign one or more Authorized Organization Representatives (AOR). We recognize registration activities take extra time; however, this is part of the security process the U.S. Government must use to prevent fraud and abuse of funds. The Grants.gov application process is outlined below.

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>. You'll also need the authorizing official of your organization and an Employer Identification Number (EIN) (7-10 business days).

Create Grants.gov Username and Password. Complete your Authorized Organization Representative (AOR) profile and create your username and password. You will need to use your organization's DUNS Number (same day).

Authorize the AOR. Request approval, then your organization's E-Biz POC must log in to Grants.gov to confirm you as an 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-2020-2006457 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).

Applications must be submitted electronically via [www.grants.gov](http://www.grants.gov).

## V. Application Review Information

### A. Evaluation Criteria

The successful applicant will possess experience that is substantive to the area(s) related to the MBDA Priorities (see section I.B) and the "Agency Requirements for the Initiative" (see section I.B.1) will be evaluated based on the evaluation criteria included below. It is also anticipated that the mission of the successful applicant organization will align with the mission of MBDA and the MBDA initiative. The successful applicant also will ensure alignment of budget, resources, objectives, outcomes or goals, and timelines to accomplish the MBDA initiative.

1. Applicant Narrative (65 points) - This section of the Project proposal will be evaluated on the criteria identified below.

a. Project Description (25 Points). The applicant should fully describe and explain the project being proposed, including:

i. a description of the proposed Project that thoroughly explains the approach, methodology, implementation and operation of the proposal over the entire period of performance (5 points);

ii. an approach that clearly demonstrates innovation, creativity, cost-efficiency, a strong likelihood of achieving the desired outcome, and the capability of being deployed in the near term (2-3 months of award) and of having an impact in the near term (6-12 months of award) or long term (within 1-2 years of award) (5 points);

- iii. a concept of operations that clearly describes a process, method, or model upon which the Project will meet specific objectives (i.e., defined measures), outputs and outcomes or goals (5 points);
- iv. a description of specific work requirements from beginning to end and how the proposed Project will accomplish the stated initiative (5 points);
- v. success indicators using defined and relevant measure(s) and goal(s) (3 points); and
- vi. a description of how the Project will be able to adapt to any operational and/or performance challenges (2 points).

Literature cited in the project description may be submitted to support the project description statements in this section.

b. Applicant Capability (25 points). The applicant must present information describing the experience and qualifications of the organization to carry out the proposal. The application should include the following information.

- i. Organizational Outline. A concise outline of what the applicant organization does, a discussion of experience with similar projects or services as those proposed, and an explanation of experience dealing with the specific subject matter involved with the MBDA initiative the proposal covers, and a list of previous or current projects or services relevant to the proposal. (5 points)
- ii. Organizational Background. An organizational background that emphasizes the applicant's knowledge of the minority business sector and strategies for enhancing its growth, expansion and capacity building related to the MBDA initiative under this Announcement. (5 points)
- iii. Organizational Structure. A chart showing the applicant's organizational structure during the period for which the proposal applies, along with a functional statement noting the duties and/or responsibilities of all units that comprise the organization. Applicants must also provide a brief narrative background statement outlining the financial operation of the organization. (5 points)
- iv. Organizational Value. A section that highlights the applicant's organizational value to partner with MBDA and other relevant and established/proposed partnerships. If the applicant proposes to leverage third-party partnerships and their respective resources to accomplish the proposed Project under this Announcement, the applicant will need to

provide proof of commitment by the third party as an attached document in the proposal. (5 points)

v. Biographies or Resumes for Major Participant(s). The applicant should provide a one-page bio or resume showing only relevant experience of the major Project participants. Major participants include the organization leader, financial management officer, and/or Project manager/daily supervisor of the proposed Project. (0 points)

vi. Proof of Capability. Applicants are also encouraged to provide proof of capability such as (but not limited to) public records of accomplishments, public citations, and/or letters of referrals as attachments in the proposal. (5 points)

c. Project Goals and Objectives (15 points). The applicant must provide a detailed list of Project components and a statement of objectives for each component. This statement must include:

i. clear objectives and specific approaches to achieving its Project description and those objectives (5 points);

ii. an implementation schedule that specifically outlines the coordination of all Project components, and organizational activities, timelines, relevant measures with expected outputs, projected outcomes and impact (5 points); and

iii. annual goals and a break-out of the goals in six-month increments (5 points).

#### Evaluation Criteria Points

Project Description (up to 25 points)

Applicant Capability (up to 25 points)

Project Goals and Objectives (up to 15 points)

Applicant Narrative Total 65

2. Applicant Budget (35 points) - This section of the Project proposal will be evaluated on the criteria identified below. Section IV.B.1.e, above provides detailed cost proposal requirements.

a. Budget Breakdown (15 points). The applicant must submit the SF-424 (application package) and initial breakout via the SF-424A form (SF-424A non-construction, as appropriate). The applicant must indicate matching funds if provided in the appropriate areas of the SF-424 and SF424A. Costs must align.

b. Budget Narrative (20 points). The applicant must provide justifications for all budget items in sufficient detail to enable the proposal reviewers to evaluate the appropriateness of the funding requested. The budget justification must be broken-out and detailed using the same budget categories as the SF-424A. Costs must align.

All of the applicant's proposed expenditures for the Project must be broken-down into their individual units and discussed. The budget narrative must match the proposed line item budget (as found in the SF-424A). The budget narrative must also align with work activities, goals, staffing, and other proposed resources. Fringe benefits and other percentage item calculations must match the SF-424A, for the proposal year.

(a) Required Travel Item(s). Each applicant should include travel costs for key personnel to attend the following three items:

- i. MBDA's post award conference (held via teleconference)
- ii. Minority Enterprise Development Week
- iii. MBDA National Training Conference

All costs included in the proposed budget must be allowable, allocable and reasonable. Each item of cost must be accompanied by a sufficiently detailed description in the budget narrative and align with the SF-424A to enable proposal reviewers to determine if the cost is allowable, allocable and reasonable. One word descriptions and lump sum amounts are not adequate for justifying costs or narrative descriptions. Each budget item should be broken out and described fully so that there is no ambiguity or question regarding its relevance or reasonableness to the

Project and its objectives.

Evaluation Criteria Points

Budget Breakdown (up to 15 points)

Budget Narrative (up to 20 points)

Applicant Budget 35

All applications must adhere to the submission guidelines provided in this section and section IV.B.1, "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 synopsis/description fails to address one of the above-listed agency program objectives (see Section I.B “Program Priorities” and Section I.B.1, “Agency Requirements”);
- d. The application falls within the scope of an existing MBDA competitive program or announcement for Federal Funding or duplicates a project previously awarded; or
- e. 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 qualified to evaluate the applications submitted based on the published criteria. The 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, at least one of the reviewers will be an MBDA employee. 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 Applicant Narrative section of the application will be eligible for a total of 65 points, the Applicant Budget section will be eligible for 35 points. The 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 (i.e. applications will not be compared to

others).

Each merit review panel (through the panel Chairperson) shall complete an evaluation with corresponding score. The Chairperson of the merit review panel will be responsible for averaging reviewers' scores and collating reviewer comments. Applications that receive an overall average of 75 points or more will be considered for funding. Applications receiving an average score of 60 to 74 points may be given a second consideration for funding if the panel requests additional information or clarification and if the applicant is able to respond to the panel's request for additional information/clarification within an allotted time.

Thereafter, the Merit Review Panel may rescore these applications. Applications receiving fewer than 60 points will not be considered for funding.

### C. Selection Factors

Applications receiving an average score of 75 points or higher or given a second consideration (as noted above) will be forwarded to the Office of the Associate Director, Office of Business Development for review and consideration of the merit panel evaluation, overall average score, and innovation and noted strengths. Upon completion, the Office of the Associate Director, Office of Business Development will forward funding recommendations to the Selecting Official.

The MBDA National Director is the MBDA Selecting Official and makes the final recommendation to the Grants Officer regarding the funding of applications under this Announcement. The Selecting Official will recommend funding for applications evaluated as meritorious based on the Merit Review Panel and any of the following selection factors: the availability of funds, and/or Presidential, Department of Commerce, and MBDA priorities.

Prior to making a final recommendation for funding to the Grants Officer, MBDA may conduct negotiations with an applicant regarding the elements of the application and/or may request that the applicant provide written clarifications regarding its application.

1. Federal Awarding Agency Review of Risk Posed by Applicants - After applications are proposed for funding by the Selecting Official, the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) Grants Management Division (GMD) will conduct pre-award risk assessments in accordance with 2 C.F.R. § 200.205, which may include a review of the financial stability of an applicant, 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. In addition, for any Federal award under this notice where the Federal share will be greater than the simplified acquisition threshold (currently \$250,000,00; see 2 CFR § 200.88) over the period of performance: (1) MBDA is required to review and consider any information about the applicant that is in the designated

integrity and performance system accessible through SAM (currently FAPIIS) (see 41 U.S.C. § 2313); (2) an applicant, at its option, may review information in the designated integrity and performance systems accessible through SAM and comment on any information about itself that a Federal awarding agency previously entered and is currently in the designated integrity and performance system accessible through SAM; and (3) MBDA will consider any comments by the applicant, in addition to the other information in the designated integrity and performance system, in making a judgment about the applicant's integrity, business ethics, and record of performance under Federal awards when completing the review of risk posed by applicants as described in 2 CFR §200.205.

#### D. Anticipated Announcement and Award Dates

Anticipated time for processing awards is one-hundred fifty (150) days from the receipt of applications. MBDA anticipates that the awards under this Announcement will be made with start dates of September 1, 2020. Successful applicants may be eligible for pre-award costs.

### VI. Award Administration Information

#### A. Award Notices

##### A. Federal 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

##### Administrative and National Policy Requirements

Administrative and national policy requirements for all Department of Commerce awards

contained in 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>

Awards made under this announcement 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:  
[http://www.osec.doc.gov/oam/grants\\_management/policy/](http://www.osec.doc.gov/oam/grants_management/policy/)

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>

### C. Reporting

a. Project Monitoring - The Project is funded for two years. MBDA will conduct performance assessments every six months from the start date of the project:

MBDA will conduct periodic assessments of the Project to verify progress including:

(1) Monitoring. MBDA will conduct ongoing monitoring through the funding award period and maintain open communications with key Project staff. The level of monitoring will be dependent on the awarded applicant's proposed performance measures, milestones (e.g., outputs and outcomes), and goals.

b. Financial Reports - The Project is required to provide the following reports:

(1) 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 semi-annual and annual basis. Semi-annual reports are due forty-five (45) days after the end of each six-month period. The final annual report is due within ninety (90) days after the expiration of the award.

(2) Progress Performance Report - are to be submitted to the Department of Commerce via Grants Online on a semi-annual and annual basis. Semi-annual reports are due forty-five

(45) days after the end of each six-month period. The final annual report is due within ninety (90) days after the expiration of the award.

The semi-annual and annual reports must include data and information to determine Project progression and success. MBDA will rely on these reports, data and information as evidence for 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 delay 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](http://www.FSRS.gov) on all sub-awards over \$25,000. 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](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 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:

Nakita Chambers  
MBDA Program Manager  
U.S. Department of Commerce  
1401 Constitution Ave., N.W., Room 5079  
Washington, DC 20230  
Email: [nchambers@mbda.gov](mailto:nchambers@mbda.gov)  
Tel: 202-482-0065

## VIII. Other Information

A. Pre-Application Teleconference

MBDA will conduct a pre-application teleconference on May 6, 2020. The time of the pre-application teleconference is 2:00 – 3:00 p.m. E.D.T. Participants must register at least 24 hours in advance of the teleconference. Please visit the MBDA Internet Portal at [www.mbda.gov](http://www.mbda.gov) to register and view additional information.

**B. Post Award Conference (held via teleconference)**

MBDA shall conduct mandatory post-award conference(s) to ensure that the successful applicant has a clear understanding of the Project award, terms, conditions and expectations. The post award conference will be no more than two (2) hours in duration. During the post-award conference, 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.

**C. 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. MED Week is proclaimed by the President of the United States. 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. MED Week also 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 should include expenses related to MED Week in the proposed budget, including travel and registration. The duration of the conference is approximately 3 days.

**D. 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 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 MBDA Office of Business Development 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 should include expenses related to the NTC in the proposed budget, including travel. The duration of the conference is approximately 2-3 days.

#### E. Collaboration with MBDA

MBDA welcomes working collaboratively with each award recipient and Project to serve the minority business community. The Project and its staff are encouraged to support MBDA by communicating the mission and values of the MBDA to the minority business community. Collaboration with MBDA may include items such as: promotion of MBDA sanctioned events and conferences, annual nomination of minority businesses for MED Week recognition, inclusion of MBDA to Project-lead activities, use of an MBDA designated logo and signage for Project-lead activities and website, submission of Project success stories and/or profiles for MBDA social media promotion, and co-promotion of Project and MBDA lead activities.

#### F. Past Performance and Non-Compliance with Award Provisions

A consistent pattern of 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.

#### G. Limitation of Liability

In no event will MBDA or the Department of Commerce be responsible for preparation costs for the Applicant's proposal. All funding periods under the award are subject to the availability of funds to support the continuation of the Project. Publication of this Announcement does not obligate MBDA or the Department of Commerce to award any specific project or to obligate any available funds.

#### H. 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.

#### I. Right to Use Information

DOC reserves the right to use information contained in applications submitted under this opportunity, as well as all reports and performance data submitted by recipients to undertake an evaluation of its programs, either through its staff or by hiring a third party. 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 DOC in conducting reviews and evaluations of its financial assistance programs. For this purpose, applicant information and data may be accessed, reviewed and evaluated by DOC 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 DOC 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 DOC Federal financial assistance award.

#### J. 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 the FOIA. Applications submitted in response to this Notice of Funding Opportunity may be subject to requests for release under the Act. 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,

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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.