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MBDA Announces Grant Competition to Create Jobs and Grow Businesses

Agency makes \$6.3 million available to launch six new MBDA Business Centers

WASHINGTON (May 23, 2013) — The U.S. Department of Commerce's Minority Business Development Agency (MBDA) today announced a solicitation for applications from prospective candidates to operate six new MBDA Business Centers in Baltimore, Houston, New York City, San Francisco, St. Louis and Washington, D.C. The successful applicants will join a network of more than 30 MBDA Business Centers across the United States and Puerto Rico. Grant amounts will range from \$300,000 to \$500,000 per year for a three-year cycle.

"The MBDA Business Center program is critical to furthering the Agency's mission in assisting minority-owned businesses in gaining access to contracts, access to capital, and access to markets," said David A. Hinson, MBDA National Director. "It is our goal to ensure the continued success of minority-owned firms who, in turn, strengthen the economy and create American jobs."

The MBDA helps to create and maintain jobs by supporting the growth and global expansion of U.S. minority-owned businesses. In Fiscal Year 2012, the MBDA helped create and retain over 16,000 jobs, the highest level in the 44-year history of the Agency, and helped their clients obtain over \$3.6 billion in contracts and capital awards.

The primary objective of the business centers is to provide strategic consulting services to minority-owned firms that will result in the creation and retention of jobs for Americans through business growth. MBDA Business Centers have had notable success in increasing public and private sector contracts and capital investments obtained by minority-owned firms. Successful applicants to this grant competition are also expected to foster global business expansion by promoting export opportunities.

Although each MBDA Business Center is strategically located in areas with significant numbers of minority-owned firms, they are not limited by geographic boundaries and may serve minority businesses in all 50 states and Puerto Rico. This expanded reach is designed to facilitate collaborative efforts among minority-owned firms around the U.S. and with Fortune 500 companies regardless of location.

Eligible Applicants:

For-profit entities (including but not limited to sole-proprietorships, partnerships, limited liability companies and corporations), non-profit organizations, state and local government entities, American Indian Tribes and educational institutions are eligible to apply to operate a business center.

Submission Requirements:

Applicants must review and adhere to the full *Announcement of Federal Funding Opportunity* (FFO). This document outlines program details and instructions for submitting an application. The FFO can be accessed at www.Grants.gov or www.mbda.gov.

Applications must be submitted electronically and time-stamped at www.Grants.gov by 11:59 p.m. Eastern Daylight Time (EDT) on June 22, 2013. Applications that are time-stamped after the deadline will not be considered.

MBDA will conduct a pre-application teleconference on June 4, 2013. The goal of the teleconference is to provide a background and summary of the MBDA Business Center program, as well as provide potential applicants with the opportunity to ask questions about the program and the application process. The time and registration instructions for the pre-application conference will be posted on MBDA's website. Applicants should visit MBDA at www.mbda.gov for more information.

Interested applicants unable to participate in the pre-application teleconference may access a recording of the teleconference and materials on the Agency's website the following day.

Note: The MBDA Business Center program is not a grant program to start or expand an individual business. Applicants must be able to operate a business center and provide business consulting services to eligible minority-owned firms as set forth in the *Announcement of Federal Funding Opportunity*. Applications that do not meet these requirements will not be considered by MBDA for funding.

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About the Minority Business Development Agency (MBDA)

MBDA, www.mbda.gov, an agency within the U.S. Department of Commerce, helps create and maintain U.S. jobs by promoting the growth and global competitiveness of large, medium and small businesses owned and operated by members of the minority and Diaspora communities. Through a national network of more than 30 business centers and a wide range of domestic and international strategic partners, MBDA provides Agency clients with the technical assistance and access to capital, contract opportunities and new markets that they need to create new jobs.