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**Ms UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF  
COMMERCE  
NEWS  
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20230**



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## **U.S. Secretary of Commerce Pritzker Announces New York City Native to Lead Minority Business Development Agency**

**WASHINGTON (April 17, 2014)** — The U.S. Secretary of Commerce Penny Pritzker today announced the appointment of Alejandra Y. Castillo, a New York City native born to Dominican immigrants, with more than 20 years of experience working in the private, government and non-profit sector, as the new Director of the Minority Business Development Agency (MBDA).

“The success of minority-owned businesses is fundamentally essential to our nation’s economic vitality,” said Pritzker. “MBDA has been instrumental in laying the foundation that is giving rise to the fastest growing segment of the business community, and I am very confident that Alejandra will continue to maximize their opportunities.”

Castillo, a practicing attorney for several years, is the first Hispanic-American woman to lead the Agency, and only the second woman in MBDA’s 45-year history. Previously, Castillo served as MBDA’s National Deputy Director managing the Agency’s day-to-day operations and its national network of more than 44 business centers across the U.S. and Puerto Rico.

“I am honored to accept this appointment as National Director of the Minority Business Development Agency,” said Castillo. “As the daughter of a Dominican business-owner, I have come to see first-hand the transformative role minority-owned firms play in their communities and the contribution they make to the Nation’s economy. As National Director, I am committed to carrying out Secretary Pritzker’s “Open for Business Agenda” to assist minority entrepreneurs grow their businesses in size and scale while continuing to generate job and wealth creation for all Americans” said Castillo.

During FY13, MBDA assisted minority-owned businesses in obtaining more than \$4.8 billion in capital and contract awards, which led to the creation and/or retention of 25,704 jobs, the highest performance level in the Agency’s 45-year history.

Below please find more information on Castillo.

Alejandra Y. Castillo Bio:

Ms. Castillo first joined the Department of Commerce in 2008 as a Special Advisor to the Under Secretary for the U. S. Department of Commerce's International Trade Administration (ITA). In this capacity, she was responsible for business outreach and intergovernmental affairs, as well as assisting in the development of policy initiatives geared at trade promotion and enforcement of U.S. trade laws.

A practicing attorney for several years, Ms. Castillo has worked in the private, government and non-profit sector. Prior to joining the Obama Administration, Ms. Castillo served as the Executive Director of the Hispanic National Bar Association headquartered (HNBA) in Washington D. C. During her tenure at HNBA, she was instrumental in working with the White House, and non-profit organization, such as the Latinos for a Fair Judiciary, in support of the nomination and confirmation of Supreme Court Justice Sonia Sotomayor. Ms. Castillo served as a member of the Clinton Administration as a Senior Policy Analyst to the Deputy Director at the White House Office of National Drug Control Policy, and was responsible for developing and analyzing White House initiatives on anti-drug traffic and interdiction, anti-money laundering policies, as well as drug prevention and treatment programs.

A native of New York, Ms. Castillo holds a Bachelor Degree of Arts from the State University of New York at Stony Brook in economics and political science. Ms. Castillo holds a Master's Degree in Public Policy from the Lyndon Baines Johnson School of Public Affairs, University of Texas at Austin; and also holds a Juris Doctorate Degree from American University - Washington College of Law. Ms. Castillo is active in a number of civic and professional organizations, including: The Hispanic National Bar Association, the Hispanic Bar Association of DC, the American Bar Association, and the American Jewish Committee. She also serves as a Board of Trustee of the University of the District of Columbia.. In 2010, *Hispanic Business Magazine* recognized Ms. Castillo among the Top 100 Influential Latino in the U.S. and she received the 2010 Rising Star Award by the Hispanic Bar Association of the District of Columbia.

***About the Minority Business Development Agency (MBDA)***

MBDA, [www.mbda.gov](http://www.mbda.gov), is the only Federal agency dedicated to the growth and global competitiveness of U.S. minority-owned businesses. Our programs and services better equip minority-owned firms to create jobs, build scale and capacity, increase revenues and expand regionally, nationally and internationally. Services are provided through a network of MBDA Business Centers. After 45 years of service, MBDA continues to be a dedicated strategic partner to all U.S. minority-owned businesses, committed to providing programs and services that build size, scale and capacity through access to capital, contracts and markets. Follow us on Twitter [@usmbda](https://twitter.com/usmbda)

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