U.S. Small Business Administration (SBA)

Office of Women's Business Ownership (OWBO)

WOMEN'S BUSINESS CENTER (WBC) APPLICATION READINESS AND PROCUREMENT ASSISTANCE GRANT

Funding Opportunity Announcement (FOA) No. SB-OEDWB-24-003

Base Budget Period: September 30, 2024 – September 29, 2025

Opening Date: June 6, 2024 - Closing Date: August 7, 2024

The purpose of this Funding Opportunity Announcement (FOA) is to provide grant funding for organizations to establish Women's Business Centers (WBCs) to assist women entrepreneurs with application readiness for certification in the Women-Owned Small Business (WOSB) and Economically Disadvantaged Women-Owned Small Business (EDWOSB) Programs, procurement assistance, and entrepreneurial development. Eligible Applicants must be private, non-profit organizations with 501(c) tax exempt status from the U.S. Treasury's Internal Revenue Service.

This FOA provides opportunities for three distinct WBC projects. WBC Project 1 will focus on training, coaching, and technical assistance related to eligibility and certification for the WOSB and EDWOSB Programs. WBC Project 2 will focus on providing targeted training for women entrepreneurs to ensure Federal contract procurement readiness. WBC Project 3 is an opportunity for Applicants to design individual projects related to the growth and entrepreneurial development of women in the Federal government marketplace. Applicants may submit proposals for one or more WBC projects.

Successful Applicants must provide matching funds equal to one-half of the Federal funding received for the first two years of the initial award (a statutory match ratio of 2:1 Federal to non-Federal funding). For example, grantees must provide $75,000 in matching funds if awarded a grant of $150,000. For the remaining years of the grant, Grantees must provide matching funds of one dollar for every dollar of its annual Federal award amount (a statutory match ratio of 1:1 Federal to non-Federal funding). (See Section 2.6 for more information.)

Proposals responding to this FOA must be posted to www.Grants.gov by no later than 11:59:59 p.m. Eastern Daylight Time (EDT), on August 7, 2024. No other methods of submission are permitted. Proposals submitted after the stipulated deadline will be rejected without evaluation.

SBA will host a pre-application information session on Monday, June 24, 2024, at 3:00 p.m. EDT. All interested Applicants are encouraged to attend. The link to information session is below:

https://www.zoomgov.com/j/1617633464?pwd=dnkrZmYwcmt5cU5uU3RXcitpL0tSZz09

passcode: 769136

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Section I – Funding Opportunity Description

1.1 Program Overview

1.1.1 Federal Agency Name:	U.S. Small Business Administration (SBA)
1.1.2 Funding Opportunity Title:	Women's Business Center (WBC) Application Readiness and Procurement Assistance Grant
1.1.3 Announcement Type:	Initial
1.1.4 Funding Opportunity Number:	SB-OEDWB-24-003
1.1.5 CDFA Number:	59.043
1.1.6 Closing Date for Submissions:	August 7, 2024, 11:59PM (EDT)
1.1.7 Authority:	Small Business Act §§2(h), 29 (15 U.S.C. §§631(h)), and 656(m), as amended; 13 CFR Part 131
1.1.8 Duration of Authority:	Permanent
1.1.9 Funding Instrument:	Cooperative Agreement
1.1.10 Funding Year:	Funding is from Fiscal Year (FY) 2024
1.1.11 Award Amount/Funding Range:	SBA expects to make multiple awards with a maximum amount of up to $150,000 for each successful proposal. Organizations may receive multiple awards of $150,000 should they have multiple successful proposals or if they utilize the "Hub" and "Spoke" Model. Only qualified recipients will be funded. There is a matching fund requirement. Award amounts may be prorated based on the number of months remaining in the project period.
1.1.12 Project Duration:	The length of the project is a total of 60 months. Awards will be made for a base project period of 12 months, plus four continuation periods of 12 months each, if applicable. The continuation of the award will be solely in the discretion of SBA and is subject to continuing program authority, the availability of funds, and satisfactory performance by the Grantee. Grantees are required to match awarded funds on a 1:2 ratio for the base project period and first option year of the grant and on a 1:1 ratio for the subsequent three (3) years.
1.1.13 Project Starting Date:	September 30, 2024

1.1.14 Proposal Evaluation:	Proposals will be reviewed for sufficiency as detailed in Section V. SBA may ask Applicants for clarification of the technical and cost aspects of their proposals. This is not to be construed as a commitment to fund the proposed project.
1.1.15 Agency Point of Contact:	Office of Women's Business Ownership (OWBO) Email: owbo@sba.gov

1.2 Objective and Projects

The objective of this FOA is to benefit women entrepreneurs through three distinct projects.

WBC Project 1 – Certification Training and Application Preparation Assistance

WBC Project 1 will provide expert level training, coaching, and technical assistance to women entrepreneurs related to eligibility and certification for the WOSB and EDWOSB programs. Specifically, WBC Project 1 is focused on:

- Providing assistance to women entrepreneurs to determine eligibility for the WOSB or EDWOSB program;
- Assisting women entrepreneurs in gathering and preparing all documents necessary to apply for the WOSB or EDWOSB program;
- Reviewing all documents necessary for women entrepreneurs to apply for the WOSB or EDWOSB program to ensure completeness and quality of these documents; and
- Assisting women entrepreneurs with creating profiles in SAM.gov.

WBC Project 2 – Government Contracting Training

WBC Project 2 will provide expert level training, coaching, and technical assistance to help women business owners be prepared to win Federal government contracts. Specifically, WBC Project 2 is focused on:

- Providing targeted training for women entrepreneurs to ensure procurement readiness;
- Providing counseling to understand the different roles of Office of Small and Disadvantaged Business Utilization and Office of Small Business Program leaders, program managers, and contracting officers;
- Training on Federal Acquisition Regulation contract types;
- Providing technical assistance with capability documents and training on presenting capabilities to Federal agencies;
- Training and counseling women entrepreneurs in locating agency forecasts and Federal contract opportunities; and
- Providing training and counseling to women entrepreneurs in how to access the capital necessary to perform Federal contracts.

WBC Project 3 – Distinct Project(s) Designed by the Applicant

WBC Project 3 allows Applicants to use innovation and creativity to propose additional WBC projects that benefit WOSBs and EDWOSBs seeking to grow in the Federal government marketplace. WBC Project 3 proposals must clearly outline the focus of the WBC and should address the needs and gaps for WOSBs and EDWOSBs not addressed by WBC Project 1 or WBC Project 2.

Examples for WBC Projects include: a focus on providing training, coaching and technical assistance to women entrepreneurs in a specific underserved community where WOSBs are underrepresented; or a focus on providing industry specific training to increase women entrepreneurs in North American Industry Classification System (NAICS) codes that are prevalent for Federal government contracting where women

entrepreneurs are underrepresented. Applicants must ensure that WBC Project 3 proposals contain all WBC requirements outlined in 13 CFR §§131.310 and 330.

Applicants may submit one proposal for each of WBC Projects 1 and 2. Applicants may submit proposals for multiple WBC Project 3 projects, provided that each proposal is distinct and serves distinct populations that would not otherwise be served, in accordance with 13 CFR §131.410.

1.3 Introduction

The WBC Program was established by the Women's Business Ownership Act of 1988 (Public Law No. 100-533) as the Women's Business Demonstration Pilot, providing grants to private non-profit organizations to aid and encourage the development and growth of small women-owned businesses through long-term training and counseling. The program was expanded and made permanent in 2007, when the WBC Sustainability Grant Program, established in 1999, was replaced with the WBC Renewal Grant Program.

WBCs are a part a national network of entrepreneurship centers throughout the United States and its territories, which are designed to assist women in starting and growing small businesses. WBCs seek to "level the playing field" for women entrepreneurs, who still face unique obstacles in the business world.

1.4 Background

Since its inception in 1953, the SBA has served to aid, counsel, assist, and protect the interests of small businesses. While the SBA is best known for its financial support of small businesses through its many lending programs, the agency also plays a critical role in providing funding to organizations that deliver technical assistance in the form of counseling and training to small business concerns and nascent entrepreneurs to promote growth, expansion, innovation, increased productivity, and management improvement.

The mission of the WBC Program is to act as the catalyst for providing in-depth, substantive, outcome-oriented business services to women entrepreneurs, both nascent and established businesses, a representative number of which are socially and economically disadvantaged. This mission is accomplished through the award of financial assistance to private, 501(c) certified non-profit organizations to enable them to affect substantial economic impact in their communities, as measured by successful business start-ups, job creation and retention, and increased company revenues.

Specifically, by statute WBCs must:

- Provide prospective entrepreneurs and existing small businesses with training, counseling, and specialized services. The services provided must relate to the formation, financing, management, and operation of small business enterprises.
- Provide training and counseling services that enhance a small business concern's ability to access capital, such as business plan development, financial statement preparation/analysis, and cash flow preparation/analysis.

The WOSB program helps women-owned small businesses compete for Federal contracts. Joining the WOSB program makes a business eligible to compete for Federal contracts reserved for the program's

certified participants. WBCs are uniquely positioned to assist women entrepreneurs with obtaining WOSB or EDWOSB certification and providing technical assistance to women entrepreneurs, thus enhancing women entrepreneurs' ability to succeed in the Federal marketplace, create jobs, and increase company revenues.

1.5 Purpose

The purpose of this FOA is to provide funding for non-profit organizations that will provide entrepreneurial development services to women, with an emphasis on socially and economically disadvantaged entrepreneurs.

All awards will be made as an Initial Phase Project, regardless of whether an Applicant currently has or formerly had a WBC award. An organization that is currently operating as an SBA funded WBC must utilize grant funds under this opportunity to provide services that are distinct from or in addition to services provided pursuant to its current WBC grant.

SBA will consider the geographical area that the Applicant proposes to serve in making award decisions. Applicants may propose projects that are virtual in nature and contain virtual services in order to reach women entrepreneurs in as many geographic, socio-economic, and demographic communities as possible.

Eligible Applicants may apply as a sole organization or as a joint or cooperative venture utilizing the "Hub" and "Spoke" Model.

1.6 Leveraging of Resources

The Applicants selected for an award under this FOA are required to maximize efforts to leverage SBA funding by collaborating, as needed, with SBA's District Offices and other Federal, state, local, and tribal government small business development programs and activities; SBA resource partners (such as Small Business Development Centers, SCORE, Women Business Centers, APEX Accelerators, and Veterans Business Outreach Centers); Empower to Grow technical assistance providers; Small Business Mentor-Protégé Program; 8(a) Business Development Program; Women-Owned Small Business Program; Veteran Small Business Certification Program; HUBZone Program; Small Business Investment Companies; SBA lenders; and organizations such as chambers of commerce and trade and industry groups and associations.

1.7 SBA Involvement and Oversight

The WBC Program is managed by the Assistant Administrator (AA) of the Office of Women's Business Ownership (OWBO).

A designated Program Manager (PM) located within OWBO at SBA Headquarters will be responsible for monitoring and oversight of the non-Federal entity's WBC project, including compliance with the terms and conditions of the Notice of Award (NOA). OWBO will conduct periodic assessments of the project to verify progress. The level of monitoring will be dependent on the awarded Applicant's proposed measures, milestones (e.g., outputs and outcomes), and goals. A designated Grants Management Officer (GMO) within OWBO will be responsible for issuing the NOA, making modifications to the award, and processing payments. An SBA employee assigned to a District Office located within the non-Federal entity's service area will be tasked with serving as the District Office Technical Representative (DOTR) and will act as the local representative for SBA. An SBA employee within the Office of Government Contracting and

Business Development (GCBD) will serve as the program and technical representative. SBA will conduct performance assessments every 12 months from the start date of the project.

In its capacity overseeing and funding the grants, SBA has the authority to approve, monitor, and change methodologies for implementing technical assistance. SBA will collaborate with grantees on how to execute the service delivery of WOSB and EDWOSB application assistance, and training and technical assistance to women entrepreneurs in order to avoid duplication of existing services, as well as to leverage fully the other existent resources and educational tools available through the WOSB program, through SBA's Office of Entrepreneurial Development, and through SBA's resource partner networks.

1.8 Changes or Cancellation

SBA reserves the right to amend or cancel this FOA, in whole or in part, at the agency's discretion. Should the SBA make material changes to this FOA, the agency will adjust the closing date as necessary to afford Applicants sufficient opportunity to address such changes.

1.9 SBA Priorities

The Federal Government is the largest procurer of goods and services in the world, spending more than half a trillion dollars each year. Although these dollars present an opportunity for small businesses, SBA seeks to reverse a downward trajectory of fewer small businesses receiving prime contracts. In addition to the small business set-aside goal, the Federal Government has statutory goals of awarding no less than five percent of contract dollars to both small, disadvantaged businesses and women-owned small businesses. SBA seeks to increase the number of underserved small businesses that have contracting certifications, enabling them to compete in the Federal contracting market.

OWBO leads Federal government efforts to promote entrepreneurship among women, especially those in underserved and economically disadvantaged communities. GCBD provides oversight and leadership for the federal government's small business contracting program.

SBA is committed to ensuring that women entrepreneurs from underserved communities have access to the resources needed to start, grow, manage, and sustain resilient businesses. In response to the challenges that these entrepreneurs face, SBA is prioritizing projects targeting women entrepreneurs from underserved communities.

Section II – Award Information

2.1 Estimated Funding

SBA expects to make multiple awards of $150,000 each. A single organization may have more than one application funded by SBA through this FOA. SBA expects to make awards to both individual organizations and "Hub" and "Spoke" Models.

2.2 Expected Number of Awards
SBA expects to make multiple initial awards, and in its discretion, may select qualified Applicants not initially funded under this FOA for future awards, using subsequent fiscal year resources, subject to continuing program authority and the availability of funds.

2.3 Period of Performance/Budget Periods
Awards will be made for up to a five (5)-year period of performance, consisting of a base period of twelve (12) months from the date of award and four (4) option periods of twelve (12) months each. The exercise of option periods will be solely at the SBA's discretion and is subject to continuing program authority, the availability of funds, and a non-Federal entity's continued satisfactory performance and compliance with all the terms and conditions of the award. Each base and option period will constitute a separate and distinct twelve (12)-month Budget and Performance Period.

2.4 Funding Information
Funds provided under the WBC Program must be used solely for the purposes stipulated in this FOA and the NOA. Funds provided under the WBC Program may not be commingled with funds from other sources. Non-Federal entities are required to maintain separate accounting over Federal funds to ensure funds are used for authorized purposes only. All costs proposed in an Applicant's budget must meet the tests of allowability, allocability, and reasonableness set forth in 2 CFR §200, Subpart E.

The SBA will not reimburse Applicants for their proposal preparation costs. In accordance with 2 CFR §200.458, Applicants may request pre-award costs, which require prior approval from SBA. If approved, these pre-award costs must be represented as a separate line item in the project budget. Authorization of pre-award costs does not change the performance period of the award.

No Federal funds provided through an award under this FOA, or matching contributions dedicated to such an award may be used for the purpose of making a sub-grant. While subcontracting is permitted, successful Applicants may not spend more than forty-nine percent (49%) of award funds on subcontracts.

Under no circumstances may successful Applicants contract out the administration or day-to-day management of this project to any other party. Projects designed as joint cooperative ventures, or which employ the "Hub" and "Spoke" Model are not prohibited under the subcontracting restrictions.

Any non-Federal entity that does not have a current negotiated (including provisional) indirect cost rate may charge a de minimis rate of 15% of modified total direct costs (MTDC) which may be used in accordance with 2 CFR §200.414(f). Applicants should be familiar with 2 CFR §200.68 in determining requests related to indirect costs.

2.5 Funding Instrument
The funding instrument used will be a Cooperative Agreement.

2.6 Non-Federal Matching Requirement
The Applicant is required to provide non-Federal matching funds. Non-Federal match may consist of cash, program income, and/or in-kind and must be used for approved budgeted items only.

2.6.1 Annual Match Requirement

The Applicant is required to match awarded funds on a 1:2 ratio ($1 of non-Federal funds for every $2 of Federal funds) for the base period and first option year and 1:1 in the three subsequent years. At least half of matching contributions must be in the form of cash.

2.6.2 Non-Federal Match Sources

- Cash
    - Matching contributions must come from non-Federal sources such as state and local public funds; and private individuals, corporations, and foundations.
    - When permissible under the terms of the Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) Program, CDBG funds may also be used as match. The matching contribution must be pledged for WBC activities.
- Program Income
    - Program income is considered a form of cash for the purpose of matching contributions. Funds an Applicant receives as payment for services provided under an agreement with an outside, non-Federal entity may be used as match regardless of whether the non-Federal entity received those funds from a Federal source.
- In-Kind
    - No more than one-half of the non-Federal match may be in the form of in-kind contributions, including but not limited to office equipment and office space.

Any recipient that has an approved negotiated indirect cost rate agreement described in 2 CFR §200.306(f) may count unrecovered indirect costs toward any required cost sharing or matching under the award.

2.6.3 Failure to Obtain Match

SBA may withhold payment at any time if the required level of non-Federal match has not been obtained. Likewise, the Grantee shall not be eligible thereafter for advance disbursements or payments during the remainder of the project, or for any other project for which it is or may be funded by SBA and may not be eligible for other SBA funding opportunities.
Payment will be withheld unless or until the Grantee has adequately certified that the required amount of non-Federal match equal to or greater than the Federal funds expended (of which at least half is in the form of cash) has been fully obtained and expended for project activities during each reporting period.

2.7 Non-Federal Matching Certification

The Grantee must certify that the non-Federal matching share has been obtained and expended on the WBC project and must maintain records of all cash, in-kind donations, and program income and how it was spent. The OWBO Program Manager and the OED financial examiner will review programmatic and financial records when conducting desk reviews, on-site visits, program reviews and/or financial exams.

Section III – Eligibility Information

3.1 General

Only one proposal per Applicant for WBC Project 1 and WBC Project 2 will be evaluated. Should an Applicant submit more than one proposal for each of these projects, the proposal submitted closest to, without exceeding, the application deadline will be evaluated. Any additional proposals for WBC Project 1 or WBC Project 2 from the same Applicant will automatically be rejected without being evaluated.

SBA will evaluate all distinct proposals from Applicants for WBC Project 3 received by Grants.gov before the closing date and time of this FOA. Should an Applicant submit more than one proposal for a distinct WBC Project 3 project, the proposal submitted closest to, without exceeding, the application deadline will be evaluated. Any additional proposals for a distinct WBC Project 3 from the same Applicant will automatically be rejected without being evaluated.

3.2 Eligible Applicants

In order to be eligible for this FOA, Applicants must be a private, non-profit organization certified under § 501(c) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 and have experience providing technical services to women, with a special emphasis on socially and economically disadvantaged entrepreneurs.

Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs), Hispanic Serving Institutions (HSIs), Tribal Colleges and Universities (TCUs), Native Hawaiian Serving Institutions (NHSIs), Alaska Native Serving Institutions (ANSIs) of higher learning with existing minority entrepreneurship or related programs, and 501c entrepreneurial development organizations that serve designated Historically Underutilized Business Zones (HUBZones) are encouraged to apply. To the extent that they satisfy all eligibility criteria the same as all other Applicant organizations, religious organizations are entitled to compete for Federal financial assistance (grants and/or cooperative agreements) used to support government programs. Generally, such organizations are not required to alter their religious character to participate in a government program, nor to cease engaging in explicitly religious activities outside the program, nor effectively to relinquish their Federal statutory protections for religious hiring decisions.

An organization that is operating or has operated as an SBA funded WBC within the past five (5) years, if selected, will be awarded as an Initial Phase Project. Likewise, an organization that previously operated an SBA-funded WBC (but that is no longer operating), if eligible to apply and selected, will also be awarded as an Initial Phase Project since this application will be treated as an effort to re-establish the WBC. An organization that is currently operating as an SBA funded WBC must demonstrate how services rendered under this grant are distinct from or in addition to services provided pursuant to its current WBC grant.

To demonstrate additional eligibility requirements, Applicants must indicate in the narrative proposal that they:

- Will provide technical assistance to small business concerns owned and controlled by women.
- Will provide services to women and other entrepreneurs who are both socially and economically disadvantaged.
- Continue to be organized and incorporated in the United States and remain in good standing in the state or territory of incorporation. A copy of the Certificate of Good Standing or applicable document must be attached to the Applicant's technical proposal.
- Are a private, not-for-profit or non-profit corporation with an active 501(c) Federal tax-exempt status certification from the United States Department of Treasury/Internal Revenue Service. A copy of the 501(c) designation letter must be attached to the Applicant's technical proposal.

- Have an established organizational infrastructure with an internal financial management system that currently meets the requirements of 2 CFR §200.302.
- Are responsible for hiring, supervising, and employing sufficient staff to ensure that the WBC is open to the public a minimum of forty (40) hours per week, including evening and weekend hours, and to fully provide the services required under this FOA, the Notice of Award (NOA), and the Applicant's proposal. Staff must include a full-time (forty (40) hours per week) program director, whose time is dedicated one hundred percent (100%) to managing the day-to-day operations of the WBC as well as overseeing its staff, volunteers, and all financial aspects.

3.3 Ineligible Applicants

The following Applicants will automatically be considered ineligible, and their applications will be rejected without being evaluated:

- Applicants with a Federal delinquent debt subject to offset;
- Applicants that are currently suspended, debarred, or otherwise prohibited from receiving awards of contracts or grants from the Federal government;
- Applicants with an outstanding and unresolved material deficiency reported under the requirements of the Single Audit Act within the past three years;
- Applicants that had a WBC grant or cooperative agreement involuntarily terminated or not renewed within the past year;
- Applicants that filed for bankruptcy within the past five (5) years;
- Applicants that propose to serve as a pass-through and permit another organization to manage the day-to-day operations of the project;
- Applicants that do not propose to hire and employ a full-time (forty (40) hours per week) program director whose time is dedicated one hundred percent (100%) to managing the day-to-day operations of the WBC and staff; and
- Applicants that had an officer or agent acting on its behalf convicted of a felony criminal violation under any Federal law within the preceding twenty-four (24) months.

SBA is not authorized to provide awards to individuals under this FOA and applications from individuals will not be considered under this request. Award funds cannot be used to make investments in individual businesses.

Section IV - Application and Submission Information

4.1 General Application Instructions

Applications must outline how the project(s) will increase the capacity of women entrepreneurs to create new enterprises, compete in the Federal contracting market, access capital, increase business survivability, and create jobs.

Organizations may submit proposals for multiple, distinct projects. For example, an organization may choose to submit one application for WBC Project 1, one application for WBC Project 2, and two applications for two distinct WBC Project 3 projects. Separate, distinct proposals are required for each WBC Project.

Each proposal must consist of the following elements: (i) cover letter; (ii) technical proposal; (iii) budget information; (iv) certifications, forms and assurances; and (v) attachments and exhibits. Applicants must document as part of the narrative proposal the eligibility requirements outlined in Section 3.2.

4.1.1 Cover Letter

The Applicant must submit a cover letter as the first page of the application. The cover letter is limited to one (1) double-spaced, 8.5x11 inch page, with twelve (12) point text, and one (1) inch margins. The cover letter must include:

- A statement that the application is in response to Funding Opportunity No. SB-OEDWB-24-003.
- The Applicant's name and address.
- The Applicant's website address, if applicable.
- The name, telephone number, and email address for the Applicant's designated point of contact.
- A discussion of the Applicant's eligibility, as defined within this FOA.
- A statement of whether the Applicant is applying as a solitary organization or as an organization that will utilize the "Hub" and "Spoke" Model. If the Applicant proposes to use the "Hub" and "Spoke" Model, the Applicant must also indicate the number of "Spoke" organizations and the address for each "Spoke."
- Which WBC project the proposal addresses (i.e., WBC Project 1, WBC Project 2, or WBC Project 3).
- The geographical area to be served by the project. Geographical area may be described in terms of SBA Region(s), state(s), or city(ies).
- The dollar amount being requested for the proposed grant award.

4.1.2 Technical Proposal

The Technical Proposal must demonstrate the Applicant's capability to implement the grant project in accordance with the provisions of this announcement. It must be succinct, self-explanatory, and well organized so that reviewers can understand the proposed project.

The Technical Proposal pages must be numbered, and the narrative portion of the application shall be limited to twenty (20) double spaced, 8.5 x 11-inch pages with Source Sans, Calibri, or Times New Roman twelve (12)-point text font and one (1)-inch margins. Attachments are not counted toward the twenty (20) page maximum. Attachments must be labeled and shall be limited to fifty (50) pages, excluding the Applicant's most recent audit.

SBA will not consider any materials beyond the specified page limit and the required attachments in the application review process.

The agency will evaluate the Applicant's proposal using the evaluation criteria identified in this section. If the Applicant's proposal utilizes the "Hub" and "Spoke" Model, the Applicant must include information for each section for the "Hub" and each "Spoke," as applicable.

For a Technical Proposal that has the greatest likelihood of readability for reviewers, allowing for maximum points, use the section headers identified below for each section of the Technical Proposal.

Project Design & Description (30 Points)

This section of the proposal describes how the Applicant proposes to provide services in the areas of WOSB and EDWOSB application assistance, counseling, training, or procurement readiness, for the designated WBC project, described in Section 1.2.

The Applicant may propose multi-year activities, as well as activities that build upon each other, but each phase of the project must be attainable within a single budget year.

Measurable Activities (13 points)

- The Applicant should provide a summary of the proposed project, including but not limited to the scope of the project and proposed outcomes.
- The Applicant must identify and describe, in detail, the proposed WBC's approach and measurable activities that will assist the Applicant in accomplishing the Project Objective within the proposed service area(s). Each measurable activity must include a detailed description and approach, anticipated timeline, and needed resources.
- The Applicant must describe, in detail, the proposed methodology for evaluating and assessing the effectiveness and impact of the proposed activities.
- The Applicant should include the steps needed to successfully launch the project, such as hiring key staff; securing locations to house the center; finalizing partnership agreements; and ensuring readiness for transmitting data to SBA.
- The Applicant must clearly identify the geographic area of the WBC and describe the service area's entrepreneurial ecosystem, including industries, sectors, and support systems that support the formation, growth, and financing of women owned businesses.

- Project Management (8 points)
  - The Applicant must provide staffing and management plans for accomplishing the goals and objectives of proposed projects.
  - The Applicant must demonstrate that adequate personnel resources, with sufficient experience, will be devoted to execute project activities. The Applicant should stipulate the amount of time each key employee will devote to the project.
  - The Applicant must establish clear and direct lines of responsibility and authority for managing and overseeing the project.
  - The Applicant must provide copies of all contracts and consulting agreements and identify the employees or officials who will be responsible for overseeing and administering those agreements.
  - The Applicant must describe its financial management structure and internal controls and identify all staff members who will be responsible for financial recordkeeping, reporting, expenditure of award funds and addressing audit findings.

- Method of Service Delivery (2 points)
  - The Applicant must describe the method that services will be delivered including, but not limited to, in-person, virtual, one-on-one, one-to-many, etc. The Applicant should list all facilities and other physical resources that will be utilized to implement the proposed project and, if applicable, the hours of operation including any night and weekend availability.

- Understanding of Client Challenges (3 points)

- The Applicant should clearly articulate an understanding of the current, unique challenges facing women entrepreneurs specific to the WBC project relevant to the proposal.

- Marketing Plan (2 points)
  - The Applicant should provide a Marketing Plan which describes the Applicant's ability and positioning to extend project services to firms eligible to receive assistance. The Marketing Plan should include outreach strategies that are incorporated in the Applicant's Budget Narrative.

- Conflict of Interest Policy (2 points)
  - The Applicant must provide a copy of its Conflict of Interest Policy addressing, at a minimum, procedures for ensuring its employees, consultants, and contractors do not assist client firms in which they, their principals, or their immediate family members have a financial interest or fiduciary duty and for ensuring its employees, consultants, and contractors do not use their role in the project as a means of marketing their outside services to project clients.

Logic Model (25 points)

This section of the proposal will detail the Applicant's logic model for the project. A logic model is a graphic depiction that presents the shared relationships among the resources/inputs, activities, outputs, outcomes, and impact of the project. The Applicant should not only align the logic model with the plans described in the Project Design & Description, Data Collection & Program Evaluation, and Budget Narrative sections of the proposal but also specifically reference page numbers, section numbers, or other identifiers for the relevant information in these sections.

- Resources/Inputs (2 points)
  - The Applicant must identify the specific resources/inputs that will be used to implement project activities. The resources/inputs should be sufficient to execute activities and should be contained, as appropriate, in the Budget Narrative section of the proposal.

- Activities (1 point)
  - The Applicant should state the project activities. The activities must be described, in detail, in the Project Design & Description section and referenced in the logic model. Grantees should report activities to SBA on a quarterly basis.

- Outputs (7 points)
  - The Applicant must enumerate the tangible products, capacities, deliverables, and/or interactions that result from the activities described in the Project Design & Description section. Outputs should be measurable and realistic and align with the Project Objective. The plan to collect the data needed for the outputs should be described, in detail, in the Data Collection & Program Evaluation section. Grantees should report outputs to SBA on a quarterly basis.

- Outcomes (10 points)
  - The Applicant must identify specific, measurable, achievable, relevant, and timebound outcomes for the project. The submission should include benchmarks to communicate both base-level goals and stretch goals as well as the level of effort required to realistically

achieve each level. Outcomes should align with the Project Objective and the Project Design & Description section of the proposal. The plan to collect the data needed for the outcomes should be described, in detail, in the Data Collection & Program Evaluation section. Grantees must report outcomes to SBA on an annual basis.

- Impact (5 points)
    - The Applicant must describe what long-term effect the Applicant anticipates accomplishing through the project. Impact consists of the results that are directly due to the outcomes of the project. The results should be determined by evaluations that are accomplished through the plan contained in the Data Collection & Program Evaluation section. The Applicant should also include potential barriers to long-term outcomes in this section.

Data Collection & Program Evaluation (25 points)

This section of the proposal describes the Applicant's plan to collect the data needed to assess and evaluate its performance and impact of services. Grantees are required to participate in data collection, analysis, and reporting related to SBA's performance measures, and other similar requirements. Grantees must respond to specific data collection and analysis requests as they arise to support GCBD and OWBO priorities and initiatives. Applicants must include plans to report on the following:

- Clients served, including total client and unique clients served for specific WBC project measures (e.g., number of clients assisted with WOSB applications, with Unique Entity Identifiers; number of clients receiving government contract training; number of clients receiving procurement coaching, etc.).
- Capital infusion transactions prior to and after service activities.
- New business starts.
- Jobs supported prior to and after service activities.
- Number of effective practices/strategies.
- Number of bids and proposals submitted prior to training activities and after training activities.
- Federal contracts awarded, including distinguishing WOSB or EDWOSB set-aside or sole source awards, prior to training activities and after training activities.
- Contract revenue prior to training activities and after training activities.
- Client satisfaction.

This section should reflect, and be consistent with, all other sections of the proposal and must cover all years of the project period, including the initial base and four option periods. Within this section, the Applicant must describe a data collection plan, aimed at describing the methods, techniques, and tools used to evaluate the project and whether it achieved its anticipated outcomes.

- Specific Data Collection (10 points)
    - The Applicant must identify the specific data on clients and other data that it plans to use, and methods for collecting and analyzing the listed data elements. Grantees should report data and data analyses to SBA on a quarterly basis.

- Lessons Learned (5 points)

- The Applicant should describe its plans for how it will document and report lessons learned, both positive and negative. Grantees should report lessons learned to SBA on a quarterly basis.

- Use of Data to Inform Program Delivery (5 points)
  - The Applicant must describe plans for how data will be used to inform program delivery.

- Identification and Replication of Effective Service Models (5 points)
  - The Application should describe plans to identify the most effective service models, how they were implemented, and how they could potentially be replicated. Grantees must report this information to SBA on an annual basis.

Organizational Experience & Capacity (20 points)

This section of the proposal will focus on Applicants' ability to provide assistance to entrepreneurs seeking certification for Federal contracting programs and their experience with providing training and counseling to entrepreneurs related to procurement readiness, growth and capacity, locating and negotiating contracts, securing business funding, and specific industries in NAICS codes where women entrepreneurs are underrepresented. The Applicant must provide adequate evidence and documentation, including specific examples, for each of the listed criteria.

- Organizational Profile and Background (8 points)
  - The Applicant must provide a narrative description of its organization, including its current services, mission, structure, programs, and experience to fulfill the needs and requirements of the proposed project. The Applicant should emphasize its experience and strategies for assisting entrepreneurs with applying for Federal contracting programs, obtaining Federal contracts, and building capacity to perform Federal contracts.
  - The Applicant should provide a list of previous or current projects or services relevant to the proposal, including the number of years the Applicant has conducted such projects and the number of clients the Applicant has assisted over the prior 3 years.

- Proof of Capability (4 points)
  - The Applicant should provide proof of capability to implement and manage a project of the scope and breadth proposed.
  - The Applicant must demonstrate financial viability.
  - The Applicant must provide responses or corrective actions for any qualified audit opinions, or A-133 audit findings.

- Identification and Engagement of Key Stakeholders and Partners (2 points)
  - The Applicant should identify key stakeholders and partners that will be leveraged to accomplish the objectives. If the Applicant proposes to leverage third-party partnerships and their respective resources to accomplish the proposed project under this FOA, the Applicant must provide proof of commitment by the third party as an attachment to the proposal.
  - The Applicant should address the approach to leverage collaboration and connect entrepreneurs to the full array of SBA resources in order to expand the breadth of the training, counseling and outreach. The Applicant must define the role of each potential collaborative partner entity, clearly outline the approach to leveraging collaboration, and

convincingly communicate and demonstrate that resources from different partners will be leveraged in a way that will result in extended growth for women entrepreneurs.

- Biographies and Resumes (6 points)
    - The Applicant must provide a one-page biography or 2-page resume for each of the Applicant's key leader(s) who will be responsible for the oversight and success of the proposed project. Resumes should only include relevant experience of the leader(s) and should specifically include experience related to preparing WOSB and EDWOSB program applications, coaching and training for government contracting, and providing technical assistance for procurement readiness. The biographies or resumes should be provided as an attachment and will not count toward the 20-page limit. Application reviewers will not consider information beyond the first page of a biography or the second page of a resume, should the biography or resume exceed the stated page limit.

Budget Narrative (10 points)

This section of the proposal will use the Standard Forms and Detailed Expenditure Worksheet to evaluate the cost-effectiveness and appropriateness of the funding requested. Applicants should ensure each budget item is described fully so that there is no ambiguity or questions regarding its relevance or reasonableness to the project and its objectives. The Applicant's proposed budget narrative for the project must reasonably and realistically correspond to the costs and activities necessary for the successful execution of the proposed project.

- Budget (3 points)
    - The Applicant must submit the SF-424 (application package) and initial breakout via the SF-424A form (SF-424A non-construction, as appropriate). The Applicant must indicate matching funds in the appropriate areas of the SF-424 and SF424A. All costs must align.

- Detailed Expenditure Worksheet (7 points)
    - The Applicant must provide a detailed justification for all budget items in sufficient detail to enable the proposal reviewers to evaluate the appropriateness of the funding requested (e.g., staffing, infrastructure, work activities, materials and supplies, equipment, etc.). The budget justification must be broken-out and detailed using the same budget categories as the SF-424A. All costs must align.

Note: For Required Travel Item(s), each Applicant should include travel costs for key personnel to attend the Association of Women's Business Centers Annual Conference.

Agency Priority Points (10 points)

SBA is committed to ensuring that women entrepreneurs from underserved and rural communities have access to the resources needed to start, grow, manage, and sustain resilient businesses. In response to the challenges that these entrepreneurs face, SBA is prioritizing projects targeting women entrepreneurs from underserved and rural communities.

- Engaging Women Entrepreneurs from Underserved Communities (5 points)
    - The Applicant should address their efforts to engage women entrepreneurs from underserved communities.
    - The Applicant should describe current efforts, past results, and how the priority will be executed through the WBC project.

- Engaging Women Entrepreneurs from Rural Communities (5 points)
    - The Applicant should address their efforts to support women entrepreneurs in rural entrepreneurial ecosystems.
    - The Applicant should describe current efforts, past results, and how the priority will be executed through the WBC project.

4.1.3 Budget Information

Budget information for the twelve (12)-month period of performance must be provided through the submission of the following:

- SF-424, Application for Federal Assistance
- SF-424A, Budget Information – Non-Construction Programs

Project Budget Workbook

- Budget must be submitted in its original Microsoft Excel file format. However, an Applicant may substitute their own worksheets in place of the Annual Budget Summary provided it includes all the same cost elements/line items covered by the Annual Budget Summary.
- The Project Budget Workbook includes a narrative area where Applicants can provide a brief but detailed explanation of the components of each cost element listed in the SF-424A and Annual Budget Summary (an example can be found on the Example tab of the Annual Budget Summary).

Detailed Expenditure Worksheet (Located at www.sba.gov/wbc)

Use the following guidance for preparing the budget:

- Personnel: List all staff positions by title (both proposed and current, if applicable). Give the annual salary of each position, the percentage of each position's time devoted to the project, the amount of each position's salary funded by the grant, and the total personnel cost for the period of performance.
- Fringe Benefits: For salaried employees, provide a breakdown of the amounts and percentages that comprise fringe benefit costs such as health insurance, Federal Insurance Contributions Act (FICA), retirement, etc.
- Travel: Specify the estimated number of in-state and out-of-state trips for project staff, along with each trip's purpose, mileage, per diem, and the associated staff who traveled. For Required Travel Item(s), each Applicant should include travel costs for key personnel to attend the Association of Women's Business Centers Annual Conference.
- Equipment: Identify each item of equipment you expect to purchase which has an estimated acquisition cost of $10,000.00 or more per unit and a useful lifetime of more than one year (see 2 CFR §200.1 for the definition of "Equipment"). List the quantity and unit cost per item. Please note that items with a unit cost of less than $10,000 are classified as "Supplies," not "Equipment." During the last funded year of a grant, the purchase of equipment is not generally permitted.
- Supplies: Identify categories of supplies (e.g., office supplies) in the detailed budget and list the quantity and unit cost per item. Supplies include all tangible personal property that does not qualify as Equipment (see 2 CFR §200.1 for the definition of "Supplies").
- Contractual: Contracts are defined according to 2 CFR §200.22, as a legal instrument by which a non-Federal entity purchases property or services needed to carry out the project or program under a Federal award. For each proposed contract and subaward, specify the purpose and estimated cost.

While subcontracting is permitted, Grantees may not spend more than forty-nine percent (49%) of award funds on subcontracts.
    - Under no circumstances may Grantees contract out the administration or day-to-day management of this project to any other party.
- Construction: Construction costs are not allowed. This line must be left as zero.
- Other: List any item not covered elsewhere here (such as stipends or incentives). Provide clear and specific detail, including costs, for each item in order for it to be determined whether the costs are necessary, reasonable, and allocable.

4.1.4 Certifications, Forms and Assurances

Under the provisions of the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995, the Regulatory Secretariat Division of the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) implemented a new process in the System for Award Management (SAM), for pre-award registration requirements for Federal Grant Recipients. These revisions will enable non-Federal entities to submit common Federal government-wide certifications and representations for Federal financial assistance at the time of registration in SAM.

Non-Federal entities are required to complete funding system assessment and submit a letter from the Applicant's Auditor, Certified Public Accountant, Treasurer, Comptroller, Chief Financial Officer, or similarly qualified individual certifying that your organization's financial management system currently meets the requirements of 2 CFR §200.302. Applicants are responsible for ensuring they are compliant with all the certifications and assurances required to submit a Federal grant application. Information on the requirements can be found at SAM.gov.

4.1.5 Attachments and Exhibits

Each Applicant must attach copies of the following to the proposal, as applicable:

- Most recent audit, if applicable;
- Résumés of key employees;
- Letters of Support, Letters of Commitment, Memorandum of Understanding, and pledges of additional funding or in-kind resources;
- Leases, contracts, and consulting agreements;
- Conflict of Interest Policy;
- Cost Policy Statement;
- Listing of Federal grants received within the last three years;
- Indirect cost rate agreement (if the Applicant's budget includes indirect costs); and
- Any other documentation necessary to support the proposal.

Attachments are limited to fifty (50) pages, excluding the Applicant's most recent audit. Reviewers will not review information beyond the first fifty (50) pages.

4.2 Submission Instructions

This section provides the application submission and receipt instructions for applications submitted for this Announcement. Please read the following instructions carefully and completely.

Requirement for Electronic Submission

All proposals, including narratives and forms, must be submitted electronically via the government-wide financial assistance portal www.Grants.gov. No other forms of submissions will be accepted. All required forms are provided in the Grants.gov application package for this funding opportunity. Specific instructions for obtaining, completing, and submitting an application via Grants.gov, including animated tutorials, may be found at http://www.Grants.gov/web/grants/Applicants.html.

Grants.gov Registration

SBA requires the use of the www.Grants.gov website for submission of competitive announcements. In order to submit an application via Grants.gov, an organization is first required to have a Unique Entity Identifier (UEI) number, be registered with the System for Award Management (SAM) and have a Grants.gov username and password. The process for meeting these three pre-submission requirements may take several days to complete. Additionally, Applicants may have to download or upgrade their software in order to utilize Grants.gov. In order to avoid unexpected delays that could result in the rejection of an application, Applicants should not wait until the closing date to begin the submission process. Applications received by www.Grants.gov after the established deadline will be considered late and will not be considered for funding by SBA.

- All institutions applying for Federal grants are required to provide a UEI number. The Federal Government has adopted the use of UEI numbers to keep track of how Federal grant money is dispersed. Grant administrators or chief financial officers should be able to provide the organization's UEI number. Research universities and most colleges, independent libraries, and large organizations already have UEI numbers. If an Applicant does not have a UEI number, contact SAM.gov and register online at SAM.gov | Home or apply by phone (1-888-227-2423).
- As of February 2, 2019, under the provisions of the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995, the Regulatory Secretariat Division of the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) implemented a new process in the System for Award Management (SAM), to the currently approved information collection requirement regarding the pre-award registration requirements for Federal Grant Recipients. These revisions will enable non-Federal entities to submit common Federal government-wide certifications and representations for Federal financial assistance at the time of registration in SAM. Applicants must have an up-to-date SAM profile before a grant application can be reviewed for possible award.
- Applicants must register with www.Grants.gov before applying for this funding opportunity. Registration creates a profile of basic information about the Applicant's organization. Applicants must register as organizations, not as individuals. Organizations already registered with Grants.gov do not need to re-register. However, all registered organizations must keep their SAM registration up-to-date. As part of the Grants.gov registration process, an Applicant must designate one or more Authorized Organizational Representatives (AORs). The AORs are the only individuals who may submit applications to Grants.gov on behalf of an organization. If an application is submitted by anyone other than a designated AOR, it will be rejected by Grants.gov and cannot be considered for funding. These steps take several days to complete, therefore do not wait until the last day before the deadline to register. If you have problems registering with Grants.gov, call the support desk at 1-800-518-4726. Complete instructions for registering with Grants.gov are located at www.Grants.gov. The Grants.gov Contact Center is open 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

Creating a Grants.gov account can be completed online in minutes, but UEI and SAM registrations may take several weeks. Therefore, an organization's registration should be done in sufficient time to ensure it

does not impact the entity's ability to meet required application submission deadlines. Applications received by www.Grants.gov after the established deadline will be considered late and will not be considered for funding by SBA.

Timely Submission

All applications must be received by 11:59PM EDT on August 7, 2024. Applications received by www.Grants.gov after the established deadline will be considered late and will not be considered for funding by SBA. Proof of timely submission is automatically recorded by www.Grants.gov and an electronic date/time stamp is generated within the system when the application is successfully received by www.Grants.gov. The Applicant's designated AOR will receive an acknowledgement of receipt and a tracking number (GRANTXXXXXXXX) from www.Grants.gov with the successful transmission of their application. The tracking number and official date/time stamp from Grants.gov emailed to the AOR serves as proof of the Applicant's timely submission.

Applicants using slow internet, such as dial-up connections, should be aware that transmission can take some time before www.Grants.gov receives the application. Grants.gov will email the Applicant's AOR with either an error message or an acknowledgement of receipt following an attempt to submit an application. The www.Grants.gov Support Center reports that some Applicants end the transmission because they think that nothing is occurring during the transmission process. Please be patient and give the system time to process the application.

Submission Status

Once an application is submitted, it undergoes a validation process through which it will be accepted or rejected by the Grants.gov system. The validation process may take between 24 to 48 hours to complete. Applicants should save and print proof of an electronic submission made to Grants.gov. Applicants can expect to receive multiple emails regarding the status of their submission. The first email will confirm receipt of the application. The second email will indicate that the application has been successfully validated by the system and assigned an SBA tracking number, or it has been rejected due to errors. An Applicant will receive a third email once SBA has downloaded its application from Grants.gov for review.

If Grants.gov notifies an Applicant via email that its application contains an error, the Applicant must correct the noted error(s) before the system will accept and validate the application. Applicants that choose to submit on, or close to, the closing date are advised they may not receive email notification of an error with their applications until after the submission deadline, and thus will not have an opportunity to correct and resubmit their applications. APPLICATIONS THAT ARE REJECTED BY GRANTS.GOV WILL NOT BE FORWARDED TO SBA AND CANNOT BE CONSIDERED FOR FUNDING. It is the Applicant's responsibility to verify that its submission was received and validated successfully to Grants.gov. Applications received by www.Grants.gov after the established deadline will be considered late and will not be considered for funding by SBA. To check on the status of an application and see the date and time it was received, log on to www.Grants.gov and click on the "Track My Application" link from the left-hand menu.

Submission Difficulties

If an Applicant experiences a technical difficulty with Grants.gov (i.e., system problems or glitches with the operation of the Grants.gov website) that may threaten the ability to submit an application, the Applicant should print any error message received and call the Grants.gov Contact Center at 1-800-518-4726, for

immediate assistance. The Applicant should ensure a case number is obtained regarding communications with Grants.gov. The Grants.gov Contact Center is open 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

NOTE: Problems with an Applicant's own computer system or equipment are not considered technical difficulties with Grants.gov. Similarly, an Applicant's failure to obtain a UEI, complete SAM registration, complete Grants.gov registration, ensure that an AOR submits the application, or take note of and act upon an email from Grants.gov rejecting its application due to errors, are not considered technical difficulties. A Grants.gov technical difficulty is an issue occurring in connection with the operations of Grants.gov itself, such as the temporary loss of service by Grants.gov due to an unexpected volume of traffic or failure of information technology systems, both of which are rare occurrences. Applications received by www.Grants.gov after the established deadline will be considered late and will not be considered for funding by SBA.

Applicants should use the following link to obtain assistance in navigating Grants.gov and access a list of useful resources: https://www.grants.gov/web/grants/Applicants.html.

4.3 Final Submission

Each Applicant is required to submit their proposal electronically via www.Grants.gov by no later than 11:59:59 p.m. EDT on August 7, 2024. SBA will consider the date and time stamp generated by Grants.gov as the official submission time. Any proposal that is not received by Grants.gov before the closing date and time of this FOA will be rejected without evaluation, unless the Applicant can clearly demonstrate through documentation obtained from Grants.gov that they attempted to submit their proposal in a timely manner but were unable to do so solely due to Grants.gov system issues. Additionally, SBA will not accept any changes, additions, revisions, or deletions to applications made after the closing date.

Only one proposal per Applicant for WBC Project 1 and WBC Project 2 will be evaluated. Should an Applicant submit more than one proposal for each of these projects, the proposal submitted closest to, without exceeding, the application deadline will be evaluated. Any additional proposals for WBC Project 1 or WBC Project 2 from the same Applicant will automatically be rejected without being evaluated. SBA will evaluate all distinct proposals from Applicants for WBC Project 3 received by Grants.gov before the closing date and time of this FOA. Should an Applicant submit more than one proposal for a distinct WBC Project 3 project, the proposal submitted closest to, without exceeding, the application deadline will be evaluated. Any additional proposals for a distinct WBC Project 3 from the same Applicant will automatically be rejected without being evaluated.

Applicants should save proof of any electronic submission made at Grants.gov. If problems occur while using Grants.gov, the Applicant is advised to print any error message received and contact the Grants.gov Support Center for immediate assistance. Applicants may obtain advice and assistance with the Grants.gov submission process by visiting http://www.grants.gov/web/grants/support.html or by calling 1-800-518-4726.

Section V - Application Review Information

5.1 General

Applications will be rejected without being evaluated if they are submitted by ineligible organizations or are illegible or materially incomplete due to an Applicant's failure to include all required forms and/or provide the required level of detail.

In addition, an Applicant must disclose in its application if it currently holds any other financial assistance awards from SBA or has any other applications for SBA financial assistance awards still pending. If it does, the Applicant must identify how it will avoid duplication of efforts, commingling of funds, and overlapping or double claiming of costs among those projects. Applicants must treat each SBA project as separate and discrete with individual outcomes and deliverables and provide distinct reporting, accounting, and audit trails for each application and award.

Failure to sufficiently distinguish between multiple applications from the same organization, or between an application and one or more current SBA awards, may result in rejection of an application on the ground that it is duplicative of proposed or existing efforts.

5.2 Review and Selection Process

Applications that are not rejected by Grants.gov or SBA's screening process will be evaluated by a team of reviewers and scored based on how well they meet the criteria outlined in Section IV of this FOA. Reviewers may be SBA employees or employees of other Federal agencies. The maximum score any application can receive is 120 points. Prior to evaluating applications received in response to this FOA, SBA will establish a minimum acceptable score. Only those applications that meet or exceed that threshold will be eligible for funding. Therefore, Applicants are encouraged to design proposals that address each of the scoring criteria listed above as thoroughly as possible.

In the interest of providing the Women's Business Center Program's services to as broad a segment of women entrepreneurs as possible, SBA will take the geographical dispersion of Applicants' project service areas, both in-person and virtual, into account when making award decisions. An application that exceeds the minimum acceptable score and which scores higher than other acceptable proposals may nevertheless be passed over for funding if that application proposes to serve the same or substantially the same area or market as an existing WBC project or another higher rated application that was selected for award.

At SBA's discretion, it may select qualified Applicants not funded under this FOA for future awards, using subsequent fiscal year resources, subject to continuing program authority and the availability of funds.

5.3 Evaluation Criteria

SBA has established procedures for assessing the technical merit of applications to provide for an objective review and to assist Applicants in understanding the standards against which applications will be evaluated. The evaluation criteria are based on the information required in the application as described, in detail, in Section IV of this FOA. Reviewers will award points based on the evaluation criteria described below:

- Project Design & Description (30 points)
- Logic Model (25 points)
- Data Collection & Program Evaluation (25 points)
- Organizational Experience & Capacity (20 points)
- Budget Narrative (10 points)

- Agency Priority (10 points)
- Total: 120 points

5.4 Applicant Risk Assessment

From the applications which meet the minimum score requirement, and represent the best scoring applications, the SBA will conduct a risk evaluation of the Applicants. The risk evaluation will be conducted in accordance with the requirements imposed by 2 CFR §200.205. At its discretion, SBA may decline to issue an Award to any potential Recipient if the Agency determines the Applicant poses too great a risk. Criteria to be evaluated include the following:

- Financial stability (indicated as a score of 174 or greater);
- Quality of management systems and ability to meet the management standards prescribed in the Uniform Grant Guidance;
- History of performance
    - The Applicant's record in managing awards, cooperative agreements, or procurement awards, if the Applicant is a prior recipient of such Federal awards, including timeliness of compliance with applicable reporting requirements and, if applicable, the extent to which any previously awarded amounts will be expended prior to future awards.

Section VI - Award Administration Information

6.1 Award Notification

All Applicants selected for awards will be notified in writing and will be notified by the OWBO point of contact. Organizations selected for awards will be given instructions on how to register with GrantSolutions to access and sign the Notice of Award. Successful Applicants will be notified regarding a post-award webinar and/or training, as applicable. Applicants not selected for awards will be notified, however, such notifications will be made as a second priority to issuing Notices of Awards. There will be no debriefing process for unsuccessful Applicants.

6.2 Administrative and National Policy Requirements

The selected Applicant will be required to comply with the requirements set forth in the Small Business Act, §§2(h) and 29 (15 U.S.C. §§631(h) and 656), as amended; 2 CFR Chapter I, Chapter II, Part 200, et al., 13 CFR Part 131; and the terms and conditions set forth in their NOA. In addition, the SBA, from time to time, may advise non-Federal entities of awards made under this FOA of new legal requirements and/or policy initiatives with which they must agree to comply.

6.3 Reporting

Grant recipients are required to submit the reports identified below. Failure to submit reports in a timely manner will result in delayed payment. Additionally, SBA may weigh a Grantee's failure to report against the exercise of any option periods. The reports provided by grant recipients may be made public. In addition,

SBA reserves the right to increase the frequency of reporting as deemed necessary, as well as require grant recipients to post these reports (apart from financial reports) on their websites.

6.3.1 Financial Reports

Grant recipients will be required to submit financial reports quarterly during the base project period, and semi-annually in year two through five, within 30 days of the conclusion of each reporting period. Financial reports will be submitted to the SBA using the SF-425, Federal Financial Report (FFR) and supporting documents identified by the OWBO.

6.3.2 Health and Human Services (HHS) Payment Management System (PMS) Reports

Grant recipients will be required to submit quarterly financial reports to HHS using the electronic SF-425 via the HHS Payment Management System within 30 days of the completion of each quarter.

6.3.3 Performance Reports

In the first year of the grant, Grantees are required to submit quarterly performance reports to communicate progress toward goals, objectives, and outputs outlined in the Grantee's application. Following the first year of the project, Grantees are required to submit semi-annual narrative performance reports to the SBA using the format identified by OWBO within 30 days after the completion of each six-month period.

6.3.4 Required Data Collection

Grant recipients are required to either manually enter performance data or upload data files quarterly to NEXUS, the Office of Entrepreneurial Development's centralized data collection system, within 30 days of the completion of each quarter. NEXUS training is provided by the SBA. The WBC program's performance measures are: Unique Number of Clients Served, New Business Starts, Capital Infusion (number of transactions), Jobs Supported, and Number of Effective Practices.

6.3.5 Report Submission

Grant recipients will be required to submit reports as instructed by the NOA, including but not limited to quarterly and annual reports.

6.4 Recordkeeping Requirements

6.4.1 Activity Records

Grant recipients will be required to maintain complete and accurate records and supporting documentation. Client counseling, training, and other activities must be fully documented on the SBA Form 641 and the SBA Form 888. In addition to the performance and program reports already mentioned in the Reporting section, the grant recipient must maintain the following records:

- Counseling Activity Reports
    - The Grantee will be required to document all counseling and training activities on the SBA Form 641 Counseling Information Form (or an equivalent form). Data gathered by this form must meet the minimum requirements as stipulated by OED's NEXUS database. Signed copies of these forms must be retained by the grant recipient either electronically or in hard copy and be made available for the SBA's review upon request. For training activities, the 641 data element, denoting a training, must be used. Generally, activities provided under WBC Project 1 will be documented in these reports.

- Training Activity Reports
    - The Grantee will be required to utilize the SBA Form 888 Management Training Report (or an equivalent form) to report small business management training activities (see Definitions section for more details regarding what qualifies as training). The grant recipient may use a computerized version of this form. Electronic or hard copies of these forms must be retained by the grant recipient and be made available for the SBA's review upon request. Generally, activities provided under WBC Project 2 will be documented in these reports.
- WBC Client Evaluation Forms
    - Evaluations of WBC services or client satisfaction surveys must be collected from clients who receive continuous counseling or attend a WBC training event. Copies of these evaluations must be retained by the grant recipient and be made available for the SBA's review upon request.

6.4.2 Protection of Client Contact Information

A WBC may not disclose the name, address, or telephone number of any individual or small business concern to which it aids without the written consent of that individual or concern, except to the SBA and as authorized by the SBA.

Section VII - Agency Contacts

7.1 Office of Women's Business Ownership Point of Contact

Questions concerning general information contained in this FOA should be directed to OWBO at 202-205-6673 or OWBO@sba.gov.

7.2 Financial/Grants Management Point of Contact

Questions regarding budgetary matters related to this FOA should be directed to OWBO at 202-205-6673 or OWBO@sba.gov.

7.3 Grants.gov Technical Support

For technical assistance with filing an electronic application in response to this FOA, contact the Grants.gov Service Center at 1-800-518-4726 or Support@Grants.gov.

Section VIII - Other Information

8.1 Definitions

The following definitions apply to awards made under this FOA.

8 .1.1 Budget Period — The 12-month period during which expenditure obligations will be incurred by the Grantee under this Funding Opportunity. For the purposes

	of this Funding Opportunity, the Budget Period will be from September 1 to August 31 of the subsequent year.
8.1.2 Cost Policy Statement	A document describing all accounting policies of an Applicant organization and narrating in detail its proposed cost allocation plan. This plan must stipulate the procedures used to identify, measure, and allocate all costs to each benefitting activity. Cost Accounting Standards Board Disclosure Statement [CASB DS-2] may be submitted for this purpose.
8.1.3 Counseling	Services provided one-on-one to an individual and/or business that are delivered in-person, on the telephone, or virtually and which are substantive in nature and concern the formation, management, financing, and/or operation of a small business enterprise; are specific to the needs of the business or individual; and require a signed SBA Form 641 or equivalent form that supports SBA's management information data.
8.1.4 EDWOSB	The Economically Disadvantaged Women Owned Small Business Program seeks to provide a level playing field for economically disadvantaged women small business owners by limiting competition for certain government contracts in specific industries where women are underrepresented to economically disadvantaged women owned small businesses who participate in the EDWOSB Program.
8.1.5 Grant	A legal instrument signed by both SBA and a Recipient that memorializes the award of funding and contains the specific Terms and Conditions that apply to the Award.
8.1.6 NAICS	The North American Industry Classification System is the standard used by Federal agencies in classifying business establishments, by type of economic activity, for the purpose of collecting, analyzing, and publishing statistical data related to the U.S. business economy.
8.1.7 Notice of Award	The official document, signed (or the electronic equivalent of signature) by a Grants Management Officer that: • Notifies the Recipient of the award of a grant; • Contains or references all the Terms and Conditions of the grant and Federal funding limits and obligations; and • Provides the documentary basis for recording the obligation of Federal funds in the SBA accounting system.
8.1.8 Procurement Readiness	Demonstrated ability of a small business to effectively participate in the Federal government contracting marketplace and successfully perform contract work.
8.1.9 Project Period	The total period of performance for an award made under this Funding Opportunity.
8.1.10 Recipient	An organization that has had its application accepted and has been awarded funding under this Funding Opportunity.

8.1.11 Rural	All territory, populations, and housing units located outside urban areas.
8.1.12 Small Business	A business entity that is independently owned and operated, is not dominant in its field of operation, is organized for profit with a place of business located in the United States, and operates primarily within the United States; and does not exceed the applicable size standard for its industry as established under 13 CFR §121 (see Table of size standards | U.S. Small Business Administration (sba.gov)).
8.1.13 Technical Assistance	Programs, activities, counseling, training and services provided by Federal agencies to strengthen the capacity of grant recipients and to improve their performance of grant functions.
8.1.14 Training	An activity or event in which a counselor from the WBC delivers a structured program of knowledge, information, or experience on a business-related subject. The training must include two or more clients in attendance.
8.1.15 WBC	Women's Business Centers are a part a national network of entrepreneurship centers throughout the United States and its territories, which are designed to assist women in starting and growing small businesses.
8.1.16 WOSB	A for profit business, owned 51% or more and controlled by a woman.

8.2 Advance Understandings

If any portion of this Funding Opportunity conflicts with Section 21 of the Small Business Act, 13 CFR Part 130 (SBA's regulations), relevant OMB circulars or SBA's policy notices, all of the above will control and take precedence. The Terms and Conditions of SBA's current, standard Funding Opportunity are incorporated by reference herein.

8.3 Shared Information

SBA will have an unlimited license and all rights to use data (excluding private client data), including those prepared or stored electronically, which are generated either partially or fully under this grant. SBA will have all rights to materials which are developed either partially or fully under this grant, including materials that are copyrighted.

8.4 Hub & Spoke Model Information

The "Hub" and "Spoke" approach features a lead organization, a "Hub," at the center of a network of "Spoke" organizations that work with businesses in targeted communities or with a targeted service. These networks leverage the business development expertise of the central "Hub" organization and the community credibility or industry expertise of spoke organizations to better connect business owners in a variety of communities with critical services and assistance programs. In the case where a "Spoke" meets the eligibility criteria for a WBC, the "Hub" and "Spoke" may demonstrate the joint or cooperative venture through a teaming agreement or Memorandum of Understanding. In the case where a "Spoke" does not meet the eligibility criteria for a WBC, the "Spoke" must be engaged by the "Hub" as a contractor.

Key principles for effective use of this model includes the following:

"Hubs" at the center:

- "Hubs" coordinate project activities via regular meetings, joint planning, and collaborative strategy development.
- "Hubs" drive and coordinate the communication strategies with SBA, including planning outreach events, and webinars, and coordinate activities with SBA District Offices and Resource Partners.
- "Hubs" identify or develop training curricula to prepare "Spokes" to work with businesses 1:1, serving as a clearing house for best practices on outreach, education, and counseling.
- "Hubs" train and help "Spokes" with document preparation and data collection.
- "Hubs" receive and distribute technical knowledge and updates received from SBA.
- "Hubs" obtain prior approvals from SBA, as outlined in the terms and conditions for the award.
- "Hubs" collect and synthesize outcome and performance metrics for all parties, including "Spokes," and produce reports to the SBA in a timely manner.
- "Hubs" translate all Hub produced documents and materials into languages required by communities served through "Spokes" and ensure that data, and outcome and performance metrics are translated into English for submission to SBA.
- There is no requirement for a "Hub" to be a brick-and-mortar organization.

"Spokes" are trusted ambassadors:

- "Spokes" are dedicated to engaging in direct outreach and in-person or virtual assistance to women entrepreneurs, particularly in underserved communities.
- "Spokes" are skilled in providing technical assistance to small businesses in areas including, but not limited to, certification application assistance, financial literacy, credit counseling, financial assistance, locating government contracts, accessing government contracts, negotiating government contracts, and industry specific training in NAICS codes that are prevalent for Federal government contracting and underrepresented by women.
- "Spokes" provide in-language technical assistance.
- "Spokes" focus on reaching or exceeding agreed upon project goals.
- "Spokes" conduct focused, grassroots outreach including phone calls, texts, emails, and other forms of engagement and outreach.
- "Spokes" provide linguistically and culturally knowledgeable experts such as certified public accountants, attorneys, or other professionals to offer counseling for entrepreneurs in underserved communities.
- "Spokes" work to amplify communications and leverage other trusted partners like Chambers of Commerce, universities, churches, and local elected officials.
- "Spokes" collect entrepreneur, outcome, and performance data in accordance with required metric collections outlined in the Data Collection & Program Evaluation section and furnish such information to the "Hub" for additional analysis and reporting in a timely manner.

Effective "Hub" and "Spoke" networks are data-driven and accountable:

- An effective network supports underserved businesses to complete necessary paperwork to engage with SBA programs and services, including loan packaging assistance and assistance finding lenders or other sources of financial assistance.
- An effective network collects and maintains data related to track program metrics.

- An effective network establishes measurable goals for services conducted.
- An effective network tracks progress toward measurable outputs and outcomes.

"Hubs" will be responsible for:

- Creating and following regulations and policies.
- Managing consortia agreements.
- Providing technical assistance.
- Formulating partnership goals and objectives.
- Overseeing operations of activities, programs, and paid staff.
- Creating and following a strategic action plan.
- Translate all "Hub" produced documents and materials into languages required by communities served.

"Spokes" will be responsible for:

- Being a community leader amongst the represented sector(s).
- Ensuring clear communication between the sector represented and the partnership.
- Providing technical assistance.
- Supporting the partnership's mission.
- Attending partner meetings which are held on an agreed upon frequency with the "Hub."
- Contributing to the strategic planning process.

The relationship between the "Hub" and "Spoke" shall be from September 30, 2024, until the end of the performance period.

For this funding opportunity, the "Spoke" organizations work with women entrepreneurs in targeted communities or for a targeted service. For example, a proposal may utilize the "Hub" and "Spoke" Model to provide services through "Spokes" to different geographical areas. Alternatively, a proposal may utilize the "Hub" and "Spoke" Model to provide WOSB and EDWOSB application services for WBC Project 1 through one "Spoke," procurement readiness training and counseling for WBC Project 2 at another "Spoke," and industry-specific training for WBC Project 3 through a third "Spoke." The "Hub" is not limited by a specific number of "Spokes."

For a Technical Proposal that has the greatest likelihood of readability for reviewers, allowing for maximum points, use the section headers for each section of the Technical Proposal and clearly identify information for the "Hub" and "Spoke" for each section, as applicable.