



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
Website: www.mbda.gov
Fax: (202) 482-5117

Contact: MBDA Public Affairs
Phone: (202) 482-6272
Email: public_affairs@mbda.gov

MBDA Announces Grant Competition to Create Jobs and Grow Businesses in Indian Country

Agency Makes \$7.9 Million Available for Six New MBDA Business Centers in States with Large Native American and Alaska Native Populations

Washington, DC (May 11, 2012) – The Minority Business Development Agency (MBDA) today announced a competitive solicitation for applications from prospective candidates to operate six new MBDA Business Centers in states with significant Native American or Alaska Native populations, including: Alaska, Arizona, California, New Mexico, Oklahoma, and North Dakota or South Dakota. The successful applicants will join a network of more than 30 MBDA Business Centers across the United States, District of Columbia, and Puerto Rico.

“Today’s announcement is an example of the Obama Administration’s commitment to supporting business development and job creation in Indian country,” said David A. Hinson, National Director of MBDA. “The new MBDA Business Centers will help leverage the growth of Native American and Alaska Native owned firms to continue fueling our Nation’s economy.”

Over the past three years, MBDA has facilitated more than \$1.06 billion in contracts and capital for Native-American and Alaska Native businesses. With this competition, MBDA will phase out the Native American Business Enterprise Center (NABEC) program and replace it with the restructured MBDA Business Center program that was introduced in 2011. Under the new program, funding for each MBDA Business Center will increase from an average of \$675,000 over three years to \$1,315,000 over five years.

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

Although each MBDA Business Center is strategically located in areas with significant levels of minority-owned firms, they are not limited by geographic boundaries and may serve minority businesses in all fifty states and Puerto Rico. This expanded reach is designed to facilitate collaborative efforts among minority-owned firms around the United States 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 all eligible to apply to operate the MBDA Business Centers. Entities may apply to operate more than one MBDA Business Center; however, an individual application for each location (Competition ID) is required.

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 Standard Time (EST) on June 13, 2012. Applications that are time-stamped after the deadline will not be considered.

MBDA will conduct a pre-application teleconference on May 23, 2012. 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 to expand an individual business. Applicants must be able to operate a MBDA 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.

About the Minority Business Development Agency (MBDA)

MBDA, www.mbda.gov, an agency within the U.S. Department of Commerce, promotes the growth and global competitiveness of the minority business community, making them better equipped to create jobs, impact local economies, and compete successfully in domestic and global marketplaces. With a nationwide network of 40 business centers and a rich portfolio of strategic partners, MBDA assists minority entrepreneurs and business owners with consulting services, contract and financing opportunities, bonding and certification services, building business-to-business alliances and executive training.

###