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## Expert Roundtables Yield Reports Documenting Best Practices and Policy Recommendations to Stimulate Women's Entrepreneurship

**Washington, DC**—A series of three reports, documenting the results of expert roundtable discussions held earlier this year focused on aspects of women's entrepreneurship, are now available to policy makers, members of the women's business community, and other interested parties. The roundtable discussions summarized in these reports were convened and hosted by Project Tsunami—an organization dedicated to accelerating women's entrepreneurship internationally—in collaboration with the National Women's Business Council and other organizations. Top government officials, women's business leaders, senior corporate executives, and issue experts gathered to discuss the current state of policies and programs, current best practices, and strategies for the future of women's business ownership at three events held earlier this year.

The topics covered at these roundtable discussions were: access to markets, specifically corporate, government and international markets; entrepreneurial education and training at all stages of business development; and how best to foster high-growth women's entrepreneurship. A primary goal of the roundtable discussions was to generate ideas for new policies and program strategies that would benefit women's enterprise development.

“We were pleased to have been able to bring together some of the country's best thinkers to discuss these key challenges to business growth and development for women,” said Virginia Littlejohn, CEO of Project Tsunami. “The roundtable discussions were a tremendous success and will not only help inform further research and discussion here in the U.S., but in the women's entrepreneurship field internationally.”

Some of the key recommendations contained in these reports include:

- **Centralizing resources:** Information on access to markets— whether corporate, government or international—is plentiful, but scattered and frequently difficult to find. Portals to key sources of information, such as [www.womenbiz.gov](http://www.womenbiz.gov) for federal procurement information, or [www.trade.gov](http://www.trade.gov) for international trade information, are considered to be very useful and should be more widely marketed.

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- **The missing middle:** While there are well-known educational programs for women business owners at the start-up stage (women’s business centers) and for women seeking equity capital (Springboard Enterprises), women business owners who have passed the start-up stage or who are not in industries targeted by equity investors—often called the “silent majority” or “missing middle”—often are ignored. Just-in-time learning, which is frequently online (like the Online Women’s Business Center at [www.onlinewbc.gov](http://www.onlinewbc.gov)), and mentoring programs (such as the Athena Foundation’s PowerLink® program) can be of tremendous benefit to these women business owners.
- **Entrepreneurial frameworks:** Whether one looks at the conditions necessary for entrepreneurial growth as a funnel, a pipeline, or an ecosystem, there are some necessary conditions for fostering high-growth entrepreneurship, including: an entrepreneur’s personal experiences and goals; government structures that encourage entrepreneurial endeavor; and a labor force containing the right mix of employees. Many of the structures that support high-growth entrepreneurship—including institutional equity investment firms—are very male-dominated, and may act to discourage more women who may qualify from pursuing equity capital. Education on both sides of the table could help improve the environment for all.

“The results of these roundtable discussions are already informing the deliberations of the National Women’s Business Council,” said Julie Weeks, executive director of the Council. “We hope that by sharing these reports more broadly, policy makers, program leaders, and members of the women’s business community will also be able to benefit from and act upon the recommendations they contain.”

To obtain copies of these reports, visit the Project Tsunami Web site at [www.projecttsunami.org](http://www.projecttsunami.org), or the National Women’s Business Council’s Web site, [www.nwbc.gov](http://www.nwbc.gov). The links to the individual reports are: “New Strategies: Increasing Women Entrepreneurs’ Access to Corporate, Government and International Markets,” [http://www.projecttsunami.org/docs/Access\\_to\\_Markets\\_Report.pdf](http://www.projecttsunami.org/docs/Access_to_Markets_Report.pdf); “Entrepreneurial Education and Training for Women: Best Practices and Recommendations Along the Growth Continuum,” [http://www.projecttsunami.org/docs/Entrepreneur\\_Education\\_and\\_Training\\_Report.pdf](http://www.projecttsunami.org/docs/Entrepreneur_Education_and_Training_Report.pdf); and “Fostering High-Growth Women’s Entrepreneurship: Lessons From Silicon Valley,” [http://www.projecttsunami.org/docs/High\\_Growth\\_Entrepreneurs\\_Report.pdf](http://www.projecttsunami.org/docs/High_Growth_Entrepreneurs_Report.pdf). Support for the roundtable discussion events was provided by the Ewing Marion Kauffman Foundation ([www.kauffman.org](http://www.kauffman.org)), which works with partners to foster an environment nationwide in which entrepreneurs have the information and tools they need to succeed, and IBM ([www.ibm.com](http://www.ibm.com)).

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### **Project Tsunami, Incorporated**

Project Tsunami was founded as a non-profit corporation in October 2002, with a seed grant from the Ewing Marion Kauffman Foundation. Project Tsunami is a global accelerator for women’s entrepreneurship and uses a three-pronged strategy to create a worldwide wave of change to advance the women entrepreneurial sector. Project Tsunami uses state-of-the-art technology to deliver a clearinghouse of best practices to a powerful network of leaders worldwide. It spurs improvements for women entrepreneurs in the key areas of data, statistics and research; access to capital and credit; entrepreneurial education and training; access to networks and to corporate, government and international markets; and technology. It also fosters advocacy and constituency-building skills. For more information about Project Tsunami, contact: Project Tsunami, Incorporated, 3566 13<sup>th</sup> Street, NW, Suite 100, Washington, DC 20010; phone: 202-332-4411; fax: 202-318-4510, e-mail: [info@projecttsunami.org](mailto:info@projecttsunami.org); Web site: [www.projecttsunami.org](http://www.projecttsunami.org).

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### **The National Women's Business Council**

The National Women's Business Council is a bi-partisan federal government council created to serve as an independent source of advice and counsel to the President, Congress, and the U.S. Small Business Administration on economic issues of importance to women business owners. Members of the Council are prominent women business owners and leaders of women's business organizations. The National Women's Business Council is committed to conducting research on issues of importance to women business owners and their organizations; to communicating these findings widely; to connecting the women's business community to public policy makers; and to providing programs and platforms for change to expand and improve opportunities for women business owners and their enterprises. For more information about the Council, its mission and activities, contact: National Women's Business Council, 409 3<sup>rd</sup> Street, SW, Suite 210, Washington, DC 20024; phone: 202-205-3850; fax: 202-205-6825, e-mail: [nwbc@sba.gov](mailto:nwbc@sba.gov); Web site: [www.nwbc.gov](http://www.nwbc.gov).