CENTERANNOUNCEMENT OF FEDERAL FUNDING OPPORTUNITY

FULL TEXT OF ANNOUNCEMENT

Federal Agency Name:	U.S. Department of Commerce, Minority Business Development Agency
Funding Opportunity Title:	MBDA Business Center Program
Announcement Type:	Initial Announcement
FFO Number:	MBDA-OBD-2016-2004801
CFDA Number:	11.805 MBDA Business Center Program
Funding Instrument:	Cooperative Agreement[1]
Funding Amount:	MBDA announces the availability of approximately $1,427,000 in FY 2016 funds for the Business Center Program. We also expect approximately $285,400 per year for continued funding of this program through FY 2021.
Closing Date for Submissions:	A completed application must be transmitted and time-stamped at www.Grants.gov no later than **11:59 p.m. Eastern Time (ET) on May 7, 2016.** Applications received after the closing date will not be considered.

Funding Opportunity Description: This Federal Funding Opportunity (FFO or Announcement) announces the availability of funding for the MBDA Business Center ("Center") program, and solicits competitive applications for operators of MBDA Business Center in one (1) location. MBDA Business Center is established to provide technical assistance and business development services. The technical assistance and business development services are provided through federal financial assistance awards to generate increased financing and contract opportunities for minority business enterprises (MBEs). In addition, the services provided will assist MBEs in creating and retaining jobs.

Pre-Application Teleconference: MBDA will conduct a pre-application teleconference on – March 21, 2016**.** The time of the pre-application teleconference has yet to be determined. Participants must register at least 24 hours in advance of the teleconference. Please visit the MBDA Internet Portal at www.mbda.gov for more information.

[1] A cooperative agreement is the funding instrument used when there will be substantial Federal Government programmatic involvement. Substantial involvement means that, after award, MBDA program staff will assist, guide, coordinate, or participate in Center activities. This FFO is not to start or to expand an individual business. Applications must be submitted for the operation of an MBDA Business Center that will provide business development services to eligible minority-owned firms as set forth in this Announcement. Applications that do not meet these requirements will not be considered.

Table of Contents

SECTION I: FUNDING OPPORTUNITY DESCRIPTION 4
A. Program Overview 4
B. Introduction 4
C. Program Objective 5
D. Program Authority 5
SECTION II: AWARD INFORMATION 6
A. Funding Availability 6
B. Period of Performance 6
C. Type of Funding Instrument 7
D. Notification of Award 7
SECTION III: ELIGIBILITY INFORMATION 8
A. Eligible Applicants 8
B. Cost Sharing or Matching Requirement 8
SECTION IV: APPLICATION SUBMISSION INFORMATION 9
A. Application Overview 9
B. Application Package 10
C. Grants.gov Registration 11
D. Electronic Submission 11
E. Unique Entity Identifier and System for Award Management (SAM) 12
F. Returning Grants.Gov Users 13
G. Content and Form of Application 13
H. Required Applicant Narrative Attachments 16
I. Proposed Budget and Budget Narrative 16
K. Program Income Budgeting 17
L. Funding Restrictions 18
N. Standard Forms 20
O. Application Submission Checklist 21
SECTION V: APPLICATION REVIEW INFORMATION 22
A. Initial Screening 22
B. MBDA Merit Review Panel 22

C. Evaluation Criteria……22
D. Final Selection and Recommendation for Funding 24
E. Intergovernmental Review 25
F. Anticipated Announcement and Award Dates 25
G. Application Submission Checklist 25
SECTION VI: FEDERAL AWARD ADMINISTRATION INFORMATION.....26
A. Federal Award Notices 26
B. Post Award Conference 26
C. Administrative and National Policy Requirements 26
D. Program Award Requirement.....26
SECTION VII: AGENCY CONTACT 31
SECTION VIII: OTHER INFORMATION 32
A. Past Performance and Non-Compliance with Award Provisions.....32
B. Limitation of Liability 32
C. Audit Costs 32
D. Freedom of Information Act Disclosure.....32
E. Appendices to the FFO and Program Requirements Documents 32

SECTION I: FUNDING OPPORTUNITY DESCRIPTION

A. Program Overview

MBDA Business Center provide technical assistance and business development services to minority business enterprises (MBEs). In accordance with Executive Order 11625 and 15 U.S.C. § 1512, MBDA is soliciting competitive applications from eligible organizations for the operation of MBDA Business Center. MBDA will award one (1) individual cooperative agreements pursuant to this Announcement in the following metropolitan areas:

COMPETITION ID 2577697 Charleston, SC; Columbia, SC; North Augusta, SC; and Rock Hill, SC

The applicant may propose the physical location of the center in the metropolitan area as noted above. Alternatively, the applicant may propose the location of the center to be located in an area adjacent to the noted metropolitan area above.

A. Introduction

The Minority Business Development Agency (MBDA), a bureau of the U.S. Department of Commerce, leads Federal Government efforts to promote the growth and global competiveness of America's growing minority business enterprise (MBE) community. Through MBDA's services, MBEs are better equipped to create jobs, contribute to local economies, and sustain America's position as a world economic leader. Today, MBEs number more than 7.9 million and generate over $1.6 trillion in revenues. Minority-owned firms are consistently cited by economists as an engine of employment growth and economic expansion in America.

The MBDA Business Center program, a key component of the Agency's overall portfolio of minority business development services, focuses on securing domestic public and/or private contracts and financing transactions, exports, and job creation for "eligible minority-owned businesses." Organizations that are owned or controlled by the following persons or groups of persons are eligible to receive technical business assistance services from the MBDA Business Center Program: African American, Hispanic American, American Asian and Pacific Islander, Native American (including Alaska Natives, Alaska Native Corporations and Tribal entities), Asian Indian American, and Hasidic Jewish Americans. *See* 15 C.F.R. §1400.1, 1400.2 and Executive Order 11625.

The services are designed to assist MBE clients with achieving higher levels of growth and competitiveness. While Center serve all MBEs target clients are (1) firms with annual revenues of over $1,000,000; (2) firms involved in high-growth industries (*e.g.*, green technology, clean energy, health care, IT, infrastructure and broadband technology, among others); or (3) firms with rapid growth potential (*see* Appendix D: Definitions of Key Terms).[2] Promoting the success of MBEs is anticipated to have a significant impact on employment and the tax base in their communities, and positive economic impact throughout the nation.

[2] Start-up and/or micro firms will be served by the MBDA Business Center program via strategic partnership referrals or electronic service delivery mechanisms (e.g., MBDA Business Portal) www.mbda.gov.

B. Program Objective

The primary drivers of the Business Center program are: (i) capacity building, and (ii) job creation/retention resulting from facilitating contracts and financing for medium-sized minority businesses. MBDA Center provide technical business services including (but not limited to) the development of a pool of contract and finance opportunities; direct matching of opportunities with qualified/vetted MBEs; relationship management and deal sourcing initiatives (e.g. industry clusters); facilitating MBE growth through exports (identifying global markets and financing); identifying, matching and securing alternative sources of capital and financing ; educating MBEs on the benefits of strategic growth alternatives (e.g., mergers, acquisitions and/or joint ventures); MBE advocacy; and, providing service referrals to MBEs of all sizes.

Each Center is required to work collaboratively with all MBDA Business Center and other MBDA sponsored projects ("Network"). Each Center will engage the Network and offer its services to assisting MBE clients through Network collaboration.

C. Program Authority

MBDA is authorized in accordance with Executive Order 11625 and 15 U.S.C. § 1512, to solicit competitive applications from eligible organizations for the Minority Business Development Agency Business Center program.

SECTION II: AWARD INFORMATION

A. Funding Availability

The total funding period for the awards made under this solicitation is three (3) base years and two (2) optional years. There is approximately a total of $1,427,000 to fund the financial assistance awards for the operation of MBDA Business Center identified in this FFO through FY 2021. The anticipated amount of the federal funding for each Center for each of the program years is listed (*see* Appendix A: Funding Availability by Center Location) for each Center being competed under this FFO.

The award will be $285,400 per year. The federal share of funding levels is based at $250,000 plus locality adjustments. The locations of the Center are based on the size and ranking of minority populations in each metropolitan statistical area (MSA), the overall number of minority firms in MSAs (as established by U.S. Census Bureau data), and other available research and data.

Applicants requesting renewal of existing projects are eligible to apply for new awards under this announcement.

The minimum non-federal cost sharing requirements under the MBDA Business Center program are discussed in the FFO (*see* Section II.D —Non-Federal Cost Share Requirement*)*.

The funding periods and funding amounts referenced in this FFO are subject to the availability of appropriated funds, as well as Department of Commerce and MBDA priorities at the time of award. Neither the Department of Commerce nor MBDA may be held responsible for proposal preparation costs. All funding periods under the award are subject to the availability of funds to support the continuation of the project. Publication of this FFO does not obligate the Department of Commerce or MBDA to award any specific cooperative agreement or to obligate all or any part of available funds.

Federal funds must be fully expended by the Center operator during each funding period and are not permitted to be carried-over to subsequent funding periods. The Center operator's failure to fully expend annual federal award funds for purposes related to the Business Center program may result in programmatic enforcement or termination of federal funding allocated by MBDA to subsequent funding periods under the award.

B. Period of Performance

Awards are anticipated to be made with a start date of September 1, 2016. The period of performance under this solicitation is five years, consisting of one base period (three consecutive program years) and optional (two program years) periods. **Applicants must submit one budget (Form SF-424A) and corresponding budget narrative for each year**, including the two optional program years. MBDA may approve funding for a Center in years two through three if the Center is operating at a "Commendable" or "Outstanding" performance level at the time during the current program year that MBDA makes its recommendations to the Grants Officer for continuation funding for the next program year. A Center operator with performance rating of "Good" or lower will not qualify for automatic renewal, but the award terms and conditions will be subject to renegotiation and special award

conditions for the next funding period at the discretion of MBDA, and subject to the approval of the Grants Officer.

Recommendations for continued funding are generally evaluated by MBDA based on the mid-year performance rating and/or a combination of the mid-year and cumulative third quarter performance ratings for the current performance year. MBDA and the Department of Commerce will consider all the facts and circumstances of each case, such as, but not limited to, market conditions, most recent performance of the Center and any mitigating circumstances.

C. Type of Funding Instrument

Financial assistance awards in the form of ***cooperative agreements*** will be used to fund the MBDA Business Center program. MBDA shall maintain substantial involvement with the Center operator and Center staff throughout the award period. The substantial involvement will include a post-award conference, training, and advisement, in addition to work coordination and collaboration with MBDA and other MBDA funded programs, project monitoring, administrative and reporting requirements (*see below*, section VI.B and VI.D, Federal Award Administration Information).

D. Notification of Award

Anticipated time for processing awards is approximately one hundred-fifty (150) days from the closing date for receipt of applications. MBDA anticipates awards will be made with a start date of September 1, 2016.

SECTION III: ELIGIBILITY INFORMATION

A. 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, Native American Tribes and educational institutions are eligible to apply to operate MBDA Business Center.

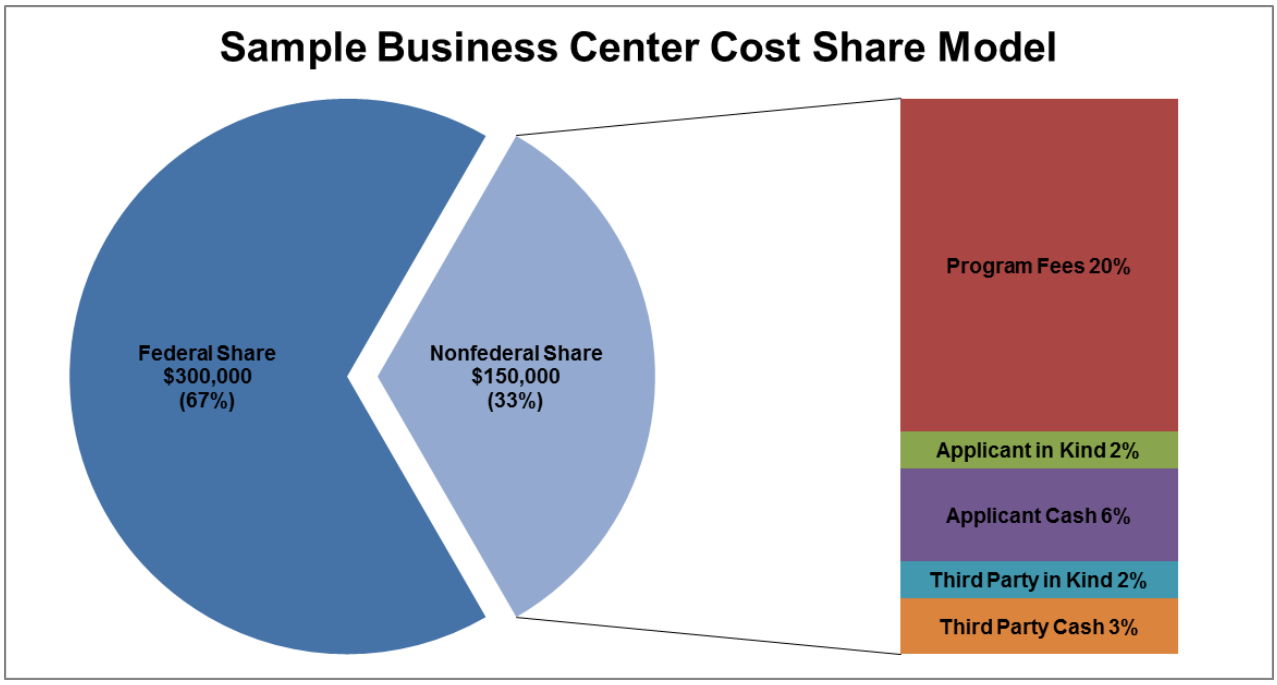
Successful applicants will possess experience in assisting minority firms in obtaining large scale contracts/procurements and financing awards; accessing established supply chains; educating and assisting minority firms in joint ventures, teaming arrangements, mergers and acquisitions; minority business advocacy; and, facilitating entry and large scale transactions in global markets. It is also anticipated that the mission of successful applicant organizations will align with both the mission of MBDA and the MBDA Business Center program objectives.

B. Cost Sharing or Matching Requirement

"Cost sharing or matching" is the portion of project costs not paid by Federal funds; these costs are provided by the Center operator or Center as direct or in-kind contributions. These costs are not borne by the Federal Government, or other federal awards or grants unless allowed by statute. Beyond the required generation of program income, applicants may contribute additional non-federal cost share to the award by one or more of the following methods: (1) applicant cash contributions; (2) applicant in-kind (i.e., non-cash) contributions; or (3) third-party cash or in-kind contributions (including a state or local grant or other form of support for the project). All cost sharing or matching must be consistent with the requirements of 2 CFR §200.306.

Each Center shall have a minimum of 33% (of estimated total) non-federal cost share under the MBDA Business Center program (s*ee* Appendix A: Funding Availability by Center Location.) Additionally, cost sharing or matching through the generation of "program income" is mandatory. Applicants may propose non-federal cost share beyond the minimum requirement. Applicants who propose non-federal cost share in excess of the minimum 33% will receive bonus points under the competitive evaluation process (*see* Section V-3.Bonus Points – Non-Federal Cost Share in Excess Minimum).

The Center program is a fee-for-service program and the Center operator is required to generate "program income" through the collection of client fees, membership fees, success fees and/or other fee structures proposed by the applicant. All proposed fee structures must be acceptable to MBDA, approved by the Grants Officer, and consistent with the requirements for cost sharing and matching in 2 CFR §200.306. Program income identified by the applicant in the applicant's proposed budget and approved by the Grants Officer must be applied directly to the Center's non-federal cost share and must be used in furtherance of program objectives. In addition, for each funding period under the award, the Center operator will be required to contribute cash or another acceptable form of non-federal cost share to the award to compensate for uncollected program income that was included in the approved Center budget.



If the Center generates more program income during a funding period than is allocated to the award's non-federal cost share for such funding period, the excess program income must be used by the Center operator in furtherance of eligible Center objectives. Subject to written approval by the Grants Officer, program income generated by the Center that cannot be expended during the funding period in which it is earned may be carried forward by the Center operator for one year and expended only in furtherance of program objectives in the award's next subsequent funding period.

However, the Center operator may not apply excess program income generated during one funding period to prior program funding periods to fund non-federal cost share shortfalls. In addition, program income that is not (1) expended in furtherance of project objectives, (2) carried forward for expenditure in the succeeding funding period with written approval of the Grants Officer, or (3) used for completion of the work by the end of the overall award period will be deducted from the project's total allowable cost. The Center operator may be required to reimburse MBDA for some, or all, of the federal share disbursed to the Center operator under the award if any of the aforementioned circumstances occur *(see* Section IV – I. Proposed Budget and Budget Narrative).

SECTION IV: APPLICATION SUBMISSION INFORMATION

A. Application Overview

Please make sure to begin registration early, as the process takes between three business days and three weeks. Before applying for a funding opportunity, your organization needs to register with Grants.gov, and assign one or more Authorized Organization Representatives (AOR).

Review your Grants.gov registration and AOR assignment in advance of the deadline to ensure that all authorizations are in place before attempting to submit an application. We recognize registration activities may take extra time, but this is part of the security process the U.S. Government must use to prevent fraud and abuse of funds. If you do not complete your registration by the submission deadline, you will not be allowed to submit an application. The Grants.gov application process is outlined below.

1. Obtain a DUNS Number. Call 1-866-705-5711 or access the Dun & Bradstreet website http://fedgov.dnb.com/webform. (1-2 business days).

2. Register with SAM. Access https://www.sam.gov. You'll also need the authorizing official of your organization and an Employer Identification Number (EIN). (7-10 business days)

3. Create Grants.gov Username and Password. Complete your Authorized Organization Representative (AOR) profile and create your username and password. You'll need to use your organization's DUNS Number. (same day)

4. Authorize the AOR. Request approval, then your organization's E-Biz POC must log in to Grants.gov to confirm you as an AOR. (same day)

5. Track AOR Status. Log in to Grants.gov and look at the Applicant Center welcome box for your current status. (same day)

6. Download an application package. Use Funding Opportunity Number **MBDA-OBD-2016-2004801** and Download a Grant Application Package, (same day)

7. Complete your application package. Write your proposal and fill out ALL the required forms, fields, and certifications. (allow 3 days)

8. Submit your application package. Access your completed application package, ensure all the necessary information is entered, check the package for errors, then click the "Save & Submit" button on the cover page. (3 days)

9. Track my application package. Enter the tracking number you received after Step 8 and click the "Submit Tracking Number(s)" button.

B. Application Package

All application materials and forms are available at the grants.gov website (http://www.Grants.gov). Additional competition materials can be found on the MBDA

Internet Portal (www.mbda.gov). Applicants may also obtain a paper copy of the application forms by making a request to the agency contact, Joann Hill or Nakita Chambers (*see* VII. Agency Contacts, for contact information).

Applications must be submitted electronically via www.grants.gov and received by MBDA by 11:59 p.m. Eastern Time (ET) on May 7, 2016. The electronic submission will receive a date and time stamp at www.grants.gov and will be processed after it is fully uploaded. The time it takes to completely upload an application will vary depending on a number of factors, including the size of the application, the speed of the applicant's Internet connection, and the time it takes www.grants.gov to process the application.
If www.grants.gov rejects the application, the applicant must resubmit the entire application before the deadline date and receive a date and time stamp from www.grants.gov.
The www.grants.gov time stamp will be considered the date and time of submission receipt.
Before beginning to apply through www.grants.gov, please review the application instructions posted at www.grants.gov and in this FFO Announcement.

C. Grants.gov Registration

To submit an application through www.grants.gov, you must register for a user ID and password. This process can take between three to five business days; and up to four weeks if all steps are not completed correctly. To avoid delays, start early and do not wait until the deadline approaches to register or to review the application instructions. Information about the registration process can be found at http://www.grants.gov/web/grants/register.html.

Before applying, your organization needs to register with Grants.gov, which requires appointment of one or more Authorized Organization Representatives (AOR). Below are instructions for registering as an organization. [3]

Please make sure to begin registration early, as the process takes between three business days and three weeks. If you do not complete your registration by the submission deadline, then you will not be allowed to submit an application. Applicants should **register as organizations**, not individuals. You must register an (AOR) for your organization. The AORs registered at www.grants.gov are the only officials with the authority to submit applications for your organization. Your organization may authorize multiple AORs for www.grants.gov purposes.

D. Electronic Submission

The electronic submission date is the date that applications will be deemed to have been submitted electronically and shall be the date and time received by www.Grants.gov.

You must save and print the proof of submission www.Grants.gov. ***Applicants should plan to submit the application electronically several (3-5) days before the deadline to ensure that the application is complete and accepted by grants.gov before the submission deadline.*** If problems occur while using www.Grants.gov, the applicant is advised to (i) print any error message received, and (ii) call www.Grants.gov at 1-800-518-4726 for immediate assistance.

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[3] An organization is an entity that submits grant applications on behalf of the group, such as a state government, nonprofit organization, or a private business.

If you experience a Grants.gov "systems issue" (technical problems or glitches with the Grants.gov website) that you believe threatens your ability to complete a submission before an applicable funding cycle deadline, please (i) print any error message received; and (ii) call the Grants.gov Contact Center at 1-800-518-4726 for immediate assistance. Ensure that you obtain a case number regarding your communications with Grants.gov. **Please note:** problems with an applicant organization's computer system or equipment are not considered "systems issues." Similarly, an applicant's failure to: (i) complete the required registration, (ii) ensure that a registered AOR submits the application, or (iii) receipt of an email message from Grants.gov are not considered systems issues. A Grants.gov "systems issue" is an issue occurring in connection with the operations of Grants.gov system, such as the temporary loss of service by Grants.gov due to unexpected volume of traffic or failure of information technology systems, both of which are highly unlikely. In the event of a confirmed "systems issue," MBDA may allow more time for applicant submission due to system problems at Grants.gov at the time of application submission that are beyond the control of the applicant. Problems with your application or computer systems are not considered systems issues. Failure to complete the required registration, ensure that the AOR submits the application, and obtain a notice receipt in the form of an email message from www.grants.gov or any other government site (e.g., www.sam.gov), and failure to comply with the requirements of www.grants.gov are not systems issues. A www.grants.gov system issue is one that occurs in connection with the operations of www.grants.gov, such as the temporary loss of service by www.grants.gov due to unexpected volume of traffic or failure of information technology systems, both of which are highly unlikely.

The preferred format for electronic attachments is .pdf. This is the most prevalent format for documents that are scanned from hard-copy. However, the Department will accept electronic files in Word or Excel formats.

E. Unique Entity Identifier and System for Award Management (SAM)

Each applicant (unless the applicant is an individual or Federal awarding agency which has an exception from the requirements of 2 CFR § 25.110(b) or (c), or an exception approved by the MBDA under 2 CFR § 25.110(d)) is required to:

(i) register in SAM before submitting an application;
(ii) provide a valid unique entity identifier in the application; and
(iii) continue to maintain an active SAM registration with current information at all times during which it has an active Federal award or an application or plan under consideration by MBDA (or any other Federal agency).

MBDA may not make a Federal award to an applicant until the applicant has complied with all applicable unique entity identifier and SAM requirements. If an applicant has not fully complied with the requirements by the time MBDA is ready to make a Federal award, MBDA may determine that the applicant is not qualified to receive a Federal award and use that determination as a basis for making a Federal award to another applicant.

F. Returning Grants.Gov Users

Organizations already registered with Grants.gov do not need to re-register, but the organization must maintain its System for Award Management (SAM) registration (formerly Central Contractor Registration (CCR)). If the applicant's SAM registration is not up-to-date the application will not be accepted by Grants.gov. An applicant's CCR username will not work in SAM. Applicants must create a new SAM user account to renew or update your registration. To obtain additional information and to verify that all required registrations are current, please visit www.sam.gov/portal/public/SAM. SAM is the Official U.S. Government system that consolidated the capabilities of CCR Federal Agency Registration (FedReg), Online Representations and Certifications Application (ORCA), and Excluded Parties List System (EPLS).

G. Content and Form of Application

In general, the applicant's proposal must define how it will implement the Center work requirements (*see* Appendix K: Work Requirements) and achieve the performance goals set forth in this FFO. A complete application includes the following:

- ✓ Detailed applicant narrative with defined sections;
- ✓ Detailed budget with narratives for each performance year;
- ✓ Required attachments and certain Standard Forms (SF); and,
- ✓ Department of Commerce (CD) forms.

An applicant must submit a separate proposal for each MBDA Business Center for which it is applying. Applications should include the elements for each section as described below in order to be eligible for the maximum number of points. (Refer to Section V.C.—Evaluation Criteria for discussion of points associated with each element discussed in this section.) Applications that fail to include all the necessary elements (in the order outlined below) will not be reviewed or considered and will be disqualified. The Applicant Narrative should not exceed 50 pages (this does not include budget and budget narrative). A complete application should contain the following:

1) Cover Page and Table of Contents. At a minimum, the application cover page must provide the applicant's name, address, telephone number, email address, date of submission, and the Competition ID listed for the Center for which the applicant is applying. Under the table of contents applicants should outline the full contents of the application and provide corresponding page numbers. All pages of the application must be consecutively numbered.

2) Applicant Narrative. The applicant narrative must contain the following:

   a) Capability

      i) Organizational Background and Knowledge of Community: This section should discuss the Applicant's organizational background, emphasizing knowledge of the minority business sector and strategies for enhancing its growth and expansion. Consideration will be given to whether the applicant has a physical presence in the applicable location and past experience providing related services.

ii) Mission Alignment. The extent to which the mission of the applicant organization aligns with the mission of MBDA and the objectives of the MBDA Business Center program.

iii) Access to Contracts and Markets: Applicant's knowledge of and experience in public and private sector contracting opportunities for MBEs, as well as demonstrated experience in assisting clients into supply chains, and demonstrated experience working with high growth industries. The applicant's professional working relationships and networks with potential sources of contracts for MBEs will also be considered. Additionally, the applicant's experience with facilitating large contract/procurement deals on behalf of minority firms, conducting business matchmaking forums, and assisting MBEs with the establishment of joint ventures and teaming arrangements will be considered.

iv) Access to Capital: Applicant experience in successfully preparing and matching MBEs with traditional sources of capital, alternative sources of financing (e.g., equity and venture capital), loan and bonding packages, and mergers and acquisitions. Applicant's professional working relationships and networks with financial institutions (e.g., corporate, banking and investment communities) that can be used for immediate implementation.

v) Business Consulting: The applicant's experience with and strategies for enhancing minority business growth and delivery of business consulting services and related successful client outcomes. Give three examples through client success stories (include description of challenge, action taken and results) and three related customer satisfaction results/ reports.

vi) Key Staff: Qualifications and experience required of proposed staff, including but not limited to, the Center director and Center business consultants. The applicant is encouraged to identify a proposed Center director with its application or after an award is issued. All Center staff shall possess the ability to deliver and/or support the program services and fulfill the work requirements of this FFO, and must be experienced in using information systems. Position descriptions, qualification requirements, education requirements, and salary ranges must be provided for each proposed Center staff position (include under Program Narrative attachments). If a specific individual is identified for a position, a copy of the individual's resume must be submitted.

vii) MBE Advocacy: Demonstrated knowledge and action pertaining to the challenges faced by minority business owners and willingness to provide information and dialogue with MBDA leadership and strategic partners.

b) Resources.

i) Key Partners: The applicant's plans for establishing and maintaining a network of strategic partners and the extent to which each partner will support the Center in implementing program services and meeting program performance goals. Whether the partnerships will be used to assist clients with securing contracts, securing financing, job creation, penetrating global markets, achieving size and scale, advocating for minority businesses, or providing referrals for services will also be considered. A

description of how the applicant will interact and coordinate with its strategic partners for successful client outcomes will also be considered.

ii) Other Resources: Resources that will be used to implement the program in each of the five program years will be considered. Resources include, but are not limited to, existing prior and/or current data lists that will serve in fostering immediate success for the Center.

iii) Location/Equipment: The applicant's strategic rationale for the proposed Center office (see Appendix J: Office and Space Requirements). The applicants plan to satisfy Center information technology requirements, including computer hardware, software, creation and support of the Center website, and network map will also be considered (see Appendix E: Information Technology and Computer Requirements).

c) Techniques and Methodologies.

i) Performance Measures: For each of the five (5) funding periods, the applicant's techniques and methodology to be used in implementing the program will be considered, including the quarterly breakdown of the performance goals. In addition, the applicant's recognition of and strategy for addressing existing market conditions in achieving performance goals will be considered. Additionally, how the applicant proposes to establish a system that corresponds to, or may complement, MBDA's tracking and validation of contracts and financings will be considered (see Appendix B: Performance Goals by Center). Please note that deviations, either above or below, from the Performance Goals by Center require justification.

ii) Start-up Phase: The applicant's project work plan for commencement of Center operations within the initial 60-day period will be considered. The Center shall have sixty (60) days to become fully operational after an award is made (see Appendix K: Work Requirements). The work plan must include significant implementation milestones, such as the hiring of key staff and the opening of the Center facility.

iii) Work Requirements Execution Plan: The applicant's description of how Center staff time will be used effectively and efficiently to achieve the work requirements of the overall program (including the start-up phase) will be considered. Please note that the applicant must include a specific five-year plan-of-action detailing how the Center work requirements will be met for each of the five (5) funding periods (see Appendix K: Work Requirements). **A staff allocation chart for each of the five (5) years must also be included as part of the work requirements execution plan (example provided below).** The Center staff allocation summary must include a Center director, and all other Center staff, volunteers, and interns. Each staff role must be identified as full or part- time, with the estimated hours to be worked on a yearly basis.

Center Operating Hours: A description of the Center operating hours and all scheduled holiday closures for each year of the anticipated five-year award period. Please note: MBDA expects that the operating hours will follow the traditional business hours of opening on or before 9:00 a.m. and remaining open until or after 5:00 p.m. each business day. In addition, the Center hours should follow the federal work schedule regarding the dates that it will be open for business. The federal holiday schedule (*i.e.*, those dates that

the federal government is not opened) is available at: https://www.opm.gov/policy-data-oversight/snow-dismissal-procedures/federal-holidays/#url=2015 for each year of the anticipated five-year award period.

Deviations from the operating hours and business working days expected by MBDA (e.g., religious holidays) must be identified, with justification, in the application.

EXAMPLE ONLY: Staff Allocation Chart Summary – Funding Period 1

Role	Status	Allocation	Available Hours
Director	Full Time	100%	2,040
Business Consultant	Full Time	100%	2,040
Business Consultant	Full Time	100%	2,040
Admin. Asst.	Part Time	25%	510
On Call Contractor	Part Time	25%	510
Total			**7,140**

H. Required Applicant Narrative Attachments

1) Applicant organization chart;
2) Proposed Center organization chart (include lines of reporting for the Center director to the head of the applicant organization);
3) Scanned Letter of Commitment from the proposed Center director (if applicable);
4) Center director resume and three (minimum) professional references must be provided (if proposed);
5) Resumes of other key Center staff (if applicable);
6) Position descriptions, qualification requirements, and salary ranges for all Center staff;
7) Proof of legal entity, for example, State-issued Certificate of Good Standing, copy of registered Articles of Incorporation, by-laws, IRS 501 (c)(3) tax-exempt letter, authorizing legislation, or other evidence of applicant entity legal status;
8) Scanned Letter(s) of Commitment from strategic partners and other resources listed, indicating their willingness to work with the applicant (ten maximum); and
9) Quarterly breakdown of performance goals, one chart for each year (*see* Appendix B: Performance Goals by Center Location).

I. Proposed Budget and Budget Narrative

All Center cost expenditures should be broken down into their individual units and discussed. The budget narrative must match the proposed line item budget, time phased plan, and staff allocation table. Fringe benefits and other percentage item calculations should match the proposed budget line-item and narrative. Line item amounts in the detailed budget and budget narrative must match the budget numbers reflected in Standard Form (SF) 424 (one for all five

years) and 424A (one for each of the five years).

All costs included in the proposed budget must be allowable, allocable, and reasonable. Each item of cost must be accompanied by a sufficiently detailed description and cost breakdown to enable reviewers to determine if the cost is allowable, allocable, and reasonable. One word descriptions and lump sum amounts are not adequate for justifying costs. Each budget item should be broken out and described fully so that there is no ambiguity or question regarding its relevance or reasonableness to the program objectives and reasonable. The following Office of Management and Budget (OMB) Uniform Guidance will be used to determine allowable costs, and will apply to the entire amount of the Center award, including both the federal and non-federal costs. *See*, Uniform Guidance: Administrative Requirements, Cost Principles, and Audit Requirements for Federal Awards (Uniform Guidance), 2 CFR Pt. 200 (2015); *adopted by* U.S. Department of Commerce, *80 Fed. Reg. 44829 (August 27, 2015).*

J. Performance-Based Budgeting

MBDA will consider the extent to which the line-item budget and budget narrative relates to the work requirements and performance measures (*i.e.*, performance-based budgeting). The budget will be compared to the Applicant Narrative to determine if the budget is realistic from a programmatic perspective and whether the proposed costs are necessary to complete the work requirements. Costs included in the budget that are determined to be unrealistic may be considered as an indication of an applicant's lack of understanding of the requirements of the Center program and/or the methods that must be utilized to deliver services.

K. Program Income Budgeting

Applicants must submit a line item budget (SF-424A) and corresponding budget narrative for each of the five (5) funding periods under the award.

The **federal contribution to the budget is non-negotiable.** The amount of federal funds designated for the award in the FFO (*see* Appendix A: Funding Availability by Center Location) must not be exceeded in the proposed budget. Costs must be proposed, on a per-event, per-person, per-item basis for all travel (*e.g.*, airfare, per diem, ground transportation). Each of the training events are set forth in this announcement (*see* Appendix F: Training Requirements and Definitions). The applicant must budget accordingly for this requirement. If a venue for an event is not stated, applicants are to assume that the event will be held in Washington, D.C. Applicants may include training costs under federal and/or non-federal cost share.

Non-federal cost share must be itemized on the SF-424A, the program line-item budget and in the budget narrative. All third-party, in-kind contributions must be supported by a scanned original and signed commitment letter from those resources. It is recommended that letters of commitment for years 1-3 be provided in the application and optional for years 4-5. Failure to provide this documentation may result in the disallowance of the amount proposed, reduction of available points or possible rejection of the application for an award.

Special Mention: The applicant must also describe how the Center director will have access to necessary funds and/or decision making for the use of funds to ensure optimization of the Business Center service delivery. Failure to address this in Budget Narrative section of the

proposal will result in the applicant losing 2 points.

Program Income: As discussed in the FFO *(see* Section II. D- Non-Federal Cost Share Requirement), the generation of program income is mandatory for the Center program and the Center operator is required to account for all program income generated in whole or in part under the financial assistance awards. Program income is defined as gross income earned by a non-Federal entity that is directly generated by a supported activity or earned as a result of the Federal award during the period of performance. For purposes of the MBDA Business Center program, program income specifically includes client fees, membership fees, success fees and other income generated by the center. *See,* 2 C.F.R. §§ 200.80 and 200.307-.

For each of the five anticipated funding periods under the Center award, applicants must identify:

1) How program income will be generated by the Center;
2) The anticipated amount of program income (which must be identified as non-federal cost share in the project's proposed budget);
3) How the program income will be used to further the Center objectives; and
4) Mandatory 33% non-federal cost share. Proposed fee structures and other methods for the Center's generation of program income must be acceptable to MBDA and approved by the Grants Officer.

The applicant should take care in projecting the total dollar amount in fees and other program income that will be generated each performance year. The applicant must state clearly the methodology for estimating the amount of fees to be billed and to be collected.

It is also important to note that in some cases the Center operator may apply a policy for fee waivers and/or accounts not collectable. The applicant must indicate, for each of the funding periods, at what point fees are charged to its clients (*e.g.*, upon completion of work assignment and/or successful completion of awarded transaction) and how it intends to collect and manage fees. These items should be taken into consideration and discussed in the budget narrative.

L. Funding Restrictions

1) Profits or Fees: Profits, fees or other increments above cost may not be paid on MBDA financial assistance awards and must not be included as part of the proposal.
2) Indirect Costs: Indirect cost rates will generally be set in accordance with negotiated indirect cost rate agreements which are established for all Federal assistance awards by the cognizant federal agency. The Program Officer must consult with the Grants Officer and FALD before limiting indirect costs.

   Indirect costs are those costs proposed for common or joint objectives and which cannot be readily identified with a particular cost objective. Therefore, if the MBDA award is to be the sole source of support for the applicant organization, all costs are direct costs and indirect costs should not be proposed. (The term "indirect costs" has been replaced with the term "facilities and administrative costs" for educational institutions and non-profit organizations). *See,* 2 C.F.R. § 200.414(a).

Under the Center program, indirect costs charged to an award shall not exceed the indirect cost rate negotiated and approved by the applicant's cognizant federal agency. In addition, in accordance with 2 C.F.R. § 200.414(f), any non-Federal entity that has never received a negotiated indirect cost rate, except for those non-Federal entities described in Paragraph D.1.b of Appendix VII to 2 C.F.R. Part 200 (specifically, a governmental department or agency that receives more than $35 million in direct Federal funding), may elect to charge a *de minimis* rate of 10 percent of modified total direct costs.

This limitation applies separately and collectively to each of the three anticipated funding periods under the award. Indirect costs in excess of the above limitations must not be included as part of the proposal. Indirect costs proposed under the award must be clearly identified as a separate budget line-item.

If indirect costs are included in the budget, the applicant must include a copy of its current Facilities and Administrative Cost Rate Agreement or documentation establishing that it has a pending application. If an applicant that does not have a current Facilities and Administrative Cost Rate Agreement negotiated and approved by the Department of Commerce (or by the applicable cognizant Federal agency) may propose facilities and administrative costs in its budget. However, the applicant must prepare and submit a facilities and administrative cost allocation plan and rate proposal or a negotiated indirect cost rate as required by 2 C.F.R. part 200 "Uniform Administrative Requirements, Cost Principles, and Audit Requirements for Federal Awards." *See*, 2 C.F.R. § 200.414. The allocation plan and the rate proposal must be submitted to MBDA (or applicable cognizant Federal agency) within ninety days from the award start date. The applicant shall provide the Grants Officer with a copy of the transmittal letter.

The maximum dollar amount of allocable indirect costs for which MBDA will reimburse a recipient shall be the lesser of the: (i) line-item amount for the Federal share of facilities and administrative costs contained in the MBDA approved budget for the award, or (ii) Federal share of the total allocable facilities and administrative costs of the award based on the cost rate approved by the Department of Commerce (or applicable cognizant Federal agency), provided that the cost rate is current at the time the costs were incurred and provided that the rate is approved on or before the award end date. The applicant should include a statement in its budget narrative if the applicant does not have, or has not applied for, a Facilities and Administrative Cost Rate Agreement.

The indirect cost policies contained in 2 C.F.R. part 200 (Appendix III, "Indirect (F&A) Costs Identification and Assignment, and Rate Determination for Educational Organizations"; Appendix IV, "Indirect (F&A) Costs Identification and Assignment, and Rate Determination for Nonprofit Organizations"; and Appendix VII, "States and Local Government and Indian Tribe Indirect Cost Proposals") will apply to MBDA awards for its business development programs. *See generally*, 2 C.F.R. § 200.414 (e).

Center operators are expected to understand and adhere to regulations pertaining to use of Federal funds.

M. Bonus Points Available

1. Youth Entrepreneurship — The Agency has determined that it is important to assist in the development the next generation of minority entrepreneurs. Applicants may receive bonus points for proposals that include concepts to support youth entrepreneurship in addition to program priorities, that:

1) Meet the need for awareness and exploration activities in entrepreneurship for minority youth;
2) Instruct minority students in entrepreneurship skills that will give them a head start in the business world and an incentive to continue their education;
3) Provide knowledge and education on the fundamentals of entrepreneurship;
4) Teach the importance of creating capital ownership and wealth within a community and help bring economic empowerment to the members of the community;
5) Begin preparing a class of future minority entrepreneurs, especially in urban and rural areas marked by underserved populations;
6) Enhance business growth, create jobs, develop community resources and stimulate national economy;
7) Show minority youth the real possibility of business ownership as a career; and,
8) Provide early introduction to economics, entrepreneurship skills, and venture initiation.

This component is optional and any service(s) proposed for youth entrepreneurship are in addition to the core MBDA Business Center program. Proposed concepts cannot be used as a substitute in the defined MBDA Business Center program and service requirements.

An applicant proposing Youth Entrepreneurship development must fully describe the aspects of any concept in addition(s) to the work requirements that the applicant will implement. Some examples have been provided (*see* Appendix G: Youth Entrepreneurship Concepts). Applicants are not required to utilize these examples. MBDA encourages any innovative concepts. Proposed ideas must be fully developed and articulated along with processes and anticipated results.

2. Non-Federal Cost Share in Excess of Minimum - The Agency has determined that additional resources allocated to the Center can improve the services provided to MBEs. Applicants may propose non-federal cost sharing in excess of the minimum amounts indicated in this FFO. An applicant will be issued additional "bonus" points to the final scoring (*see* Section V- D. Evaluation Criteria).

N. Standard Forms

Applications must contain the following Standard Forms (SF):

1) SF-424 — Application for Federal Assistance (one form to cover all funding periods);
2) SF-424A — Budget Information-Non-Construction Programs;
3) SF-424B — Assurances-Non-Construction Programs

4) SF-LLL — Disclosure of Lobbying Activities; and
5) CD-511 — Certification Regarding Lobbying.

O. Application Submission Checklist

A submission checklist has been developed as a guide for applicants. Do not submit newspaper clippings, brochures, letters of recommendation or other superfluous documents, as they will not be considered in the evaluation process (s*ee* Appendix H: Application Checklist).

SECTION V: APPLICATION REVIEW INFORMATION

A. Initial Screening

Prior to the formal review process, each application will receive an initial screening to ensure that all required forms, signatures, and documents are present. An application will not be evaluated by the review panel if:

1) The application is received after the closing date;
2) The applicant's authorized organizational representative (AOR) fails to submit Standard Form 424 by the closing date; or
3) The application does not provide for the operation of a Center.

B. MBDA Merit Review Panel

Each responsive application will receive an independent, merit review by a panel qualified to evaluate the applications submitted based on the published criterion. The review panel will consist of at least three (3) individuals, all of whom could be a combination of full-time federal employees and/or non-federal civilians at least one of whom will be an MBDA employee. Each reviewer shall evaluate and provide a score for each proposal. Each merit review panel (through the panel Chairperson) shall provide the MBDA Selecting Official with a ranking of the applications based on the average of the reviewers' scores.

A rank order of all applications will be established by averaging the individual review ratings for each application. The review panel may discuss the applications but are not required to reach a consensus on scores for each applicant. The reviewers will make their recommendations for funding based on rank order and the selection factors listed in the next section to the Selecting Official, the MBDA National Director, who is responsible for making final recommendations to the NOAA Grants Officer.

Each application will be evaluated based on the criteria set out in the FFO (*see* Section V—Application Review Information) for a maximum of 110 points (including 10 bonus points). The Applicant Narrative section of the application will be eligible for a total of 75 points, the Proposed Budget and Budget Narrative section will be eligible for 25 points. A complete application will contain information outlined in the remainder of this Section (C through F).

C. Evaluation Criteria

Successful applicants may possess experience in assisting minority firms in obtaining large scale contracts/procurements and financing awards; accessing established supply chains; advocating for minority businesses; educating and assisting minority firms in joint ventures, teaming arrangements, mergers and acquisitions; and facilitating entry and large scale transactions in global markets. It is also anticipated that the mission of successful applicant organizations will align with both the mission of MBDA and the MBDA Business Center program objectives.

Application evaluations will be based the following criteria:

1) <u>Applicant Narrative</u>**:** The Applicant Narrative section of the proposal will be evaluated, and applicants will be selected, based on the level at which the proposal addresses the below

listed evaluation criteria. Note, detailed narrative requirements for each listed criterion are in the FFO (*see above*, Section IV.G—Content and Form of Application).

Applicant Narrative Evaluation Criteria	Points
Capability - Organizational Background and Knowledge of Community (5 points) - Mission Alignment (5 points) - Access to Markets (5 points) - Access to Capital (5 points) - Business Consulting to Clients (5 points) - Key Staff (5 points) - MBE Advocacy (5 Points)	35
Resources - Key Partners (5 points) - Resources (5 points) - Location/Equipment (5 points)	15
Techniques and Methodologies - Performance Measures (10 points) - Start-up Phase (10 points) - Work Requirements Execution Plan (5 points)	25
Applicant Narrative Total	**75**

2) Proposed Budget and Budget Narrative: The Proposed Budget and Budget Narrative sections will be evaluated on the criteria identified below. Note, detailed cost proposal requirements are in the FFO (*see* Section IV. F—Content and Form of Application).

Budget Detail and Narrative Evaluation Criteria	Points
Reasonableness, Allowability, and Allocability of Proposed Program Costs	10
Performance-Based Budgeting	5
Program Income Budgeting	10
Budget Detail and Narrative Total	**25**

3) Bonus Points (optional):

a) Youth Entrepreneurship: Youth Entrepreneurship is optional and may not be considered for points if required criteria are not included in an application. Proposals may include service concepts that are above and beyond the required services (*see* Appendix G: Youth Entrepreneurship Concepts). A maximum of five (5) bonus points are available under this criterion.

b) Non-Federal Cost Share in Excess of Minimum: Proposals may include proposed con-federal cost sharing that is above the Project minimum as listed in *Section II.A – Funding Availability.* A maximum of five (5) bonus points are available under this criterion as follows:

Value Exceeding Minimum Cost Share	Bonus Points	Value Exceeding Minimum Cost Share	Bonus Points
$10,000-$29,999	1 bonus points	$70,000-$89,999	4 bonus points
$30,000-$49,999	2 bonus points	$90,000 & more	5 bonus points
$50,000-$69,999	3 bonus points		

B. Final Selection and Recommendation for Funding

The MBDA National Director is the MBDA Selecting Official and makes the final recommendation to the Grants Officer regarding the funding of applications under this competitive solicitation. MBDA expects to recommend funding for the highest ranking applicants, as evaluated and recommended by the review panel and taking into account results of the respective merit panel review. However, the MBDA National Director may decide not to select any of the recommended applicants, or may select an applicant out of rank order, for the following reasons:

1) Program Priorities – either of the following:

a. proposals aligned with or related to Secretarial priorities or initiatives;

b. geographic or ethnic diversity;

c. funding priorities; and

d. program balance.

2) Lack of Availability of MBDA Funds

Prior to making a final recommendation for funding to the Grants Officer, MBDA may conduct negotiations with an applicant that the Selecting Official anticipates recommending and/or may request that the applicant provide written clarifications regarding its application.

3) Federal Awarding Agency Review of Risk Posed by Applicants

After applications are proposed for funding by the selecting official, the Grants Management Division performs administrative reviews. These may include reviews of the financial stability of an applicant, quality of the applicant's management systems, history of performance, and the applicant's ability to effectively implement statutory, regulatory, or other requirements imposed on non-Federal entities. Upon review of these factors, if appropriate, special conditions that correspond to the degree of risk may be applied to an award.

For any Federal award under this notice where Federal share will be greater than the simplified acquisition threshold (currently $150,000, see 2 CFR §200.88) over the period of performance, recipients must note that: (1) MBDA, prior to making a Federal award with a total amount of Federal share greater than the simplified acquisition threshold, is required to review and consider any information about the applicant that is in the designated integrity and performance system accessible through SAM (currently FAPIIS) (see 41 U.S.C. 2313); (2) an applicant, at its option, may review information in the designated integrity and performance systems accessible through SAM and comment on any information about itself that a Federal awarding agency previously entered and is currently in the designated integrity and performance system accessible through SAM; (3) MBDA will consider any comments by the applicant, in addition to the other information in the designated integrity and performance system, in making a judgment about the applicant's integrity, business ethics, and record of performance under Federal awards when completing the review of risk posed by applicants as described in 2 CFR §200.205.

C. Intergovernmental Review

Applications under this program are not subject to Executive Order 12372, *Intergovernmental Review of Federal Programs*.

D. Anticipated Announcement and Award Dates

Anticipated time for processing awards is one hundred-fifty (150) days from the closing date for receipt of applications. MBDA anticipates that the MBDA Business Center awards will be made with a start date of September 1, 2016.

E. Application Submission Checklist can be found in the FFO (*see* Appendix H: Application Checklist).

SECTION VI: FEDERAL AWARD ADMINISTRATION INFORMATION

A. Federal Award Notices

The notice of award (CD-450) is executed by the Department of Commerce Grants Officer and is the authorizing award document. It is generally provided electronically via the Grants Online system to the Authorized Representative of the recipient organization. The Authorized Representative for a successful applicant will receive instructions from MBDA on how to access the Grants Online system to accept the award.

MBDA will notify unsuccessful applicants, in writing, after a final selection has been made and after an offer has been accepted. Those applications that are selected for funding will be retained by MBDA for a period of three (3) years from the date of the awardee's final expenditure after which they will be destroyed.

On occasion, competitive solicitations or competitive panels may produce less than optimum results, such as a competition resulting in the receipt of no applications or a competition resulting in all unresponsive applications received. If the competition results in only one application, it may or may not require additional action from MBDA depending upon the competitive history of the area, the quality of application received, and the time and cost limits involved. In the event that any or all of these conditions arise, MBDA shall take the most time and cost-effective approach available that is in the best interest of the Government. This includes but is not limited to: (1) a new competition; (2) re-paneling; or (3) negotiation.

B. Post Award Conference

MBDA shall conduct mandatory post-award conferences to ensure that Center operators have a clear understanding of the program and its components. During the post-award conference, MBDA will: (1) orient Center operator and Center staff; (2) explain program reporting requirements and procedures; (3) identify available resources that can enhance the capabilities of the Center; and (4) provide detailed information about MBDA's Business Internet Portal and other online systems.

C. Administrative and National Policy Requirements

Administrative and national policy requirements for all Department of Commerce awards are contained in the *Department of Commerce Pre-Award Notification Requirements for Grants and Cooperative Agreements*, published in the *Federal Register* on December 30, 2014, effective December 26, 2014 (79 FR 78390) are applicable to this solicitation. These are also available at . You may obtain a copy of this notice by contacting the MBDA contact under *Section VI—Agency Contacts*, or by entering the *Federal Register* volume and page numbers provided in the previous sentence at the following Internet website: https://federalregister.gov/a/2014-30297. Awards made under this announcement are subject to the Department of Commerce Financial Assistance Standard Terms and Conditions.

Please note that on December 26, 2013, OMB published final guidance titled *Uniform Administrative Requirements, Cost Principles, and Audit Requirements for Federal Awards (OMB Uniform Guidance)* (https://www.federalregister.gov/articles/2013/12/26/2013-30465/uniform-administrative-requirements-cost-principles-and-audit-requirements-for-

federal-awards), which streamlines the language from eight existing OMB circulars, including *Cost Principles (OMB Circulars A-21, A-87, A-122)* and administrative requirements *(OMB Circulars A-102 and A-110)*, into one consolidated set of guidance applicable to federal assistance awards. The *OMB Uniform Guidance* supersedes the Department's uniform administrative requirements set out at 15 C.F.R. parts 14 and 24. *See*, Uniform Guidance: Administrative Requirements, Cost Principles, and Audit Requirements for Federal Awards (Uniform Guidance), 2 CFR Pt. 200 (2015); *adopted by* U.S. Department of Commerce, *80 Fed. Reg. 44829 (August 27, 2015).* In addition, the audit requirements of the *OMB Uniform Guidance* (reforming current *OMB Circulars A-133 and A-50)* will apply to audits of non-Federal entities beginning on or after December 26, 2014. Therefore, notwithstanding the above paragraph, applicants need to familiarize themselves with the *OMB Uniform Guidance*. Additional information on the substance of and transition to the *OMB Uniform Guidance* may be found at https://cfo.gov/cofar/.

D. Program Award Requirements

1) Establishment of Office: The physical location of the Center office must be within an applicable city or metropolitan area as specified in this FFO. The Center operator must open a physical office and be fully operational within sixty (60) days of receipt of the award. "Fully operational" means that all staff is hired, all required signs are up, all items of furniture and equipment (*e.g.*, computer hardware, software, Internet services, phones, faxes) are in place, and the Center's doors have been fully opened to the public for service. Within sixty (60) days of receipt of the award, the Center operator shall report to the Federal Program Officer (via Grants Online) that it has complied with this requirement. Failure to be fully operational within sixty (60) days may result in appropriate enforcement action under the award, up to and including termination. If the Center is co-located with the operator, it must have a "separate identity" that must include, but is not limited to, appropriate signage and working offices for Center staff that are visually independent (or are perceived as standing apart) from the operator's non-Center operations and personnel.

   The Center must be accessible to persons with disabilities and strategically situated in the applicable region to ensure that it is: (1) close to available business resources; (2) within a reasonable commuting distance to the minority business community; and (3) professional in appearance and conducive to supporting the Center brand.

   The Center must provide services to eligible clients. Services can be delivered in person or virtually. MBDA calls and emails to the Center operator and/or the Center director must be returned by the next business day. In addition, the Center operator and director shall provide MBDA and other authorized federal government officials with access to the center upon request. Within sixty (60) days after receipt of the award, the Center operator shall report via Grants Online to the Federal Program Officer that it has complied with all information technology requirements in this FFO (*see* Appendix E: Information Technology and Computer Requirements). Within sixty (60) days after receipt of the award, the Center operator shall also report the name, contact telephone number, and email address of the Center director, Center staff member(s), and the network or system administrator. Failure to comply with these requirements may result in enforcement actions, including termination of the award.

2) Personnel: Each Center operator is required to have a Center director employed and dedicated on a full-time basis to MBDA Programs no less than the equivalence of a 40 hour work week. The Center director must be removed from any competing interests.

   The Center director is vital to the Center program and is viewed as the key representative to ensure the Center achieves its performance goals. The Center director must possess suitable management and business qualifications, including a minimum of a bachelor's degree or equivalent experience in a business-related field. Failure to hire a Center director within sixty (60) days may result in enforcement action under the award, including the withholding of award payments.

   The selection of a Center director requires the MBDA Federal Program Officer (FPO) to conduct a review of candidate qualifications. The Center operator shall submit to the FPO at the onset of competition and/or after an award is issued, the Center director's resume and a minimum of three professional references. The names of the successful candidates will be provided to the Grants officer via the FPO within sixty (60) days of the receipt of the award.

   The Center operator shall employ personnel with the knowledge and skills to develop and manage strategic relationships that enhance the Center's ability to source contracts, counsel minority firms on securing large contract and financial transactions, assist clients in negotiations with purchasing organizations and financing institutions, coordinate and collaborate on client service efforts, actively promote the brand of the center and advise MBEs on accessing global markets as outlined in the FFO (see Appendix K: Work Requirements). All consulting personnel should have a minimum of a bachelor's degree or equivalent experience.

   The Center personnel working with clients must possess the ability to: (1) promote and demonstrate the value of services offered to the client; (2) generate program income for the Center; (3) track service delivery on a consistent and regular basis; (4) collect quantitative and qualitative performance data; and (5) ensure optimal service delivery, client satisfaction, and operational quality standards are met, and ensure service optimization.

   The Center operator shall, to the best of its ability and available resources, provide competitive financial incentives and/or salaries to the Center staff. The Center operator shall adhere to commonly accepted/best practices in human capital management. The Center may not engage in employee nepotism.

   All personnel charged to the Center must directly contribute to the operation of the Center. There should be no "co-mingling" of staff time and resources being charged to the MBDA grant. Co-mingling is prohibited and is subject to enforcement action under the award, including the withholding of award payments and possible termination of the Center award (*see* Appendix D: Definition of Key Terms). Staff vacancies shall be filled promptly. Vacancies beyond forty-five (45) days may result in appropriate enforcement action under the award, up to and including termination.

   If a Center operator elects to apply and is issued an additional award from MBDA for special project(s), the Center operator may elect to allocate a maximum of 25% of the Center director's time to the special project award. The election may not result in an

allocation of the director's time to exceed 100%. In addition, all payments for the salary of a director must be in proportion to the amount of time allocated between the MBDA Center award and the special project, and must be made from separate funds held in separate accounts for each project. If a Center operator elects to allocate time to a special project, the allocation in the original award may require amendment to ensure that the total allocation does not exceed the 100% cap.

3) Training: MBDA will conduct training sessions for Center staff (subject to the availability of funds and training resources). The training sessions are mandatory (except where otherwise indicated) and were designed to improve communication, client service delivery, performance, and reporting. The Center training requirements are set forth in the FFO (*see* Appendix F: Training Requirements and Definitions.) Successful applicants are required to allocate appropriate personnel and funds to support all trainings.

4) Network, Tools and Information Exchange: MBDA will provide access to business development tools to help streamline and enhance client service delivery throughout the Center network and related MBDA projects. MBDA requires regular and ongoing use of these tools. MBDA will provide an orientation to successful applicants on how this technology can be leveraged by the Center to augment service delivery.

5) Project Monitoring and Advisement: Each Center is funded at consecutive one-year performance periods. Continued funding of the awards is subject to the terms and conditions as outlined in this FFO. As such, MBDA will systematically monitor the performance of the Center, as provided under the management assessment performance measure (*see* Appendix C: Performance Measures and Points). This monitoring includes regular review of the Center's data input to the MBDA CRM Performance system.

MBDA will conduct the following performance assessments for each program year:

Performance Assessment	**Operating Period**
Semi-annual	September 1 – March 31
Cumulative year-end	September 1 – August 31

These assessments are based on the Center's timely submission of its required performance narrative reports (*see* Appendix C: Performance Measures and Points).

MBDA will conduct an initial and periodic on-site assessment of the Center to verify the Center's performance/claims, including but not limited to a review of client files, program income, and overall operations. MBDA may also conduct a review of reported assistance by surveying and/or interviewing the clients assisted by the center.

MBDA will assess the Center's effectiveness in providing business development services to their respective minority business communities, and will provide a report of findings and recommendations for improvement as a result of evaluations and monitoring visits. MBDA will approve qualifications of key Center staff and respond to Center requests for MBDA action.

MBDA may conduct a consultation with a Center that is operating at an unsatisfactory performance level. This consultation is designed to assist the Center through collaborative support. The Center may be required to develop a performance improvement plan based on

MBDA's findings, suggestions and recommendations. In addition, a Center performing at an unsatisfactory level is subject to enforcement actions under the award, up to and including termination.

6) Reporting: (i) Financial reports are to be submitted to the Department of Commerce Grants Office on a quarterly basis. A final financial report is due within ninety (90) days after expiration of the award. (ii) Performance narrative reports are to be submitted to the Federal Program Officer within forty-five (45) days after the end of the second program quarter of each funding period. (iii) An annual or final performance report is due forty-five (45) days after the end of each funding period. (iv) Expense summary reports are to be submitted to Federal Program Officer within forty-five (45) days after the end of each quarter of each funding period. (v) Additional reporting requirements are set forth in the FFO (*see* Appendix C: Performance Measures and Related Definitions). Failure to submit reports on time may result in MBDA award enforcement action or delay in access to federal funds.

7) Federal Funding Accountability and Transparency Act of 2006 Reporting: The Federal Funding Accountability and Transparency Act of 2006 include a requirement for awardees of applicable federal grants to report information about first- tier sub-awards and executive compensation under Federal assistance awards issued in FY 2011 or later. All awardees of applicable grants and cooperative agreements are required to report to the Federal Sub award Reporting System (FSRS) available at www.FSRS.gov on all sub-awards over $25,000. Please see the OMB guidance published at 2 C.F.R. Part 200, which can be accessed at: http://www.eC.F.R..gov/cgi-bin/text-idx?tpl=/eC.F.R.browse/Title02/2C.F.R.200_main_02.tpl

8) Restrictions Governing Making Grants to Corporations Convicted of Felony Criminal Violations and/or Unpaid Federal Tax Liabilities: In accordance with current Federal appropriations law, execution by an applicant of the Representation by Corporations Regarding an Unpaid Delinquent Tax Liability or a Felony Conviction Under Any Federal Law (see Appendix A) will be required in a format requested by NOAA before any award will be made under this FFO

9) General Program Requirements**:** Each Center is part of a broader MBDA network and must be able to collaborate with both Agency staff, other funded Center and the MBDA network. As a part of business center operations, the Business Center accepts client referrals from MBDA Headquarters and the MBDA nationwide network of funded programs and projects. MBDA anticipates the Center would, to the best of its abilities, provide services to those firms beyond a reasonable distance through virtual communications. The following graphic outlines the overall service model for the Center program. Detailed program requirements are described in the FFO (*see* Appendix K: Work Requirements).

SECTION VII: AGENCY CONTACT

Prospective applicants may contact:

Ms. Joann J. Hill, Chief
MBDA Office of Business Development
U.S. Department of Commerce
1401 Constitution Ave., N.W., Room 5079
Washington, DC 20230
Tel: 202-482-1940

Nakita Chambers
MBDA Program Manager
U.S. Department of Commerce
1401 Constitution Ave., N.W., Room 5079
Washington, DC 20230
Tel: 202-482-0065

SECTION VIII: OTHER INFORMATION

A. Past Performance and Non-Compliance with Award Provisions

A consistent pattern of unsatisfactory performance under prior federal awards may result in an application not being considered for funding. Failure to comply with any or all of the provisions of an award may have a negative impact on future funding by the Department of Commerce (or any of its operating units) and may be considered grounds for any or all of the following actions: establishment of an account receivable, withholding payments under any Department of Commerce awards to the recipient, changing the method of payment from advance to reimbursement only, imposition of other special award conditions, suspension of any active Department of Commerce awards, and termination of any active Department of Commerce awards.

B. Limitation of Liability

In no event will MBDA or the Department of Commerce be responsible for proposal preparation costs if the MBDA Business Center program fails to receive funding or if the program opportunity is cancelled because of Department of Commerce or MBDA priorities. All funding periods under the award are subject to the availability of funds to support the continuation of the Center. Publication of this FFO does not obligate MBDA or the Department of Commerce to award any specific project or to obligate any available funds.

C. Audit Costs

Audits shall be performed in accordance with audit requirements contained in the Uniform Administrative Requirements, Cost Principles and Audit Requirements found in 2 CFR part 200, Subsection F. Recipients expending $750,000 or more in federal funds during the recipient's fiscal year must conduct a single audit in accordance with guidelines outlined in 2 CFR §§200.500-.520. For-profit organizations not covered by the audit requirements in 2 CFR §§200.500-.520 are subject to the audit requirements set forth in the terms and conditions of the award. Recipients that expend less than $750,000 during the recipient's fiscal year in Federal awards are exempt from Federal audit requirements for that year, except as noted in 2 CFR §200.503, but records must be available for review or audit by appropriate officials of the Federal agency, pass-through entity, and Government Accountability Office (GAO). Applicants are also reminded that other audits may be conducted by the Department of Commerce Office of Inspector General and by other authorized federal agencies.

D. Freedom of Information Act Disclosure

The Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) (5 U.S.C. § 552) and the Department of Commerce's implementing regulations at 15 C.F.R. part 4 set forth the rules and procedures to make requested material, information and records publicly available. Information submitted in response to this announcement is subject to the FOIA.

E. Appendices to the FFO and Program Requirements Documents

The appendices and MBDA Business Center program documents listed below are incorporated

by reference into this announcement. It is incumbent on all applicants to access and familiarize themselves with the information contained therein.

ANNOUNCEMENT OF FEDERAL FUNDING OPPORTUNITY
APPENDICES

Federal Agency Name: Minority Business Development Agency (MBDA/Agency)

Funding Opportunity Title: MBDA Business Center

Announcement Type: Initial Announcement

FFO Number: MBDA-OBD- 2016-2004801

CFDA Number: 11.805, MBDA Business Center Program

A. Appendices to the FFO and Program Requirement Documents p.34

APPENDICES

The appendices and MBDA Business Center program documents listed below are incorporated by reference into this announcement. It is incumbent on all applicants to access and familiarize themselves with the information contained therein.

Appendix A**:** Funding Availability by Center Location p.35
Appendix B**:** Performance Goals by Center Location p.36
Appendix C**:** Performance Measures and Points p.39
Appendix D: Definitions of Key Terms p.42
Appendix E: Information Technology and Computer Requirements p.48
Appendix F: Training Requirements and Definitions p.54
Appendix G: Youth Entrepreneurship Concepts p.58
Appendix H: Application Checklist p.60
Appendix I: Representation by Corporations Regarding an Unpaid Delinquent Tax Liability or a Felony Conviction any Under Federal Law p.62
Appendix J: Office and Space Requirements p.63
Appendix K: Work Requirements p.64
Appendix L: Business Center Trademark and Licensing Requirements p.74

APPENDIX A
Funding Availability by Center Location

MBDA Business Center Location	Federal Funding Per Year (Years 1-5)	Competition ID#
Charleston, SC; Columbia, SC; North Augusta, SC; and Rock Hill, SC	$285,400	2577697

Applicants are limited to submitting one application per Competition ID. The applicant must propose the physical location of the Center in the metropolitan area as noted above. Alternatively, the applicant may propose the location of the Center to be located in an area adjacent to the noted metropolitan area above.

APPENDIX B
Performance Goals by Center Location

The following tables provide the minimum performance requirements for each MBDA Business Center by location. Applicants should propose specific performance goals, for each year and in each category, based on the requirements listed below. Proposed goals that differ, either higher or lower, from those listed below require justification.

Instructions

In preparing applications in response to this Announcement, please note the following:

1. The "**Total Value of Awarded Transactions**" is the sum of the "Dollar Value of Awarded Contracts and Procurements" and the "Dollar Value of Awarded Financial Transactions." Applicants must propose specific performance goals for each of these two sub-categories within the following parameters:
   (a) The "Dollar Value of Awarded Contracts and Procurements" must be no more than 70% and no less than 30% of the "Total Value of Awarded Transactions;" and
   (b) The "Dollar Value of Awarded Financial Transactions" must be no less than 30% and no more than 70% of the "Total Value of Awarded Transactions." The combined total of these two sub-categories must equal 100% of the "Total Value of Awarded Transactions."
2. The "**Total Number of Awarded Transactions**" is the sum of the "Number of Awarded Contracts and Procurements" and the "Number of Awarded Financial Transactions." Applicants must propose specific performance goals for each of these two sub-categories within the following parameters:
   (a) The "Number of Awarded Contracts and Procurements" must be no more than 65% and no less than 35% of the "Total Number of Awarded Transactions;" and
   (b) The "Number of Awarded Financial Transactions" must be no less than 35% and no more than 65% of the "Total Number of Awarded Transactions." The combined total of these two sub-categories must equal 100% of the "Total Number of Awarded Transactions."
3. The "**Total Number of Clients Served**" is the sum of the "New Clients" and "Existing Clients" Applicants must propose specific breakout of goals for each of these two sub-categories within the following parameters:
   (a) The "Number of New Clients Served" must be no more than 80% and no less than 20% of the "Total Number of Clients Served;" and
   (b) The "Number of Existing Clients Served" must be no less than 20% and no more than 80% of the "Total Number of Clients Served." The combined total of these two sub-categories must equal 100% of the "Total Number of Clients Served." Note, applicant may round to nearest whole number when determining goal.

MBDA recognizes new Center operators will need time to initiate operations upon receipt of an award. As such, a new applicant may reduce its proposed performance goals by 33% for year one only.

MBDA Business Center Performance Measures and Goals

The tables below set minimum performance measures and goals.

Note: Applicants are encouraged to propose beyond minimal values listed in the table below.

Performance Measures and Goals	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5
Number of Jobs Created	188	188	188	188	188
Number of Jobs Retained	100	100	100	100	100
Total Value of Awarded Transactions	Listed by Location*	Listed by Location*	Listed by Location*	Listed by Location*	Listed by Location*
Total Number of Awarded Transactions	50	60	62	64	66
Dollar value of Awarded Contracts and Procurements	To be Proposed**	To be Proposed**	To be Proposed**	To be Proposed**	To be Proposed**
Number of Awarded Contracts and Procurements	To be Proposed**	To be Proposed**	To be Proposed**	To be Proposed**	To be Proposed**
Dollar value of Awarded Financial Transactions	To be Proposed**	To be Proposed**	To be Proposed**	To be Proposed**	To be Proposed**
Number of Awarded Transactions	To be Proposed**	To be Proposed**	To be Proposed**	To be Proposed**	To be Proposed**
Number of Export Transactions Facilitated	3	5	6	6	6
Number of Strategic Transactions Facilitated	7	10	11	12	14
Total Number of Clients Served	70	75	77	80	82
Number of Existing Clients Served***	N/A	To be Proposed**	To be Proposed**	To be Proposed**	To be Proposed**
Number of New Clients Served	70	To be Proposed**	To be Proposed**	To be Proposed**	To be Proposed**
Number of Advocacy Initiatives Facilitated	10	15	15	20	20

**See Total Dollar Value of Awarded Transactions Goal*

***See Performance Goals by Center Location - Instructions*

****The Center will only serve new clients in year 1.*

Total Dollar Value of Awarded Transactions Goal

Note: Applicants are encouraged to propose beyond minimal values listed in the table below.

MBDA Business Center Location	Awarded Transactions Year 1	Awarded Transactions Year 2	Awarded Transactions Year 3	Awarded Transactions Year 4	Awarded Transactions Year 5
Charleston, SC; Columbia, SC; North Augusta, SC; and Rock Hill, SC	$81,670,231	$84,120,338	$86,643,948	$89,243,267	$91,920,565

APPENDIX C
Performance Measures and Points

This section defines the evaluation criteria and weighted value that MBDA will use to measure Center performance based on the minimum programmatic goals set by MBDA and the proposed goals set by the applicant.

In accordance with 2 CFR Part 200, the award recipient (Center operator) will be responsible for the effective management of all functions and activities supported by the financial assistance award. Additionally, the Center operator is required to report to MBDA on the attainment of program performance goals twice during each program year. A Semi-Annual Progress Report is due forty-five (45) days after the end of the first six months (first semi-annual period) of each year. The Center operator shall also provide a comprehensive Year-End Progress Report on the accomplishments and overall operations of the Center. The Year-End Progress Report is due forty-five (45) days after the end of the funding year. All performance reporting is conducted electronically via MBDA's Internet portal. The evaluation criteria and weighted-value for measuring Center performance on an ongoing basis are as follows:

Performance Measure	Performance Points (at 100% Goal	Performance Points (Maximum 150% Goal Achievement)
Number of Jobs Created	15	22.5
Number of Jobs Retained	5	7.5
Dollar Value of Awarded Contracts and Procurements Transactions	15	22.5
Number of Awarded Contracts and Procurements Transactions	5	7.5
Dollar Value of Awarded Financial Transactions	15	22.5
Number of Awarded Financial Transactions	10	15.0
Number of Existing Clients Served	5	7.5
Number of New Clients Served	5	7.5
Number of Export Transactions Facilitated	5	7.5
Number of Advocacy Initiatives Facilitated	5	7.5
Number of Strategic Transactions Facilitated	5	7.5
Service Optimization Assessment	10	15.0

Bonus		Bonus Points (Maximum)
Eligible Bonus Items: - MBDA Special Initiatives - Youth Entrepreneurship - Collaboration with MBDA & MBDA Network - B2B Events Completed	N/A	10 total available 1 point per approved bonus item, 10 points total maximum
Total Points	**100 points**	**160 maximum**

The performance goals are listed on an annual basis by MBDA and should be broken out into quarterly goals by the applicant in its proposal.

MBDA encourages and rewards high achievement levels. Up to 150% of the maximum allowable points for most performance measures will be awarded, based on the extent to which the Center exceeds the minimum performance goal for the identified category. For example, if the minimum performance goal for the Dollar Value of Awarded Contracts is $70 million and the center achieves $105 million in this category, the Center operator will receive 22.5 points. Alternatively, if the Center were to achieve $110 million in this category, the operator would be limited by the 150% threshold and receive 22.5 points.

Under "Bonus Points," a Center operator may earn up to 10 additional points in each performance year for additional activities related to the award requirements beyond required performance: (a) participating in special initiatives undertaken by MBDA; (b) collaborating with MBDA staff on agency and departmental initiatives for the benefit of MBE clients; and (c) organizing and completing business-to-business events.

The Center can receive credit for its engagement and collaboration with MBDA National Partners. MBDA Partnerships, both formal and informal, can be leveraged by MBDA Business Centers at the request of MBDA. Such engagement includes, but are not limited to: (1) collaborative matchmaking events for MBEs and contract or capital opportunities; (2) co-hosted capacity building workshops or webinars; (3) local and state level policy and issue forums; or (4) joint initiatives and projects aligned with MBDA's strategic plan priorities.

The Center is required to utilize all of its resources to maintain optimum performance and/or operations. **Should the Center exceed its performance requirements prior to the end of a performance period, the Center is expected to maintain operations at full capacity, and continue to provide services consistent with the award.**

MBDA views the Center operator as a cooperative partner and collaborator with MBDA in serving the minority community. The staff of the Center is seen as working in partnership with MBDA, communicating the mission and values of the MBDA to the minority business community. Thus, high achievement in any one performance measure does not waive performance of goals proposed in the application and as stated in this Appendix. Failure to satisfy minimal goals in other performance elements may result in termination of the award, notwithstanding high achievement in any particular performance element.

In order for a reported outcome to be considered and counted towards the Center's goal, the

outcome must have a link to the Center services. A "link" is defined as specific actions provided by the Center to the client for a specific objective directly related to the MBDA Business Center program goals (*e.g.*, loan packaging services resulting in an approved loan, bid matching services resulting in the client securing a contract, managerial consulting focused on increasing productivity resulting in jobs retained). The Center may also receive credit for a defined outcome towards a goal achieved through the assistance of a strategic partner or in collaboration with other MBDA funded projects and staff. Strategic partner or collaborative- related outcomes must have a link to the Center services.

APPENDIX D
Definitions of Key Terms

1. Number of Jobs Created – The number of new full time and/or part time employment opportunities reported on the client's payroll during the funding year. Persons on paid sick leave, paid holiday and paid vacations are included as employees, as are salaried officers and executives of corporations. However, proprietors and partners of unincorporated businesses are not considered employees under this definition.

2. Number of Jobs Retained – The number of existing full time and/or part time employee positions retained and reported on the client's payroll during the funding year. Job retention pertains to maintaining the status quo of persons employed by the client in lieu of subjective and objective decisions made by the client to reduce its work force due to economic conditions, lack of capital, failure to secure necessary contracts and/or sales. Persons on paid sick leave, paid holiday and paid vacations are included as employees, as are salaried officers and executives of corporations. However, proprietors and partners of unincorporated businesses are not considered employees under this definition.

3. Dollar Value of Awarded Contracts and Procurements – This represents the total dollar value of successfully awarded contracts and/or the total principal value of executed sales/delivery contracts of services/products/intellectual rights and/or other binding financial considerations secured by clients of the Center, with the assistance of the Center staff.

   For purposes of this performance element, Dollar Value of Awarded Contracts and Procurements are those transactions which have a specific dollar value, and which produce a commercial benefit for the client.

   MBDA recognizes that the financial obligations evidenced by these transactions may be long-term, and require the delivery of goods and services over an extended period. In some cases, the agreements may have been awarded as indefinite demand indefinite quantity. Consequently, it is not necessary that the funds or other financial value specified under the agreements have actually changed hands for the Center operator to receive credit. In the case of multi-year and multiple-year awards (base and option years), the full contract value, including option years, can be claimed in the year the contract was signed. Non-single year contracts shall require the Center to communicate with the client, obtain proof of awards that were let on or prior to the end of the Center award period and to conduct an update the MBDA performance system.

4. Number of Contracts – The number of awarded contracts and other binding procurement awards secured by clients.

5. Dollar Value of Awarded Financial Transactions – The total principal value of approved loans, equity financings, bonds, leases (property and equipment), assets under management or other binding financial agreements secured by clients of the Center, with the assistance of the Center staff. For purposes of this performance element, eligible financial transactions are those that have a specific dollar value, and which expand the client's capital base/operations, or produce some other direct commercial benefit to the clients.

6. Number of Financial Transactions – The number of successful financial transactions secured by clients.

7. Number of New Clients Served – The actual number of new clients served in a funding period. Clients are defined as those MBEs that have not previously registered with the Center within the program period (years 1-5). The clients must complete a written engagement with the Center for specific services. Clients may be counted only once during the program year. Clients from a prior program year may not be counted under this definition. Note: all clients are considered new clients in the first program year.

8. Number of Existing Clients Served – The actual number of existing clients served in a funding period. Clients are defined as those MBEs that have registered previously with the Center from a prior performance year, completed a written engagement for specific services in the current performance year period, and are within the current performance period (year 1-5). Clients may be counted only once during the performance year by the Center. Clients from a prior performance year may be counted in a subsequent performance year if continued service provision to said clients is documented.

9. Number of Export Transactions Facilitated – The number of global contract opportunities and export financing transactions secured by clients as a result of direct Center activity related to international trade assistance.

10. Number of Strategic Transactions Facilitated – The number of awarded transactions secured by clients that included successful Center facilitation of joint ventures, teaming arrangements, and/or the number of mergers and acquisitions facilitated on behalf of clients by the Center. MBDA is seeking to build MBE capacity/capability through (1) the establishment of competitive teams for federal/state/local government and private sector contracting opportunities, and (2) the promotion of mergers and acquisitions.

11. Service Optimization – MBDA's evaluation of the overall management of the Center, based on the Agency's internal review of the Center's operations and adherence to the Manual. The management assessment focuses on such areas as the development of written service engagements and work plans; proper staffing; adherence to scheduled work hours; recordkeeping; successful completion of Agency training; customer relationship management, maintenance of strategic partnerships; bonding compliance; mandatory match; market promotion and any other areas which MBDA may deem to be relevant in determining the overall quality of the Center's operations. A Center operator may also lose up to two points from the assessment if the Center staff fails to participate in the required training credit hours.

12. Collaboration in Shared Outcomes – MBDA expects collaboration of activity throughout the MBDA nationwide network of funded programs and projects. Shared outcomes occurs when two or more Centers/projects collaborate to: facilitate and/or assist a client with an awarded transaction to include jobs created/retained, B2B event sponsorships, special initiatives/requests from MBDA/Department of Commerce. An approved MBDA form will be used to determine the shared percentage of an outcome resulting in an awarded transaction. The Centers/projects engaged in Collaboration in Shared Outcomes will negotiate amongst themselves to determine

the percentage of shared outcomes prior to recording in the MBDA CRM Performance System. **Special Mention:** It should be noted that collaboration amongst the Business Center network is expected and includes the following MBDA nationwide network of funded programs and projects: National Capital Specialty Center, National Federal Procurement Center, American Indian and Alaska Native Centers, Advanced Manufacturing Project, Export Project or any other program(s) or initiative(s) offered by MBDA. Collaboration can involve but is not limited to assistance with deal facilitation of contracts, capital and market opportunities, teaming arrangements, joint ventures or strategic partners.

13. Performance Bonus - The Center may earn up to a maximum of 10 points in any funding period for performance in addition to the performance criteria as follows:

a. Participation in and Successful Execution of MBDA Special Initiatives (such as but not limited to Youth Entrepreneurship) – On occasion, MBDA may issue a request for Center participation on special Agency and/or Department of Commerce initiatives. The Center may be asked and/or instructed to support MBDA in these special efforts. MBDA shall reward the Center by allocating up to one (1) bonus point per event, for a maximum of (5) five points. MBDA Special Initiatives shall be formally announced to the program as a whole, in further detail, and all Centers will have an opportunity to participate.

b. Collaboration with MBDA – The MBDA Business Center program is a component of MBDA's overall portfolio of minority business assistance services. To further encourage Center collaboration with the Agency in generating outcomes for clients, MBDA will award up to one (1) bonus point per client successfully assisted in partnership with MBDA staff, for a maximum of five (5) points. As a part of business center operations, the Business Center accepts client referrals from MBDA Headquarters and the MBDA nationwide network of funded programs and projects.

c. Business to Business (B2B) Events Completed – B2B events are a cost-effective and convenient mechanism for matching vetted MBEs with interested purchasing officials from the private and public sectors. This activity involves identifying the business needs of all parties and ensuring that all matchmaking appointments are qualified and mutually beneficial. MBDA will award up to one (1) bonus point per B2B event successfully executed, for a maximum of five (5) points.

14. Facilitation – This represents one of the business consulting services provided by the MBDA Business Center to its clients. It involves the act of identifying and coordinating meetings between clients and contracting officers, lending/financial institutions and domestic/international market opportunity providers that will yield awarded transaction outcomes. Examples of Facilitation include, but are not limited to: matching a client with a public or private sector contracting officer that results in a contract; matching a client to a traditional and/or alternative source of financing that result in a loan/investment and matching a client to a domestic or international market opportunity. It can also involve the Business Center providing consulting expertise that leads to a teaming arrangement, joint venture or strategic partnership that strengthens the clients' competitive advantage for future deals.

15. Harvesting – Harvesting is prohibited under the MBDA Business Center program. "Harvesting" is defined as any action by which a Center takes credit for a contract or financial transaction without having performed some work that linked the center to the client and that helped the client obtain the contract or complete the financial transaction. A Center found to employ the practice of harvesting is subject to having its award with MBDA terminated for cause.

16. Pipeline - A "Pipeline" is defined as a tool designed to capture forecasted and discovered opportunities through stages until the contract or financial transaction has been awarded. The Pipeline tracks the Center's progress and provides transparency to the Center's client projected outcome activities. The Pipeline should be "robust" and updated monthly to reflect the status of deal flow. Pertinent fields/data that will be collected include: client name, deal name, close date, probability, and the deal amount. Failure to update the pipeline could potentially result in the loss of points from the Service Optimization Assessment score.

17. Co-mingling: The act of blending MBDA grant award funds with other related and/or non-related program funds and accounts. For example, if a grant recipient operates more than one grant program or other economic and/or business development related program, it is expected that there will be separate accounting systems for each grant program. Please be advised that this is prohibited under the MBDA Cooperative Agreement and if commingling is cited the grant recipient may be required to: (i) reimburse the federal government, and/or (ii) terminate the award, and/or (iii) other legal penalties for such an offense.

18. Rapid Growth Potential - Rapid growth-potential is determined on an individual, case-by-case basis by the Center staff ("Consultant"). The Consultant upon conducting a client assessment and comprehensive review of a prospective MBE client, business concept, business plan and/or feasibility analysis may determine if the MBE has a high propensity for sales/revenue growth that would result in making an economic impact in its local community and/or creating U.S. jobs. A determination of Rapid Growth Potential may vary based on emerging domestic and international high growth industry trends, current market conditions, and viability of product lines and services offered by the MBE.

19. Client Success Stories – A qualitative measure of MBDA Business Center performance, client success stories provide a detailed narrative of the services rendered, the impact on MBE operations and/or revenue, and the actual outcome (i.e., contract or capital award). MBDA's Office of Public Affairs collects information on client success via a standard form that the Center completes in consultation with their client. A final submission also includes a signed legal waiver for permission to publish.

20. Capture Management (CM) – CM is the process of identifying contract opportunities, matching the opportunity to a MBE client, and tracking the probability of a favorable outcome that results in a transaction awarded to the MBE client. Through the CM process, a Center will track the progress and transition of an opportunity from discovery to award/close. The Pipeline is a tool used in support of CM.

21. Client Feedback Loop – This process will allow MBDA to gather customer, client and stakeholder insight about the quality and value of our programs and services delivered. The feedback will help MBDA continue to deliver the highest standard of service to MBEs and other key stakeholders. The feedback may initiate from the point of customer/stakeholder contact to the completion of a desired outcome.

22. Performance Improvement Plan (PIP) – A Performance Improvement Plan (PIP) is an enforcement action. The PIP defines the current areas of concern regarding the Center operator's work performance. The PIP reiterates MBDA's expectations and allow the Center operator the opportunity to demonstrate improvement and compliance with the award terms and conditions. The PIP also outlines actions to be taken in steps when a Center operator has received an "Unsatisfactory" performance rating during two consecutive performance periods.

23. Metropolitan Statistical Area (MSA) – The general concept of a metropolitan area is that of a large population nucleus, together with adjacent communities having a high degree of social and economic integration with that core. The Office of Management and Budget (OMB) defines metropolitan areas for purposes of collecting, tabulating, and publishing federal data.

24. Advocacy - Promote the mobilization of activities and resources of State and local governments, businesses and trade associations, universities, foundations, professional organizations, and volunteer and other groups towards the growth of minority business enterprises, and facilitate the coordination of the efforts of these groups with those of Federal departments and agencies.

(a) Convene business leaders, educators, and other representatives of the private sector who are engaged in assisting the development of minority business enterprise or who could contribute to its development, for the purpose of proposing, evaluating and coordinating governmental and private activities in furtherance of MBEs and MBE community.
(b) Confer with and inform officials of State and local governments about minority business development activities and issues.
(c) Provide managerial and/or organizational framework through which joint or collaborative undertakings with Federal departments or agencies or private organizations can be planned and implemented for the benefit of MBEs.

25. Customers - Minority or non-minority entrepreneurs and/or persons interested in entrepreneurship who do not have a written client service engagement agreement with a MBDA Business Center.

26. Clients – Minority businesses and/or persons who meet the eligibility criteria set out in Executive Order 11625 or 15 CFR § 1400.1, and who have signed a client service engagement agreement with a MBDA Business Center.

27. Minorities - Persons who are of the following ethnic and/or race: African American, Hispanic American, American Asian and Pacific Islander, Native American (including Alaska Natives, Alaska Native Corporations and Tribal entities), Asian Indian American, and Hasidic Jewish Americans.

Please note that program performance related definitions may be subject to change based on Department of Commerce imperatives, quality assessment reviews, and/or federal audit findings.

APPENDIX E
Information Technology and Computer Requirements

MBDA requires that all Center operators meet certain requirements related to the acquisition, installation, configuration, maintenance and security of information technology (IT) assets *within thirty (30) calendar days after receipt of the award*, in order to ensure seamless and productive interface between and among all grant recipients, minority-owned businesses, the MBDA Federal IT system and the public. These required assets and their configuration are hereinafter referred to as the "enterprise." The basic components of the enterprise are the mobile workstation, the server (where applicable), local area network (LAN) (where applicable), and a source for web enablement.

At a minimum, the Center operator shall provide one (1) business- grade mobile workstation ("workstation") (e.g. business grade laptop), for the exclusive use of each Center employee delivering minority business assistance to the public under an award from MBDA. All mobile workstations shall be web enabled and can take form in one or more service platforms including: (i) connected to a client/server network using an Ethernet protocol enabling communication with all workstations on the operator's network; or (ii) using wireless protocol devices allowing direct access to the internet. The server shall have a constant, high-speed broadband Internet connection. The Center operator may also ensure that each Center employee performing business development activities (e.g. business development consultants/specialist) have access to business grade tablets capable logging into MBDA's CRM system and other tools support by MBDA.

The Center operator shall ensure that each of the Center employees (including management, administrative personnel, contractors, full-time, part-time, and non-paid (volunteer) staff) have a unique electronic mail (email) address that is available to the public. The designated email address(s) shall utilize a Microsoft 2010 platform (or later version) and be able to interface with Salesforce or any other technology platforms implemented by MBDA. The Center operator shall design, develop and maintain, in accordance with the computer requirements, a presence on the Internet's World Wide Web that conforms to MBDA's current branding policy. The Center operator shall also maintain appropriate computer and network security precautions during all periods of funding by MBDA. All IT requirements, as described herein, shall be met by the Center operator within thirty (30) calendar days after the award.

A Center operator's failure to adhere to the MBDA Business Center program computer requirements as set forth herein may result in enforcement action under the award, including but not limited to the withholding of award payments until full compliance is reached.

A. Cloud Based Solution: A cloud based solution is any resource that is provided over the Internet. The most common cloud solution resources are Software-as-a-Service (SaaS), Platform-as-a-Service (PaaS) and Infrastructure-as-a-Service (IaaS).

B. Network Design: All locations where services are delivered to the eligible organization as defined by Executive Order 11625 and 15 CFR § 1400.1, the Center operator can operate a Client Server Network that provides shared disk drives and the setup of print queues for a network printer(s) (if individual printers are not provided) for each staff person delivering services to the eligible public. MBDA shall, from time to time, specify certain configurations of the enterprise hardware and software to meet interface requirements.

MBDA requires servers using an operating system that is fully compatible with Microsoft Windows 2010. Any server providing principal service to the desktops shall contain one (1) or more terabytes (TB) of hard drive space using two or more disks configured appropriately to ensure data retention should one disk fail. At least one (1) Quad-Core Intel central processing unit (CPU) or any other server providing principal service to the workstations shall be used. Web servers, mail servers and/or servers maintained by a third party such as an Internet Service Provider (ISP) shall meet the minimum server specifications as stated herein.

C. <u>Mobile Workstations:</u> All workstation systems shall not be more than four (4) calendar years old at time of award and shall contain an Intel Cores Quad Processor class central processing unit (CPU), operating at speeds not less than 2.4 Gigahertz (GHz). Each workstation system shall contain a hard drive with a storage capacity of at least five hundred (500) GB and 1 Gigabyte (GB) of RAM and a CD or DVD reader/writer. All workstations systems shall have installed an operating system fully compatible with Microsoft Windows 10 64 bit Professional or higher Operating System, MS Office 2010 Professional or higher, Microsoft Internet Explorer 9.x, Anti-Virus software, software or hardware-based Firewall and Adobe Reader 9.1 or higher. Additionally, it is suggested that a full-page scanner, along with software fully compatible with Adobe Acrobat (Standard or Professional, 10.2 or higher) be installed on a minimum of one workstation for the production of electronic document submissions.

The Center operator shall refresh (i.e. replace) all related computing devices (mobile workstations, tablets, etc.) designated to support the Center every four years or sooner if it is determined that the technology is no longer compatible with updated security standards or computing requirements. The Center operator shall provide evidence of their system refresh to their assigned Program Analyst and the MBDA Program Management Supervisor.

D. <u>Maintenance and Security</u>: An enterprise map ("as-built") reflecting adherence to the computer and networking requirements set forth herein shall be maintained by the Center operator for review by MBDA at any time. The Center operator shall designate and train one administrative person competent in the operation of an Operations System fully compatible with Windows 2010 network (or higher) and local area network (LAN) technology as described herein. From time to time, MBDA may require that certain software be loaded on servers and desktops. In any given year, the cost of this additional software may be $600.00 or higher per mobile workstation and $1000.00 or higher per server. Applicants should include amounts for potential software upgrades for outer years in their proposed budget.

Every employee of the Center shall be assigned a unique username and password to access the computing device and enterprise. Every Center employee shall be required to sign a written computer security agreement (the computer security agreement will be provided at the time of award and/or on the MBDA Portal). Every Center manager, employee, and contractor and any other person given access to the enterprise shall sign the security agreement and an original copy of the signed agreement shall be kept in the MBDA Business Center files. A photocopy of the signed agreement shall be submitted to MBDA, no later than thirty (30) calendar days after receipt of the award. The original agreement shall be maintained on file by the Center operator. All subsequent new hires and associations requiring access to the Center or MBDA systems shall read, understand, and sign the security agreement prior to issuance of a password no more than fourteen (14) calendar days after the start of their employment. No Center employee shall have access to any MBDA system(s) without a

signed security agreement on file at MBDA.

E. Web Site: The Center operator shall create and maintain a public web site using a unique domain/address (e.g., www.center-name.com), that will conform to MBDA web standards (A comprehensive listing of MBDA web standards can be found on the MBDA Portal). MBDA Web standards may include, *but are not limited to the following*:

1) The first page (Index page) of the web site shall *clearly* identify the Center as a MBDA Business Center funded by the U.S. Department of Commerce's Minority Business Development Agency." The index page of the web site shall load on software fully compatible with Microsoft Internet Explorer 9.x browser software using a normal home computer with 56 Kb/s analog phone- line connections in less than five (5) seconds.

2) The web site shall contain a "Contact" page with the names of all Center employees, the business and mailing address of the Center, business phone and fax numbers and email addresses of the Center and Center employees, a statement referencing the services available at the Center, the hours under which the Center operates and a link to the MBDA homepage at www.mbda.gov.

3) For purposes of electronically directing clients to the appropriate Center staff, the Center web site shall also contain a short biographical statement for each Center employee including management, contractors, part-time, full time, and non-paid (volunteer) personnel, providing services directly to the eligible public under an award from MBDA. This biographical statement shall contain: the full name of the Center employee, and a brief description of the expertise of the Center employee to include academic degrees, certifications and any other pertinent information with respect to that employee's qualifications to deliver minority business assistance services to eligible members of the public.

4) No third party advertising of commercial goods and services shall be permitted on the site. All links to websites other than federal, state or local government agencies and non-profit educational institutions must be requested, in advance and in writing, through the MBDA Office of Public Affairs and the website must provide an external link policy or notice stating that they will be redirected to an external website. Specifically, a notice similar to the following must be provided:

   The appearance of hyperlinks to other sites does not constitute endorsement by the [Center operator's company name] or by the Minority Business Development Agency of these web sites or the information, products or services contained therein. Regarding such external web sites, we do not exercise any editorial control over the information you may find at these locations. These links are provided consistent with [Center operator's company name] stated purpose as shown on our web site. We recommend that you review the website's information collection policy or terms and conditions to fully understand what information is collected and/or provided.

5) Furthermore, the approval for the placement of such links shall not be unreasonably withheld but is subject to withdrawal if MBDA determines the linked site is unsuitable. No employee of the Center operator, nor any other person, shall use the Center web site for any purpose other than that approved under the terms of the agreement between

the Center operator and MBDA.

6) Every page of the web site shall comply with Federal standards of the American With Disabilities Act, Section 508, and be reviewed by the Project for accuracy, currency, and appropriateness every three (3) months. In addition, MBDA's Section 508 Officer may occasionally review the project web site to ensure that it is Section 508 Compliant. For additional information and guidelines, please visit www.section508.gov. Appropriate privacy notices and handicapped accessibility will be predominately featured. In general, MBDA may audit the Center web site and recommend changes in accordance with the guidelines set forth herein.

7) The Center operator will also be responsible for informing their assigned MBDA Program Analyst and the MBDA Program Management Supervisor of any changes in operations such as location, contact information or otherwise.

F. Time for Compliance Regarding IT Requirements: *Within thirty (30) calendar days after receipt of the award*, the Center operator shall report via email to the Federal Program Officer to the MBDA Business Center Program Management Supervisor that he/she has complied with all technical requirements as specified herein (a checklist will be provided at the Post Award Conference). Within thirty (30) calendar days after receipt of the award, the operator shall report the name, contact telephone number and email address of the Center director, Network or System Administrator.

G. Performance System: All required performance reporting to MBDA shall be conducted via the Internet using the Performance system to be found at a secure web site (www.mbda.gov).

H. Data Integrity: The Center operator shall take the necessary steps to ensure that all data entered into MBDA systems, and systems operated by the Center operator in support of the award, or by any employee of the Center operator is verified, accurate and timely.

I. Personally Identifiable Information (PII) and Business Identifiable Information (BII): The Center shall configure systems to protect the PII/BII contained in the system from unauthorized access. The Center should employ best-practice techniques to protect confidentiality of sensitive PII and BII information. A Center, when it designs, develops, or operates a system of records on individuals or entities, or otherwise collects or has access to personally identifiable information (PII) or Business Identifiable Information (BII) in the performance of this grant shall, prior to taking such action, comply with the following requirements:

1. The Center shall have established policies and procedures in place to safeguard MBDA client PII/BII. The policies and procedures shall describe the Center's processes for identifying, assessing and mitigating privacy risks associated with PII. The policies and procedures shall also describe training that will be provided to Center staff and consultants on their roles and responsibilities for safeguarding MBDA client PII/BII and incident management of suspected or confirmed loss of MBDA client PII/BII in accordance with OMB's Recommendations for Identity Theft Related Data Breach Notification, September 20, 2006, and OMB Memorandum M-07-16, Safeguarding Against and Responding to the Breach of Personally Identifiable Information, May 22, 2007.

2. The Center shall also ensure that all processes, procedures and equipment associated with PII/BII comply with all laws, regulations, and MBDA security mandates as defined by National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST) Special Publication (SP) 800-61 Revision 1 and are aligned with the incident categories and timelines referenced in Table J-1 of NIST SP 800-61, as well as U.S. government policies developed to safeguard the confidentially, integrity and availability of MBDA data that may contain PII/BII. In support of these requirements, the Center shall have:

    a. Policies, procedures, and mechanisms designed to restrict access to MBDA data exclusively to authorized personnel;
    b. Policies, procedures, and mechanisms that prevent transmission or disclosure of MBDA data to an unauthorized party;
    c. Policies, procedures, and mechanisms that ensure MBDA data on portable devices are encrypted using methods compliant with Federal Information Processing Standard 140-2;
    d. Policies, procedures, and mechanisms that ensure any sensitive MBDA data transmitted across public networks (i.e., the Internet) by Business Center staff and Center consultants are protected using encryption compliant with Federal Information Processing Standard 140-2;
    e. Annual assessments to the MBDA demonstrating that the policies, procedures, and mechanisms required by continuing to be functional, that the Center is compliant with these requirements, and that these requirements are effective.
    f. Copies of its privacy policies to MBDA Headquarters at the time of award. The Center shall also provide a copy of the policies and procedures (or otherwise make such policies and procedures available) to all of its staff and consultants.
    g. Ensure that those individuals adhere to the Center's policies and procedures relating to PII/BII and to MBDA-prescribed policies and procedures for the safe handling of MBDA PII/BII, including privacy and MBDA security training requirements and privacy incident management.
    h. Immediate alerts to MBDA of any event, including the suspected or confirmed loss of MBDA PII/BII, that could potentially affect the privacy rights of individuals or which violates any federal law, regulation, mandate or requirement as defined in NIST 800-122 by contacting the MBDA designated point of contact. The Center shall act in accordance with its policies and procedures in the event of any suspected loss of MBDA PII/BII and shall support the MBDA's investigation and resolution of reported incidents as requested by the MBDA. For purposes of this Clause, a "suspected loss of PII/BII" shall be interpreted liberally to mean any situation in which the loss of PII/BII or unapproved access to PII/BII is deemed a reasonable possibility.

J. <u>Time for Compliance Regarding IT Requirements:</u> *Within sixty 60) days after receipt of the award*, the Center operator shall report via email to the Federal Program Officer and the MBDA CIO of the Office of Information Technology, Research and Innovation and to the MBDA Program Manager that he/she has complied with all technical requirements as specified herein (a checklist will be provided at the Post Award Conference). **Within thirty (30) days after receipt of the award, the Center operator shall report the name, contact telephone number and email address of the Center director, Network or System Administrator.**

K. <u>Performance System:</u> All required performance reporting to MBDA shall be conducted via the Internet using the Performance system to be found at a secure web site (www.mbda.gov).

L. <u>Data Integrity:</u> The Center operator shall take the necessary steps to ensure that all data entered into MBDA systems, and systems managed by the Center operator in support of the award, or by any employee of the Center operator is verified, accurate and timely.

APPENDIX F
Training Requirements and Definitions

A. Training Requirements

MBDA has designed a comprehensive training program for the MBDA Business Center program. The identified Center staff shall be required to participate in the following training sessions (subject to the availability of the training as determined by MBDA):

Training Event	Delivery Mode	Operator	Director	Consultant(s)
Post- Award Conference	In Person	Mandatory	Mandatory	N/A
Program Review and Orientation	Teleconference	Mandatory	Mandatory	Mandatory
Grants Online System	Webinar	Mandatory	Mandatory	N/A
Customer Relationship Management Performance System	Webinar	Mandatory	Mandatory	Mandatory
MBDA Working Group Collaboration	Teleconference or In-Person Attendance	Mandatory	Mandatory	N/A
Monthly Business Center Teleconference	Teleconference	Mandatory	Mandatory	N/A
MBDA National Training Conference	In-Person Attendance	Mandatory	Mandatory	Mandatory
MBDA National MED-Week	In-Person Attendance	Mandatory	Mandatory	Optional
Professional Development Training	Teleconference or Webinar	Optional	Optional	Mandatory
E-Tools	In-Person Attendance or Webinar	Optional	Mandatory	Mandatory
NOAA Grants Recipient Workshop 1st year and 3rd year	In-Person or Webinar	Mandatory	Mandatory	N/A
Ethics Training for Recipients	In-Person or Webinar	Mandatory	Mandatory	Mandatory
Informational Security Training PII/BII	In-Person or Webinar	Mandatory	Mandatory	Mandatory

If the Center staff fails to participate in the required training indicated above the Center shall lose a maximum of two (2) points from the performance assessment score during each evaluation period. The Center personnel professional and educational experience shall not be accepted as substitutions for attending the trainings.

B. Training Definitions

1. Post-Award Conference**:** This session, held once in the first year, is designed to review the grant award and key issues pertaining to the successful management of the award. Failure to attend shall designate the Center operator as non-compliant with the award and may result in award termination. A change in Center director will require the Center director to attend a post-award conference as soon as practicable following the commencement of his/her duties. The anticipated location of training is Washington, D.C.

2. Program Review and Orientation: This session, held once in the first year, will focus on understanding key aspects of the Center operations and procedures. This training will not require travel and may be conducted over a series of days by teleconference or by MBDA staff attending the center in person.

3. Grants Online System Orientation**:** This session, held once in the first year, is designed to review basic access, navigation and understanding of the Grants Online (GOL) system. The GOL system is utilized by MBDA and the Grants Office to manage all financial assistance awards administered by the Agency. This training will be conducted via webinar and will not require travel.

4. MBDA CRM Performance System Orientation: This training is designed to review basic access, navigation and understanding of the MBDA CRM Performance system. This system is a tool developed to enhance the client intake and relationship management processes across MBDA. The system is also used to capture and track Center performance. This training will be conducted via webinar and will not require travel.

5. MBDA Working Groups Collaboration: This session, held once in the first program year, is designed to foster the flow of communication and leveraging of resources and talent within the MBDA network. The cultivation of this collaborative environment is anticipated to expand the Agency's ability to deliver seamless and relevant services to benefit Native American, Alaska Native and MBE firms across the nation. This training will be conducted via webinar and will not require travel.

6. Monthly Business Center/Project Teleconferences: MBDA will conduct monthly Business Center Teleconferences with all Centers/Projects to provide updates on upcoming events, trainings, system enhancements, policy developments, and to offer a forum for Center questions and feedback. Travel will not be required.

7. MBDA National Training Conference (NTC): This training is designed to review key MBDA initiatives among all the Centers/ Projects and MBDA staff. Specialized programmatic training as well as formal meetings and/or trainings with the MBDA Office of Business Development are also offered at this event. The NTC is held once a year, depending on the availability of funds. The location of this event varies. However, the

Center should anticipate travel related costs to this activity. This session is normally a 3-day event, not including travel days.

8. MBDA National MED Week: This is an annual program typically conducted in Washington, D.C. and is a culmination of all MED Week celebrations. The event features workshops, seminars, and business matchmaking activities that inform attendees of new opportunities and information related to contracts, capital and markets. MED Week also hosts a celebratory awards program in recognition of MBE clients that have made significant economic impact and minority business advocates that have supported supplier diversity. The Center will nominate MBE clients in the pre-planning stages of the conference and support the promotion of the conference through outreach efforts to its respective clients. The Center will be required to attend the full conference unless otherwise noted by MBDA. This event is held once a year, depending on the availability of funds for approximately 1-4 days. The Center attendees should anticipate travel related costs.

9. Professional Development Training: This platform is designed to provide an opportunity for educational and professional development to advance the Center's service offerings. Training could include strategic planning consulting, financing, and procurement opportunities. MBDA anticipates these training opportunities will be conducted in multiple sessions throughout the funding period. Training will be conducted by the MBDA Office of Business Development and external partners at various locations across the United States and can be in-person or webinar accessible. MBDA will leverage strategic partners including Federal partners, academic institutions and public/private sector to tailor training to meet the needs of the program.

10. E-Tools: This refers to any online application in which all or some parts of the application is downloaded from the web each time it is run. It may refer to browser-based apps that run within the user's web browser, or to "rich client" desktop apps that do not use a browser or to mobile apps that access the web for additional information. Training will be conducted at the NTC or via webinar.

11. NOAA Grants Recipient Workshop: The Grants Workshop is an intensive and detailed session that will provide guidance on how to ensure that grant application packages are clear, concise and contain all of the pertinent information and documentation required to receive approval. Federal forms, budget justifications and narratives and project descriptions are all topics for discussion. The applicant should anticipate travel related costs.

12. Ethics Training for Recipients: The Ethics Law and Programs Division staff provides guidance on issues including financial and non-financial conflicts of interest, outside activities including political activities, gifts, and post-employment restrictions. To ensure that advisory services are readily available, an attorney is assigned each day to answer telephone questions and e-mail inquiries. Training will be conducted at the NTC or via webinar.

13. IT Security Training PII/BII: The Center shall have established policies and procedures in place to safeguard MBDA client PII/BII. The policies and procedures shall describe the Center's processes for identifying, assessing and mitigating privacy risks associated with PII. The policies and procedures shall also describe training that will be provided to Center

staff and consultants on their roles and responsibilities for safeguarding MBDA client PII/BII and incident management of suspected or confirmed loss of MBDA client PII/BII in accordance with OMB's Recommendations for Identity Theft Related Data Breach Notification, September 20, 2006, and OMB Memorandum M-07-16, Safeguarding Against and Responding to the Breach of Personally Identifiable Information, May 22, 2007. Training will be conducted at the NTC or via webinar.

APPENDIX G
Youth Entrepreneurship Concepts

MBDA encourages the collaboration of its Centers with secondary educational institutions and colleges and universities, chambers of commerce and trade associations to support programs targeted at Youth Entrepreneurship. A youth entrepreneurship proposal must be submitted in addition to the criteria required in by the application and may not be used as a substitute for the required criteria. The platform for innovative ideas and concepts submitted for Bonus Points could range from educational platforms to Pitch Forums and could address either one or several of the outcomes listed:

- Meet the need for awareness and exploration activities in entrepreneurship for minority youth.
- Instruct minority students in entrepreneurship skills that will give them a head start in the business world and an incentive to continue their education.
- Provide knowledge and education on the fundamentals of entrepreneurship.
- Teach importance of creating capital ownership and wealth within a community and help bring economic empowerment to the members of the community.
- Begin preparing a class of future minority entrepreneurs, especially in urban and rural areas marked by low-income populations.
- Enhance business growth, create jobs, develop community resources and stimulate National economy.
- Show minority youth the real possibility of business ownership as a career.
- Provide early introduction to economics, entrepreneurship skills, and venture initiation.

Examples of Programs:

Summer Institutes/Camps

Operate summer institutes or summer camps where participants receive intensive training for one or more weeks in entrepreneurial skills. Summer programs may be run separately or as part of a larger instructional agenda. Summer institutes are to provide the following general kinds of activities:

- Present speakers and interactive films on business
- Introduce students to the language/concepts of entrepreneurship
- Furnish adult advisors and mentors. Or “big sister, big brother” programs
- Hold intensive workshop/seminar discussions
- Divide students into groups or “companies” under advisors/mentors
- Run computer business simulations where individuals/groups try to product a market or product
- Have students create (and possibly execute) advertising for their product
- Award certificates for completing the summer program

This type of program would be a great addition to our Youth Entrepreneurship initiative, as it provides an interactive “business haven” for high school students to gain exposure to the entrepreneurial world. This is a program where students can commit full-time and develop a business-like focus that may impact their immediate future.

Pitch Forum Competition

Many colleges and secondary schools sponsor competitions among students who present an idea

for a business venture. Contestants submit a proposal for new product/service, perform market research and cost analysis, then write a business plan and make an oral presentation to a panel of judges. The panel usually has owners and other business leaders who do evaluations. Winning contestants may receive a trophy, cash awards, scholarships, etc.

Business Consulting by Graduate Students
A number of entrepreneurship programs employ MBA graduate student consultants to give technical advice for new or established owners. Graduate students, under faculty supervision, help analyze the problems of small concerns. This is an excellent learning opportunity for them which they may turn to good use in their future entrepreneurship.

Mentorship
Mentoring is an informal type of training which accords young trainees' one-to-one business learning experiences with college students or adult business owners. It is a very useful method of conveying practical experience directly, as well as providing a first-hand, positive role model for youthful minority entrepreneurs. Many college social clubs, business fraternities and student organizations offer student-volunteered mentorship services to their communities for free. MBDA or business centers should connect with local universities to establish a mentorship program.

APPENDIX H
Application Checklist

___ Cover Page
___ Table of Contents
____Program Narrative

___ Applicant Capability
- ___ Organizational background and knowledge of community
- ___ Mission alignment
- ___ Access to markets
- ___ Access to capital
- ___ Business consulting to targeted clients, key staff

___ Resources
- ___ Partners
- ___ Resources
- ___ Location/Equipment

___ Techniques and Methodologies*
- ___ Performance measures
- ___ Start-up phase
- ___Work requirement execution plan

___ Required Attachments
- ____Applicant organizational chart
- ___ Proposed MBDA Business Center organizational chart
- ___ Center director resume, professional references (three) and letter of commitment (if applicable)
- ___ Resumes of other key Center staff (if applicable)
- ___ Position descriptions, qualification requirements and salary ranges
- ___ Copy of State-issued Certificate of Good Standing, registered Articles of Incorporation, by-laws, IRS 501 (c)(3) tax-exempt letter, authorizing legislation or other evidence of applicant legal entity
- ___ Scanned Letter(s) of Commitment from strategic partners and other resources
- ___ Quarterly breakdown of performance goals (one chart for each year)
- ___ Center staff allocation chart (one for each year, see example)
- ___ Listing of Center operating hours and all anticipated holiday closures (one for each year)

___ Budget Narrative
- ___ Proposed Detailed Budget (one for each funding period, total of 5)
- ___ Proposed Budget Narrative (one for each funding period, total of 5)
- ___ Scanned Letters of Commitment from Third Party In-Kind Contributors (if applicable)

_____Youth Entrepreneurship - Optional
____Plan to fully execute innovative service

___ Standard Forms
___SF – 424 (one set to cover all funding periods)
___SF – 424 A (one for each funding period, total of 5 sets)
___ SF – 424 B
___ SF – LLL

___ Commerce Department Forms
___ CD 511

*Multi-year awards require the applicant to acknowledge what services will be provided for each program year. The Center applicant may provide a summary statement indicating the proposed techniques and methodologies will remain consistent for the entire funding period.

APPENDIX I

Representation by Corporations Regarding an Unpaid Delinquent Tax Liability or a Felony Conviction Under Any Federal Law

Pursuant to the current Appropriations Act, funds made available by the Act are prohibited from use to enter into a cooperative agreement with or make a grant to any corporation that:

1. Was convicted of a felony criminal violation under any Federal law within the preceding 24 months, unless any agency has considered suspension or debarment of the corporation and made a determination that this further action is not necessary to protect the interest of the Government; and/or,

2. has any unpaid Federal tax liability that has been assessed, for which all judicial and administrative remedies have been exhausted or have lapsed, and that is not being paid in a timely manner pursuant to an agreement with the authority responsible for collecting the tax liability, unless an agency has considered suspension or debarment of the corporation and made a determination that this further action is not necessary to protect the interest of the Government.

The Applicant represents that:
It is or it is not a corporation that was convicted of a felony criminal violation under a Federal law within the preceding 24 months.

It is or it is not a corporation that has any unpaid Federal tax liability that has been assessed, for which all judicial and administrative remedies have been exhausted or have lapsed, and that not being paid in a timely manner pursuant to an agreements with the authority responsible for collecting the tax liability.

_____

[Signature of person who has authority to certify on behalf of the corporation]
[Typed name of the signing individual]
[Typed title of the signing individual]
[Typed name of corporation]
[Typed phone number of the signing individual]
[Typed email address of the signing individual]

APPENDIX J
Office and Space Requirements

The Center operator is required to provide professional office space that is suitable for meeting with Center clients, MBDA headquarters staff and other MBDA stakeholders. The space should be located in a modern, quality building of sound and substantial construction. The space should be located in a commercial office district with attractive and professional surroundings. The office should have signage to indicate that it is an MBDA Business Center and shall adhere to MBDA signage and branding policies. The space should be located in facilities that have infrastructure to accommodate high-speed Internet access.

MBDA encourages applicants to propose a location for the Business Center that is in a building which is separate and apart from any of the applicant's existing offices in the geographical service area. The Center must be accessible to disabled persons and strategically located in the applicable geographic area to ensure that it is: (1) close to the available public and private sector resources, and (2) within a reasonable commuting distance to the minority business community.

It is recommended that the Center operator follow office space benchmarks outlined in the 2011 GSA Workspace Utilization and Allocation Benchmark study. Recommended allocations are contained in work space utilization and benchmark #9, which is specific for business services/consulting. Based on this benchmark, the Center director would be allocated an office space with a minimum of 140 Usable Square Feet (USF) and Business Consultants would be allocated office space with a minimum of 70 USF per every two consultants on staff.

Applicants are encouraged to describe the facilities proposed to house the Center and include: site location, approximate square footage, site/meeting facilities description, building sustainability attributes (ENERGY STAR, LEED, etc.), proximity to public transportation, availability of parking, and accessibility. If available, please include floor plans and photos of the office space.

Office Facility Information Checklist	
Is the office located in a central business district?	
Is the office easily accessible by public transportation?	
Is the office space freeway accessible?	
Is there parking available on-site?	
Is a meeting room available on-site?	
Is a reception or greeting area available on-site?	
Is the office cleaned on a regular basis?	
Is there a restroom on-site, which clients may access?	
Is the building ENERGY STAR certified?	
Is the building LEED certified?	
Is the facility accessible by persons with disabilities?	
Will it be possible to place MBDA signage in the building lobby/building directory?	
Will there be MBDA signage on the entrance to the office suite?	
Does the building have infrastructure to accommodate high-speed Internet access?	

APPENDIX K
Work Requirements

The primary drivers of the MBDA Business Center program are job creation, retention and award of contracts/procurements and financial transactions for MBEs. The MBDA Center provides services including, but not limited to, the development of a pool of contract and finance opportunities; direct matching of opportunities with qualified/vetted MBEs; execution of relationship management and deal sourcing initiatives (e.g., industry clusters); assisting MBEs in accessing global market opportunities and financing; identification and securing of alternative sources of capital for MBEs; advocating for MBEs; promoting of the advantages of achieving size and scale to MBEs; educating MBEs on the benefits of strategic growth alternatives (e.g., mergers, acquisitions and/or joint ventures); and provision of service referrals to MBEs of all sizes.

Through the cooperative agreements expected to be awarded under this FFO, MBDA seeks to establish a national network of public-private partnerships that will provide services aimed at increasing the probability of significant growth for minority-owned firms. The Center, MBDA staff and the MBDA nationwide network of programs and projects will work collaboratively to improve access to market and financial opportunities (domestic and global), foster key industry relationships, and leverage business expertise. The Center operator will work with MBDA and its network of funded centers to support and enhance MBDA's initiatives, performance, brand, reach, customer service, and strategic partners.

Successful applicants will possess experience in assisting minority firms in obtaining large scale contracts/procurements and financing awards; accessing established supply chains; educating and assisting minority firms in joint ventures, teaming arrangements, mergers and acquisitions; and facilitating entry and large scale transactions in global markets, and advocating for MBEs. The mission of successful applicant organizations should align with both the MBDA mission and the MBDA Business Center program objectives.

The Center services are targeted towards assisting MBE clients to achieve high levels of growth and competitiveness. Start-up and/or micro firms will be served by the MBDA Business Center via strategic partnership referrals or electronic service delivery mechanisms (e.g., MBDA Business Portal at www.mbda.gov). While the Center serves all MBEs, target clients include eligible MBEs with one or more of the following characteristics: (1) annual revenues of over $1,000,000 (2) participation in a high-growth industry (e.g., green technology, clean energy, health care, infrastructure and broadband technology); or (3) rapid growth potential (*see* Appendix D: Definitions of Key Terms).

Each MBDA Business Center is part of a broader MBDA network and must be able to collaborate with MBDA staff and the MBDA nationwide network of programs and projects. MBDA expects the MBDA Business Center to provide services to firms beyond a reasonable distance through virtual communications. The physical locations for each MBDA Business Center are outlined in Appendix A.

Although the each Center must have a physical office location as designated by MBDA within this announcement, a Center may serve MBEs nationwide.

General Program Requirements

The MBDA Business Center program requires Center staff to: (1) directly provide high-level business development and expert consulting services to eligible MBEs by facilitating access to capital, contracts and market opportunities; (2) develop, cultivate and maintain a network of high quality strategic partnerships; with organizations that foster access to economic, markets, or contracts for MBEs; (3) collaborate with other MBDA Business Centers nationwide and strategic partners; and, (4) provide referral services to clients. The Centers will assist eligible MBEs in accessing federal and non-federal contracting opportunities in the public and private sector; traditional and alternative financing opportunities; as well as emerging domestic and international (export) market opportunities. These services will result in qualitative and quantitative outcomes yielding growth and expansion of MBE firms, building scale and capacity, and contributing to job creation/retention in the U.S.

MBDA has developed a variety of information technology tools to augment the Agency's ability to assist the minority business community. The Agency uses a high-speed network strategy that links all of the MBDA Business Centers and projects into a single virtual organization. All funded Centers and projects will have access to this technology through the MBDA Business Portal (www.mbda.gov). Center operators and Center staff are required to attend MBDA trainings, as outlined (*see* Appendix F: Training Requirements and Definitions). The trainings are designed to increase operational efficiency and provide value-added client services.

Program Details and Work Requirements

The Center is required to provide services in three basic areas—client services; program promotion and advocacy; and operational and performance management. These elements are designed to:

- Conduct a comprehensive assessment of immediate, interim and long-term client needs and expectations;
- Establish projected growth tracks;
- Implement targeted plans of action for increasing size, scale and capacity;
- Provide strategic referrals;
- Increase the exposure and visibility of the MBDA Business Center program and MBEs;
- Maintain optimal service delivery and the standard of operational quality of center operations; and,
- Promote achievement of client outcomes by sharing and submitting success stories.

Client Services

MBDA plans to initiate a three-tiered service model. The service model transitions contacts to customers and subsequently customers to MBE clients. The Center will assist in promoting and referring minority customers to other readily available resources, information and readily accessible online tools to further support their growth and development. The Center will record the contact and referral information of the Customer into MBDA's Customer Relationship Management (CRM) Performance system.

"Customers" are defined as those minority entrepreneurs and/or minority persons interested in entrepreneurship who do not meet the service criteria as defined in the FFO (see Section I-B.

Introduction) or do not have a written service engagement.

The Center shall assist eligible MBEs (which have a current client engagement agreement, in growing their businesses and competing in domestic and global markets. The Center shall provide direct client assistance to MBEs in the form of business consulting, Business-to-Business (B2B) Linkage Forums, relationship brokering, strategic referrals, and deal-making.

All new and existing client services must be entered into MBDA's CRM Performance system within three business days (72 hours) of the client engagement agreement, the time of service, and of each completed transaction. The Center is required to enter client profile information, detailed consulting services provided and description, awarded transactions and job creation/ retention into the CRM Performance System. A client feedback loop will be created to help MBDA ensure optimal service delivery. This feedback loop will include a Customer Satisfaction Survey and other elements as outlined in the Manual.

The client feedback loop is process for evaluating the MBDA Business Center program; MBDA may conduct surveys and/or evaluations during or after the program using outside parties hired by MBDA or by MBDA staff. MBDA Business Center Award recipients are required to respond to the evaluation questions and furnish information. Evaluators will treat information provided in response to the survey as business confidential and in accordance with federal privacy and disclosure laws. As a part of acceptance of funding, MBDA business center award recipients agree to provide client information via MBDA's CRM Performance system to facilitate evaluations upon request. Surveys conducted by MBDA will comply with the requirements of the Paperwork Reduction Act. *See,* 44 U.S.C. §§ 3501–3520.

MBDA may also share client information, client service information and performance results with other Federal agencies in order to conduct research, performance and impact studies consistent with the MBDA mission and programs. As such, all clients of the Center must agree to the use of their information for statistical and program evaluation purposes during the client intake process. Additional information about client intake procedures will be provided in the MBDA Business Center Operations Manual.

Client services include, but are not limited to, the following types of assistance:

1. Client Assessment and Engagement - This is defined as a fundamental Center business practice. This activity should be conducted prior to the onset of service delivery. A client assessment requires an interview to be completed between the prospective MBE client and a MBDA Business Center employee or representative to obtain specific information about the status of the client's business and potential technical assistance or development needs. Once the assessment has been conducted, the MBDA Business Center will execute a client engagement form (i.e., a written service agreement) between the client and business center director) with each client that specifies services to be provided. This engagement form must outline services individually tailored to the specific needs of each client and include a course of action for assisting the client in reaching its strategic goals. A completed form should contain the following elements:

2. Intake - Background and contact information on the client, such as:
   - Client capability

- Determination of client service needs
- Development of a tailored Service Plan; and,
- Identification of strategic resources and referrals, used in conjunction with MBDA Business Center direct assistance.

The Center must ensure that MBE intake information is accurately recorded in the MBDA CRM Performance System.

3. Access to Markets – The Center is expected to engage in activities designed to expand MBEs access to new and emerging domestic and international markets to increase MBE revenue growth. These activities may include, but are not limited to:

   - Identifying procurement opportunities based on client needs, and sourcing deals;
   - Developing and maintaining strategic alliances with purchasing executives and government procurement officials;
   - Engaging in deal-making between purchasing organizations and minority firms, and assisting in bringing transactions to closure;
   - Conducting B2B forums, procurement/contract matchmaking events, opportunity fairs and networking events between MBEs and potential contract sources;
   - Educating and assisting in the development of joint ventures, teaming arrangements, strategic alliances, and mergers and acquisitions;
   - Solicitation analysis and bid/proposal preparation assistance;
   - Identifying potential export markets, facilitating global transactions and providing referrals to international trade programs and services; and,
   - Conducting market analysis and market promotion assistance.

4. Access to Capital - The goal of the access to capital activities is to help MBEs obtain appropriate financing for business growth. Activities in this area include, but are not limited to:

   - Identifying financing opportunities based on client needs, and sourcing deals;
   - Developing and maintaining strategic alliances with banking officials and alternative financial resources;
   - Facilitating financial transactions by establishing and facilitating relationships between pre-qualified clients and sources of financing;
   - Financial assistance, for example, identification, preparation and packaging of standard commercial and alternative debt, bonding, leases (property and equipment), equity, mezzanine financing, accounts receivable, venture capital, angel investors, factoring and trade credits;
   - Identification and closure of opportunities for mergers and acquisitions;
   - Conducting financing forums and networking events between MBEs and potential financing sources; and,
   - Conducting cost analysis.

5. Strategic Business Development - This activity involves providing tailored business development services directed towards assisting Center clients to achieve higher levels of

growth, competitiveness and capacity building. Strategic Business Development services include, but are not limited to the following:

- Financial Analysis Services includes capital budgeting, break-even analysis, cost accounting analysis, financial planning analysis and budgeting, and financial transaction packaging.

- Marketing, Advertisement, Social Media and Sales Management includes strategic services designed to assist the client through increased sales.

- Operations & Quality Management, includes services designed to increase client capability such as (but not limited to):
    - Manufacturing - facility lease;
    - Construction – estimating bid preparation, and bonding;
    - Risk Management; and,
    - International Trade Assistance - exporting, importing, letters of credit, bank draft, distributorship, exporting trading companies (i.e. international freight forwarders), and joint ventures.

6. Capture Management is the process of identifying contract opportunities, matching the opportunity to a MBE client, and tracking the probability of a favorable outcome that results in a transaction awarded to the MBE client. The Center will actively participate in the capture management process. The Center will update the MBDA online tool (commonly referred to as the "Pipeline") on a regular basis. This tool will assist the entire MBDA Network to evaluate specific opportunities with clients.

7. General Consulting Management includes, but not limited to organization and structure, formulating corporate policy, feasibility studies, business planning, and organizational development.

   The Center shall not perform or engage in the day-to-day operations of, or make decisions for, its clients. The primary goal of the Center is to facilitate access to contracts, capital and market opportunities that lead to the growth and expansion of MBEs. The level of strategic referral, consulting services and/or facilitating provided to MBEs will vary based on the stage of the MBE in its business life cycle.

Program Promotion and Advocacy

Program promotion and advocacy consist of promoting MBDA program activities and brand within the business community, facilitating the identification of high quality clients, and identifying and developing public and private sector resources and business opportunities for clients.

1. Market Research and Development - Systematically investigate markets (locally, statewide, nationwide, and globally) to determine what business and capital opportunities exist for MBE development, contract opportunities, and business acquisitions. The Center will make optimum use of and collaborate with MBDA network to ensure that the information is

made available to MBEs throughout the country. The Center will leverage resources available at the MBDA Office of Business Development.

2. Program Promotion - The Center will increase minority business development by obtaining support for the program and promoting the utilization of MBEs. The Center will submit client success stories for publishing on www.MBDA.gov.

   MBDA will develop a promotional brochure for distribution and develop a directory of staff and services offered for inclusion on the MBDA Portal. The Center shall provide the necessary information to support marketing and promotion and adhere to the Manual.

3. The Center shall produce client success stories in coordination with MBDA's Office of Public Affairs. These success stories will be submitted to MBDA by Center via email. Additional information will be provided in the Manual.

4. The Center staff shall promote and participate in the National Minority Enterprise Development (MED) Week activities and other events (*see* Appendix F: Training Requirements and Definitions).

5. Develop and Maintain a Network of Strategic Partners - Strategic partnerships are established to assist the Center with: (1) generating successful contract and financial transactions; (2) creating new jobs and/or retain existing jobs; (3) helping MBEs to achieve size, scale and capacity; (4) assisting MBEs to expand in global markets. Strategic partnership must be documented in writing through Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) or similar agreement that records the terms and conditions of the partnership. The agreements must be shared with MBDA for coordination and tracking purposes.

   A minimum of ten (10) strategic partnerships must be maintained by the Center. However, **a minimum of (5) letters of commitment are required with the submission of this application.** MBDA must be notified within 15 business days, in writing if the Center is replacing, removing, and/or adding a new partner. Terminated partnerships must be replaced within forty-five (45) days after termination. Before the Center can claim a strategic partnership, it must be reviewed by the Federal Program Officer to determine whether the proposed relationship is likely to assist the Center in serving its client base and is consistent with the overall goals and objectives of the MBDA Business Center program. MBDA has no responsibility or obligations to the Center's strategic partners unless otherwise negotiated between parties.

   Examples of Center strategic partners include, but are not limited to:
   a) Large purchasing organizations – public and private sector;
   b) Banks and alternative financial institutions;
   c) State, county or city governments;
   d) Chambers of commerce or trade associations;
   e) U.S. Export Assistance Centers and Procurement Technical Assistance Centers;
   f) Small Business Development Centers;
   g) Community development corporations;
   h) Technology-based economic development organizations;
   i) Other organizations interested in furthering the growth and global competitiveness of

MBEs; and,

j) Minority serving institutions of higher education.

6. **The Center and/or the Center operator will engage in Advocacy efforts** to promote MBEs and/or the MBE community with Federal, state and local governments, as well as private sector entities for the purpose of expanding business opportunities, financings and teaming.

Operational and Performance Management

1. Operational management requires the Center to identify and electronically record on the MBDA CRM Performance System and/or Portal sources of the following:

   - Market Opportunities - public (federal, state and local government) and private (domestic and foreign) sector contracting opportunities;
   - Capital Resources - standard commercial and alternative debt (loans, lines of credit, etc.), equity, and mezzanine financing, bonds (performance and surety), and trade credit opportunities;
   - Business Ownership Opportunities - franchises, licensing arrangements, mergers and buy-outs;
   - Registration of MBEs - register eligible local MBEs in MBDA's CRM system.

2. Establishment of Office - The physical location of the Center office must be within an applicable city or MSA specified in this FFO. The Center operator must open a physical office and be fully operational within sixty (60) days after receipt of the award. "Fully operational" means that all staff is hired, all required signs are up, all items of furniture and equipment (e.g., computer hardware, software, Internet services, phones, faxes) are in place, and the Center's doors have been fully opened to the public for service. Within sixty (60) days after receipt of the award, the Center operator shall report via Grants Online to the Federal Program Officer that it has complied with this requirement. Failure to be fully operational within sixty (60) days may result in appropriate enforcement action under the award, up to and including termination. If the Center is co-located with the operator, it must have a "separate identity" that must include, but is not limited to, appropriate signage and working offices for Center staff that are visually independent (or are perceived as standing apart) from the operator's non-Center operations and personnel.

   The Center must be accessible to disabled persons and strategically situated in the applicable location to ensure that it is: (1) close to available business resources; (2) within a reasonable commuting distance to the minority business community; and (3) professional in appearance and conducive to supporting the Center's brand.

   The Center must provide services to eligible clients. Services can be delivered in person or virtually. MBDA calls and emails to the program operator and/or the project director must be returned by the next business day. In addition, the Center operator and Center director shall provide MBDA and other authorized federal government officials with accessibility to the center upon request. Within sixty (60) days after receipt of the award, the Center operator shall report via Grants Online to the Federal Program Officer, and to the MBDA

Chief Information Officer (CIO) of the Office of Information Technology, Research and Innovation that it has complied with all information technology requirements (*see* Appendix E: Information Technology and Computer Requirements). Within sixty (60) days after receipt of the award, the Center operator shall also report the name, contact telephone number, and email address of the Center director, MBDA Business Center staff member(s), and the network or system administrator.

3. Personnel - Each Center operator is required to have a Center director employed and exclusively dedicated on a full-time basis to the Center, and is removed from any competing interests. The Center director is vital to the MBDA Business Center program and is viewed as the Center operator's key representative to ensure the Center achieves its performance goals. The Center director must possess suitable management and business qualifications, including a minimum of a bachelor's degree or equivalent experience in a business-related field. Failure to hire a Center director within sixty (60) days may result in enforcement action under the award, including the withholding of award payments.

   The selection of a Center director requires consultation with the MBDA Federal Program Officer (FPO) during a review of candidate qualifications. The Center operator shall submit to the FPO at the onset of competition and/or after an award is issued, the Center director's resume and a minimum of three professional references. . Successful candidates will be recommended to the Grants Officer via the FPO for final approval.

   The Center operator shall employ personnel with the knowledge and skills to develop and manage strategic relationships that enhance the Center's ability to source contracts, counsel minority firms on securing large contract and financial transactions, assist clients in negotiations with purchasing organizations and financing institutions, coordinate and collaborate on client service efforts, actively promote the brand of the center and advise MBEs on accessing global markets as outlined in Section VI., "Award Administration Information." All consulting personnel should have a minimum of a bachelor's degree or equivalent experience.

   The Center personnel working with clients must possess the ability to: (1) promote and demonstrate the value of services offered to the client; (2) generate program income for the center; (3) track service delivery on a consistent and regular basis; (4) collect quantitative and qualitative performance data; and (5) ensure optimal service delivery, client satisfaction, and operational quality standards are met.

   The Center operator shall, to the best of its ability and available resources, provide competitive financial incentives and/or salaries to the Center staff. The Center operator shall adhere to commonly accepted/best practices in human capital management. The Center may not engage in employee nepotism.

   All personnel charged to the Center must directly contribute to the operation of the Center. There should be no "co-mingling" of staff time that is being charged to the MBDA grant. Co-mingling is prohibited and is subject to enforcement action under the award, including the withholding of award payments and possible termination of the Center award. Staff vacancies shall be filled promptly. Vacancies beyond forty-five (45) days may result in appropriate enforcement action under the award, up to and including termination.

4. Service Optimization - The Center operator must maintain the efficiency and effectiveness of its overall operations as well as the quality to maximize client service impact with the MBDA Business Center Program. Under this function, the Center shall:

a) Execute signed work plan agreements and engagements with clients;
b) Input data, progress, best practices and results into the MBDA CRM Performance system within three (3) business days of the time of service and/or receipt of documentation (note: failure to adhere to may result in MBDA enforcement action);
c) Establish procedures for collecting and accounting for all fees charged to clients; accounting records for fees collected should be maintained on a consistent basis; no co-mingling of fees and funds;
d) Maintain records/files for all work charged to the program and clients; systems should be efficient and meet industry standards;
e) Ensure all files are properly recorded and supported by documentation including, MBDA Notice of Data Use; client MBE self-certification, MBDA data privacy notice, needs assessment, work assignments, finished work products, and awarded transactions;
f) Obtain required verification documentation for any of the performance measures claimed (See Appendix C) "Performance Measures and Related Definitions";
g) Comply with all reporting requirements that are established as the terms of the award;
h) Cooperate with MBDA in maintaining content for the CRM Performance system, and other available online tools located at www.mbda.gov;
i) Execute a Trademark and Licensing Agreement prior to using the MBDA Business center logo
j) Formal instructions and guidelines will be provided to the Center operator at the Post-Award Conference.

The term MBDA Business Center staff is a trademark of the Federal Government and the Federal Government reserves exclusive rights in the term. Permission to use the term is granted to the project operator for the sole purpose of representing the activities of the operator in the fulfillment of the terms of the financial assistance award.

The Center is not authorized to use either the Department of Commerce's (DOC) official seal or the MBDA logo in any of its electronic and/or printed publications, documents or other materials without prior written approval from the Department of Commerce. Neither the Center operator, Center director nor Center staff are permitted to represent themselves as employees of the Federal Government. See Appendix L for more detailed information on the trademark and licensing requirements.

The Center operator must ensure the Center maintains full operational capacity and services throughout the program year.

Program Performance Measures and Performance Ratings

1. Performance Measures - The program performance of each Center is evaluated by MBDA based on specific performance elements, which are assigned weighted values. The Center operator will be awarded points with respect to each performance element through defined work activities that lead to successful client outcomes. Specifically, performance points will be awarded by MBDA in proportion to the Center operator's satisfaction of the performance goals set forth in the application and incorporated into the terms and conditions of the award.

2. Performance Ratings - The Center operator is expected to achieve an overall "Commendable" (or better) performance rating for each funding period, and will be assigned a performance rating by MBDA for each of the funding periods based on the rating system below:

   MBDA Business Center Performance Scale

Performance Ratings	Overall Points Required
Outstanding	100.0* & above
Commendable	90.0 – 99.9
Good	80.0 – 89.9
Satisfactory	75.0 – 79.9
Unsatisfactory	74.9 & below

   *Not to exceed 160 Points

   Failure to maintain at least a "Satisfactory" performance rating may result in designation of the Center award recipient as high risk and/or placed on a Performance Improvement Plan (PIP), assignment of special award conditions, and other further action under the award, up to and including award termination.

3. Performance Goals

   Minimum performance requirements for the Center location and funding period (*see* Appendix B: Performance Goals by Center Location). Applicants must propose performance goals by category for the each of the five funding periods.

   Proposing higher than estimated goals without a corresponding methodology for accomplishment or without a corresponding justification may demonstrate a lack of knowledge of the market place and may adversely impact MBDA's evaluation of the application. Accordingly, applicants should carefully consider the feasibility of the performance goals proposed in the application. In addition, MBDA may negotiate proposed performance goals with the high ranking applicant winner of an award competition prior to offering an award.

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APPENDIX L
Business Center Trademark and Licensing Requirements

The "MBDA Business Center" logo and the phrase "MBDA Business Center" are trademarks of the Minority Business Development Agency (MBDA), U.S. Department of Commerce. MBDA reserves exclusive rights in the use of the "MBDA Business Center" logo, the phrase "MBDA Business Center," and all associated marks and representations (**hereafter "MBDA trademarks"**). The Cooperative Agreement from MBDA includes the terms of this Appendix covering the trademark and licensing requirements for use of the MBDA trademarks. By signing the Cooperative Agreement, the operator of the MBDA Business Center agrees to the terms and conditions related to the use of the MBDA trademarks as stated in this Appendix.

This appendix covers only the MBDA trademarks and does not authorize an MBDA Business Center to use the Department of Commerce seal or the MBDA Headquarters logo on any electronic or printed communications for any purpose.

Grant of License: Pursuant to the acceptance of the terms of the Cooperative Agreement, MBDA (hereafter "Licensor") grants to the operators of each MBDA Business Center (hereafter "Licensee/Center") a non-exclusive, royalty-free right to use the MBDA trademarks for the following purposes:

1. Business materials and products – business cards, letterhead, folders, programs, bulletins, and newsletters.

2. Event and workshop signage – flyers, publications, and signs announcing events sponsored or organized by or on behalf of the Licensee/Center. Licensee/Center must be an active participant in the event.

3. Electronic communications – email signature blocks, webpages, announcements, and signs regarding events sponsored or organized by or on behalf of the Licensee/Center.

4. Center signs and markers – signs and print information to indicate or describe the location of the Licensee/Center or an event sponsored or organized by the Licensee/Center.

The MBDA trademarks may be used to advertise the Licensee/Center's participation on a per event basis in collaboration with a third party.

Assignment and Sub-licenses: This license is not assignable. Notwithstanding this provision, the Licensee/Center may hire subcontractors to perform manufacturing and distribution activities, only in connection with items (1) – (4) above, under this License. Any attempt by the Licensee/Center to assign any portion of this License or to grant an improper sub-license to a third party shall be deemed a breach of this License and may constitute cause for termination of the Cooperative Agreement.

Quality Control: Licensor has the right to inspect the Licensee/Center's goods, services, and promotional activities employing the MBDA trademarks to ensure that such uses are of proper quality and otherwise consistent with the terms of the Cooperative Agreement and this License.

Licensor may terminate this License should Licensor determine that the MBDA trademarks have been used in a manner that is inconsistent with the terms of the Cooperative Agreement or this License.

Duration and Termination: This License is effective upon the execution of the Cooperative Agreement and shall terminate on the close out date of the Cooperative Agreement. Upon termination of this License to use the MBDA trademarks, all rights of the Licensee/Center to use the MBDA trademarks shall immediately terminate. In the event of a breach of any of the terms and conditions of this License by the Licensee/Center, the Licensor shall give Licensee written notice of such breach. In the event Licensee/Center does not cure such breach within thirty (30) days, Licensor may immediately terminate this License and shall notify the Licensee/Center in writing of such termination.

Validity and Ownership of Mark: Licensee/Center is prohibited from interfering with Licensor's rights in the MBDA trademarks, including challenging Licensor's use, registration of, or application to register the licensed MBDA trademarks, alone or in combination with other words or designs, anywhere in the world. The Licensee/Center is further prohibited from attempting to register the licensed MBDA trademarks, or any confusingly similar mark, whether or not registered by MBDA, alone or in combination with other words or designs, as a U.S. or foreign trademark, and from asserting any intellectual property rights in the MBDA trademarks through Licensee/Center's use. Any rights asserted by the Licensee/Center in the MBDA trademarks shall vest in the U.S. Department of Commerce, and any goodwill from use of MBDA trademarks by Licensee/Center shall inure to the benefit of the U.S. Department of Commerce.

Use of Mark: In addition to the above provisions of this License, the Licensee/Center shall abide by the following guidelines:

1. The Licensor considers the licensed MBDA trademarks to be its trademarks and service marks and holds them out to the public as such.
2. The Licensee/Center in using the licensed MBDA trademarks that are or hereafter become federally registered shall clearly indicate that the marks are federally registered with the U.S. Patent & Trademark Office and that they are the property of the U.S Department of Commerce. Such indication of registration shall be in the form of the "®" ("R in a circle") designation. The Licensee/Center in using the licensed MBDA trademarks that are not federally registered shall clearly indicate that the marks are the property of the U.S. Department of Commerce. Such indication shall be in the form of the "™" or "℠" designation.

Indemnification: By signing the Cooperative agreement, the Licensee/Center agrees to indemnify and hold harmless the Licensor, any of its employees, agents, and contractors, against any and all claims, damages (including attorneys' fees) asserted by or paid to any party on account of a breach or alleged breach of the above warranties regarding the use of the MBDA trademarks.