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MBDA Announces 2016 Funding Opportunities to Grow Minority Businesses

Agency to invest \$13.4 million in 2016

WASHINGTON (November 27, 2015) — Today the U.S. Department of Commerce Minority Business Development Agency (MBDA) announced a third grant competition for programs that will start in 2016.¹ MBDA is presently seeking cooperative partners to operate a business consulting project in the San Francisco Bay Area. This project is expected to operate without a permanent physical office facility. Instead, we are looking for creative solutions utilizing *alternative workspace arrangements and creative customer engagement* from established organizations in the minority business arena.

The business consulting project will serve as a pilot to test what could become the future of MBDA Business Centers—operating with significantly less overhead and more time to dedicate to clients. “Alternative workplace arrangements have been successful for many industries (including the Federal Government) and our business model must evolve in a way that enables us to make more of a direct investment in our clients—minority business owners,” said Alejandra Y. Castillo, MBDA National Director. “The San Francisco Bay Area has one of the longest average commute times in the country and the cost of office space is extremely high. It is a perfect location to test a new service delivery model that does not rely on having a permanent office location.”

MBDA plans to award one individual cooperative agreement for this project, which will begin operation April 1, 2016. The award will cover a 5-year period with total funding of \$1.9 million to serve MBE clients in the **San Francisco Bay/Oakland** region. A \$338 thousand grant will be awarded per year to an organization chosen to provide business development services to minority-owned firms with the goal of increasing their access to public and private sector contracting opportunities, financing, and capital investments. Successful applicants will be those that have experience in assisting minority firms with obtaining large scale contracts and financial transactions; accessing corporate supply chains; facilitating joint ventures, teaming arrangements, mergers and acquisitions; conducting export transactions; and performing minority business advocacy.

The following types of organizations are encouraged to apply:

- for-profit entities
- non-profit organizations

- state and local government entities
- Native American tribes
- educational institutions

Applications are due January 20, 2016. More information can be found at www.grants.gov or www.mbda.gov. A [pre-application teleconference](#) will be conducted December 7, 2015 to provide background information and answer questions about the program and application process.

MBDA expects to announce more funding opportunities in the coming months for additional locations and projects, which may include the following specialties: capital/financing, exports and advanced manufacturing. Combined, MBDA will invest nearly \$13.4 million in grants to support the growth and expansion of MBEs in next year. Click [here](#) to be notified of upcoming grant competition announcements.

About the Minority Business Development Agency (MBDA)

MBDA, 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](#).

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ⁱ The first two grant competitions were for the operation of 34 MBDA Business Centers whose current cooperative agreements will expire in 2016 (March 31 and August 31).