Inner City Innovation Hubs

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NOTICE OF FUNDING OPPORTUNITY

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Federal Agency Name(s): Minority Business Development Agency (MBDA), Minority Business Development Agency (MBDA), Department of Commerce

Funding Opportunity Title: Inner City Innovation Hubs

Announcement Type: Initial

Funding Opportunity Number: MBDA-OBD-2020-2006442

Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance (CFDA) Number: 11.802, Minority Business Resource Development

Dates: Full applications will be accepted in Grants.gov up to 11:59 p.m. Eastern Daylight Savings Time on May 15, 2020. Applications received after this time will not be reviewed or considered for funding under this Announcement.

Funding Opportunity Description: The purpose of this notice is to request applications for special projects and programs associated with the Minority Business Development Agency's (MBDA) strategic plans and mission goals, as well as to provide the general public with information and guidelines on how MBDA will select proposals and administer discretionary Federal assistance under this Broad Agency Announcement (BAA).

FULL ANNOUNCEMENT TEXT

I. Funding Opportunity Description

A. Program Objective

The Minority Business Development Agency (MBDA) provides Federal assistance to support innovative projects seeking to promote and ensure the inclusion and use of minority enterprises. This Announcement is a mechanism to encourage new activities, education, outreach, innovative projects or sponsorships that are not addressed through other MBDA programs. The funds to be awarded by this program are not congressionally directed funds or designated for existing funded awards. In the Fiscal Year 2020 appropriations bill, Congress authorized MBDA to foster, promote, and develop minority business enterprises, through grants, contracts and other agreements with public or private organizations. See Consolidated Appropriations Act of 2020, Pub. L. No. 116-93 (December 20, 2019).

MBDA is also authorized by Executive Order 11625 to provide financial assistance to public and private organizations so that they may render technical and management assistance to minority business enterprises and defray all or part of the costs of pilot or demonstration projects conducted by public or private agencies or organizations which are designed to overcome the special challenges of minority business enterprises (MBEs). Organizations that are owned or controlled by the following persons or groups of persons are the organizations that are considered MBEs for the purpose of this BAA: 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 American. See 15 C.F.R. §§ 1400.1, 1400.2 and Executive Order 11625 (1969).

MBE Inner City Innovation Hub Grants – According to a Brookings Institute review of data from the U.S. Census, 84% of Americans live in Metropolitan areas. Of these Americans, a majority are minorities. Metropolitan Statistical Areas are defined by the U.S. Office of Management and Budget (OMB) based on data gathered by the Census Bureau. OMB locates these areas around a densely populated core, typically a city, of at least 50,000 people. OMB currently identifies 366 metropolitan areas nationwide, with populations ranging from 55,000 (Carson City, Nevada) to 19 million (New York, Northern New Jersey, Long Island, New York - NJPA).

Minority populations in the United States concentrate even more heavily in large metropolitan areas than the overall population. In 2008, the 100 largest metro areas contained 66 percent of the total U.S. population but 77 percent of non-whites and

Hispanics, which included 74 percent of blacks, 80 percent of Hispanics, and 88 percent of Asians. This is now the case for 17 metropolitan areas, up from 14 in 2000 and just five in 1990. Eight of the 17 metropolitan areas that have the majority of the U.S. minority population are located in California, and another four are in Texas. California, Texas, New York and Florida are the nation's most populous states, home to nearly half of all minority residents, with the largest number of minority-owned businesses.

Minority businesses located within inner cities and economically distressed neighborhoods support the development of wealth and the growth of entrepreneurship. According to the U.S. Census Bureau, there are approximately 8 million minority-owned businesses, while other sources report 11 million minority-owned businesses across the U.S. As part of this Administration's goals to fuel economic innovation and protect economic growth, MBDA seeks to provide funding for programs that support and provide technical and management education to entrepreneurs and start-up businesses with innovative products or services in inner city areas with high concentrations of minority persons and minority-owned businesses.

Applications responding to this announcement must present projects that support start-up businesses and established entrepreneurs in inner cities and urban areas in a U.S. state or U.S. territory with high concentrations of minority populations and minority business enterprises. These service models should be designed to assist minority businesses on a regional basis dependent upon the location of the hub (e.g., North East, Mid-Atlantic, South East and Mid-West and North West, South West, Mid-West, and Pacific regions). Applicants may propose and define the regional service area.

MBDA anticipates making two (2) awards, covering a two-year period, under this BAA for a total amount of $2,800,000. Federal funding available at this time is limited to $700,000 for each award for Year 1. MBDA anticipates providing $700,000 in Federal funding for Year 2 of each award.

B. Program Priorities

MBDA, a bureau of the U.S. Department of Commerce, leads Federal Government efforts to promote the growth and global competitiveness of minority business enterprises (MBEs). MBDA has established key priorities designed to overcome the unique challenges faced by minority business enterprises (MBEs). MBDA is now initiating new approaches to serve MBEs that compliment Presidential priorities and U.S. Department of Commerce (DOC) strategic goals. The DOC's strategic goals include: 1) accelerating American leadership through commercial space activities, foundational research investments, and protecting intellectual property; 2) enhancing job creation through increased exports and

foreign direct investment; 3) strengthening U.S. economic and national security; 4) fulfilling Constitutional requirements and supporting economic activity with reliable data; and 5) excelling in the delivery of customer-centric services.

The MBDA implements each Department goal by creating programs that prioritize the deployment of technology and innovative business concepts toward growth and productivity for minority firms, by creating opportunities for private sector and governmental partnerships, and through the development of accurate and reliable data about minority firms. MBDA is looking for projects that include or support research and technology transfer, digital innovation, use of machine learning and artificial intelligence, and entrepreneurship. Projects should incorporate the use of these concepts to assist clients or plan to provide management and technical assistance to businesses based on technological advancement and innovative concepts, or both.

1. The following program priorities should be considered in an application for an award under this Announcement:

a) Collaborative workspaces (Hubs) – Applicants should submit proposals that create a collaborative working space for individual and group clients and other business development interests. Start-up and growth-based firms with access to shared working spaces co-located with other firms and business development organizations will benefit from the reduced overhead and administrative costs. Co-located spaces will provide applicants with options for meeting rooms, client and partner offices, and working environments that capitalize on shared resources with economic development and corporate partnerships. These facilities and amenities can be shared among start-up and established firms, firms with innovative concepts and laboratories, and entrepreneurship projects. Projects may be located within HBCU or other institutions of higher education.

b) State, regional and local municipal/government partnerships – Executive Order 11625 allows MBDA to provide funding for partnerships with state, local, and regional governments and organizations that have projects designed to overcome the special challenges of minority business enterprises. Proposals under this Announcement may be combined with state, local or regional government and non-public organizations whose projects further minority entrepreneurship, minority business development, and inner-city economic development. Non-federal funding contributions may support indirect costs as further explained in section IV.F of this Announcement. Projects receiving funds under another Federal program are eligible to receive funding under this BAA, but Federal funds received under another Federal program may not be used as part of a non-Federal cost share proposed for a project here.

c) Corporate Partnerships - Applications should include a description of the current corporate partnerships and partnership opportunities for mentor/protégé relationships, sponsorship and supplier diversity opportunities, and teaming opportunities.

d) Financing Resources – Applications should include at least one mechanism for referrals to provide financing resources to minority businesses of all sizes and categories. Collaborations with Community Funding Depository Institution (CFDI) and Minority-Owned Depository Institutions (MDI) funds, and minority fund management organizations, as well as, microlending, crowd sourcing, and other alternative financing mechanisms. Letters of intent from financing entities must be included in the package. See section IV.B.1, Applicant Capability – Organizational Value, of this Announcement.

e) Industry Focus – Projects may include a specific industry focus. MBDA welcomes projects focused on Administrative or agency priorities such as space commercialization, digital economy and e-commerce, technology, research and development for federal and private laboratory product development, and mergers and acquisitions.

2. Agency Requirements for the Initiative

a) Alignment to MBDA Mission – Each proposed project should align, complement and support MBDA's mission to promote the growth and global competitiveness of America's growing minority business enterprise (MBE) community.

f) Service Location - MBDA seeks to fund Projects located in inner city areas having majority minority populations within any U.S. State or U.S. Territory.

b) Performance - Funded projects must align with the MBDA program objectives and priorities (I.A. and I.B. above). Proposed projects must include a determination for success and impact in the proposal. Applicants must use reliable evidence and data to measure progress, outcomes, and impact. The proposed performance criteria must be included in the award recipient's semi-annual and annual reports. MBDA will use the award recipient's submitted reports, data, and information to determine Project success. MBDA may also use the reports, data, and information as evidence for future program design, policy recommendations, and/or statistical purposes. At a minimum, proposals must include the following categories to measure program success and performance:
(1) Clients served, including the number of clients on a factual model, including new clients (clientele may include groups and teams of similarly situated businesses as well as individual clients);
i. Service includes presentations, group and individual client meetings, seminars, and

webinars.
(2) Potential clients reached, based on technology employed and contacts through websites and virtual access to programming;
(3) Workspace capacity and usage, in terms of availability to MBEs and programming offered;
(4) Digital or innovative systems employed (by the provider or acquired by the MBEs assisted);
(5) Number of governmental programs employed and partnerships;
(6) Number of corporate programs employed and partnerships; and
(7) Number of financing referrals and financial institution relationships engaged.

C. Program Authority

In the Fiscal Year 2020 appropriations bill, Congress authorized MBDA to provide funding through grants, contracts, and other agreements with public or private organizations. See Consolidated Appropriations Act of 2020, Pub. L. No. 116-93 (December 20, 2019). MBDA is authorized pursuant to Executive Order 11625 to provide financial assistance to public and private organizations so that they may render technical and management assistance to minority business enterprises and defray all or part of the costs of pilot or demonstration projects conducted by public or private agencies or organizations which are designed to overcome the special challenges of minority business enterprises.

II. Award Information

A. Funding Availability

MBDA expects a total of approximately $2,800,000 for financial assistance awards under this Announcement. Federal funding in the amount of $1,400,000 in FY2020 appropriated funds is available at this time for Year 1 of the awards. MBDA anticipates spending $1,400,000 in FY2021 for Year 2 of the awards. The funding amounts referenced in this BAA are subject to the availability of appropriated funds. Publication of this BAA does not obligate the U.S. Department of Commerce or MBDA to award any specific grant or cooperative agreement or to obligate all or any part of available funds.

B. Project/Award Period

Applications should be submitted for a two (2) year award period. MBDA will issue awards for a two-year term from September 1, 2020 through August 31, 2022. Receipt of any prospective funding also is contingent upon the availability of funds from Congress and

continued relevance to program objectives and will be at the sole discretion of the Department of Commerce.

C. Type of Funding Instrument

Selected applicant(s) will receive funding through a grant or cooperative agreement. Cooperative agreements include substantial involvement by the Agency. After the award is made, MBDA staff may assist or guide the Project by means of a post-award conference.

Notification of the Award
Anticipated time for processing the award is approximately one-hundred twenty (120) days from the receipt of application(s). MBDA anticipates award(s) will be made with a start date of September 1, 2020.

III. Eligibility Information

A. Eligible Applicants

Eligible applicants: For-profit entities (including but not limited to sole-proprietorships, partnerships, limited liability companies, and corporations), non-profit organizations, institutions of higher education, commercial organizations, state and local government entities, quasi-government entities, Indian Tribal governments, Tribal entities, and Native Hawaiian entities in any U.S. State or U.S. Territory.

B. Cost Sharing or Matching Requirement

Cost sharing is not required unless it is determined by the applicant that the Project can only be funded with matching/cost sharing funds. Applicants are encouraged to leverage non-Federal matching/cost sharing funds.

C. Other Criteria that Affect Eligibility

None

IV. Application and Submission Information

A. Address to Request Application Package

All application materials and forms are available at the grants.gov website (http://www.grants.gov). Helpful competition materials such as FAQs 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, Nakita Chambers (see Agency Contacts, for contact information).

B. Content and Form of Application

General Requirements. The application must provide sufficient information for the agency to make a determination on the merit of the proposal. Each applicant's proposal must describe in detail the project deliverables that address Program Priorities (see Section I.B.1 Program Priorities above) as well as meet content requirements below.

1. Content Requirements

a) A Complete Application - An application must be submitted for each proposal under this Announcement. Applications should include the elements for each section as described below in order to be eligible for the maximum consideration. Applications that fail to include all the necessary elements may not be reviewed or considered and may be disqualified (see Section E. Application Review Information. A complete application should contain the following:

(1) Title Page (One (1) page limit)
At a minimum, the application title page must provide the applicant's name, address, telephone number, email address, date of submission, and the Funding Opportunity Number. Applicants are also encouraged to provide the following additional information: project's title, total budget, start and end dates, and the names, affiliations, complete mailing addresses, email addresses, and telephone numbers of all persons affiliated with the proposal.

(2) Table of Contents (One (1) page limit)
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.

(3) Applicant Narrative (Ten (10) page limit)

A detailed narrative with defined sections as described below.
(a) Project Synopsis (Two (2) paragraph limit) It is critical that the project synopsis state the MBDA priorities that are addressed through the applicant's proposed Project in the first line. The MBDA priorities are identified and described in Section I.B. Program Priorities of

this Announcement. The project synopsis must accurately summarize the Project being proposed and convey all essential elements of the activities.

(b) Project Description. The applicant should fully describe and explain the project being proposed, including:

i. a description of the proposed Project that thoroughly explains the approach, methodology, implementation and operation of the proposal over the entire period of performance;

ii. an approach that clearly demonstrates innovation, creativity, cost-efficiency, a strong likelihood of achieving the desired outcome, and the capability of being deployed in the near term (2-3 months of award) and of having an impact in the near term (6-12 months of award) or long term (within 1-2 years of award);

iii. a concept of operations that clearly describes a process, method, or model upon which the Project will meet specific objectives (i.e., defined measures), outputs and outcomes or goals;

iv. a description of specific work requirements from beginning to end and how the proposed Project will accomplish the stated initiative;

v. success indicators using defined and relevant measure(s) and goal(s); and

vi. a description of how the Project will be able to adapt to any operational and/or performance challenges.

Literature cited in the project description may be submitted to support the project description statements in this section.

(c) Applicant Capability. The applicant must present information describing the experience and qualifications of the organization to carry out the proposal. The application should include the following information.

i. Organizational Outline. A concise outline of what the applicant organization does, a discussion of experience with similar projects or services as that proposed, an explanation of experience dealing with the specific subject matter involved with the MBDA initiative the proposal covers, and a list of previous or current projects or services relevant to the proposal.

ii. Organizational Background. An organizational background that emphasizes the applicant’s knowledge of the minority business sector and strategies for enhancing its growth, expansion, and capacity building related to the MBDA initiative under this BAA.

iii. Organizational Structure. A chart showing the applicant’s organizational structure during the period for which the proposal applies, along with a functional statement noting the duties and/or responsibilities of all units that comprise the organization. Applicants must

also provide a brief narrative background statement outlining the financial operation of the organization.

iv. Organizational Value. A section that highlights the applicant's organizational value to partner with MBDA and other relevant and established/proposed partnerships. If the applicant proposes to leverage third-party partnerships and their respective resources to accomplish the proposed Project under this BAA, the applicant will need to provide proof of commitment by the third party as an attached document in the proposal.

v. Biographies or Resumes for Major Participant(s). The applicant should provide a one-page bio or resume showing only relevant experience of the major Project participants. Major participants include the organization leader, financial management officer, and/or Project manager/daily supervisor of the proposed Project.

vi. Proof of Capability. Applicants are also encouraged to provide proof of capability such as (but not limited to) public records of accomplishments, public citations, and/or letters of referrals as attachments in the proposal.

(d) Project Goals and Objectives. The applicant must provide a detailed list of Project components and a statement of objectives for each component. This statement must include:
i. clear objectives and specific approaches to achieving its Project description and those objectives;

ii. an implementation schedule that specifically outlines the coordination of all Project components, organizational activities, timelines, relevant measures with expected outputs, projected outcomes and impact; and

iii. annual goals and a break-out of the goals in six-month increments.

(4) Supporting Documents (Three (3) page limit)
Literature Cited (if applicable). The applicant may provide additional information that supports the proposed Project. Literature Cited (if submitted) may support scoring under the Applicant Narrative – Project Description criterion as noted above.

(5) Standard Forms (SF) and Budget Narrative
The applicant must provide the required SF, attachments and budget information as described in the section below.

(a) Standard Application Forms. Please refer to the application package available through

www.Grants.gov. Please review each form to determine which are required with a submission. Each applicant may not be required to submit all forms listed, depending on the project type or the applicant type.

i. Signed SF-424. The SF-424 must be signed by the authorized representative. Electronic signatures submitted through grants.gov satisfy this requirement. One form will cover all funding periods.
ii. SF-424A. Budget Information-Non-Construction Programs.
iii. SF-424B. Assurances for Non-Construction Programs. Budget Narrative Must be completed and submitted for all non-construction applications.
iv. SF-LLL Disclosure of Lobbying Activities.
v. Commerce Department (CD)-511. Certification Regarding Lobbying. Certification regarding debarment, suspension and other responsibility matters, drug free workplace requirements and lobbying.

(b) Budget Breakdown. 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 if provided in the appropriate areas of the SF-424 and SF424A. Costs must align.

(c) Budget Narrative. (Five (5) page limit). The applicant must provide justifications for all budget items in sufficient detail to enable the proposal reviewers to evaluate the appropriateness of the funding requested. The budget justification must be broken-out and detailed using the same budget categories as the SF-424A. Costs must align.
All of the applicant's proposed expenditures for the Project must be broken-down into their individual units and discussed. The budget narrative must match the proposed line item budget (as found in the SF-424A). The budget narrative must also align with work activities, goals, staffing, and other proposed resources. Fringe benefits and other percentage item calculations must match the SF-424A, for the proposal year.

(d) Required Travel Item(s). Each applicant should include travel costs for key personnel to attend the following three items:

i. MBDA's post award conference (held via teleconference)
ii. Minority Enterprise Development Week
iii. MBDA National Training Conference
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 in the budget narrative and align with the SF-424A to enable proposal reviewers to determine if the cost is

allowable, allocable and reasonable. One-word descriptions and lump sum amounts are not adequate for justifying costs or narrative descriptions. 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 Project and its objectives.

The Office of Management and Budget (OMB) Uniform Guidance will be used to determine allowable costs and will apply to the entire amount of the 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 Part 200 (2015).
Please refer to section H. “Other Information” of this Announcement for additional information pertaining to required travel.

(6) Format Requirements

All pages should be single-spaced and should be composed in at least 11-point font with one-inch margins on 8-1/2 inch x 11 inch paper. The total proposal shall not exceed 20 pages, including the title page, table of contents, applicant narrative, literature cited, budget narrative, letters of support or letters of commitment (if any) and organizational structure. The following items are not included in the 20-page limit: resumes/bios of key personnel and required forms. Failure to follow the requirements may result in the rejection of the application. Any PDF or other attachments that are included in an electronic application must meet the above format requirement when printed.

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

Each applicant (unless the applicant is a 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:

1. Register in SAM before submitting an application;
2. Provide a valid unique entity identifier in the application; and,
3. 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 the award, MBDA may determine that the applicant is not qualified to receive a Federal award and use that

determination as a basis for making an award to another applicant.

D. Submission Dates and Times

All proposals must be received on or before May 15, 2020 at 11:59 pm Eastern Daylight Time. Applications may be submitted on a rolling basis starting from the publication date of this Broad Agency Announcement (BAA) up to the deadline above. Applications received after this time will not be reviewed or considered for funding. Applications must be submitted electronically via www.grants.gov. The electronic submission will receive a date and time stamp at www.grants.gov and will be processed after it is fully uploaded. Applicants should anticipate receiving confirmation of successful submission within forty-eight (48) hours. It is imperative that applicants obtain this confirmation as proof of successful submission. Waiting to submit an application until the end of the competition period puts an application at risk; be sure to allow ample time.

E. Intergovernmental Review

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

F. Funding Restrictions

Applicants requesting an indirect cost rate (IDC) are required to submit a copy of their current and signed indirect cost rate agreement with the application package.

If an applicant does not have a current Facilities and Administrative (Indirect) Cost Rate Agreement that was negotiated and approved by the Department of Commerce (or by the applicable cognizant Federal agency), please provide a statement to this effect. The applicant must prepare and submit a cost allocation plan and rate proposal or a negotiated indirect cost rate as required by 2 CFR Part 200 “Uniform Administrative Requirements, Cost Principles and Audit Requirements for Federal Awards.” See 2 CFR § 200.414. The allocation plan and the rate proposal must be submitted to MBDA (or applicable cognizant Federal agency) within ninety (90) days from the award start date.
Alternatively, in accordance with 2 CFR § 200.414(f), a non-Federal entity that has never received a negotiated indirect cost rate, may elect to charge a de minimis rate of 10 percent of modified total direct costs. Applicants proposing a 10 percent de minimis rate pursuant to 2 C.F.R. § 200.414(f) should note this election as part of the budget and budget narrative portion of the application.

Indirect costs proposed under the award must be clearly identified as a separate budget line-item.

G. Other Submission Requirements

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 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 BAA.

a. 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. Information about the registration process can be found at http://www.grants.gov/applicants/get_registered.jsp. Before applying, your organization needs to register with Grants.gov, which requires appointing one or more Authorized Organization Representatives (AOR). Below are instructions for registering as an organization.

Applicants should register as organizations, not individuals. You must register an Authorized Organizational Representative (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.

b. Electronic Submission - The electronic submission date is the date that applications have been submitted electronically and received by www.Grants.gov. Proof of timely submission shall be the official date and time that www.Grants.gov receives your application. You must save and print the proof of submission from/on www.Grants.gov. 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.

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, you must (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 and document a case number regarding your communications with grants.gov.

Important 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) receive 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.

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.

Confirmation of successful submission requires 48 hours. Applicants are advised to review the Grants.gov tutorial to minimize risk of an unsuccessful submission. Please visit http://www.grants.gov/web/grants/applicants/applicant-tools-and-tips.html.

c. Returning Grants.Gov Users - Organizations already registered with Grants.gov do not need to re-register, but the organization must maintain a current 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 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).

Potential applicants should begin registration early, as the complete registration 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). We recognize registration activities take extra time; however, this is part of the security process the U.S. Government must use to prevent fraud and abuse of funds. The Grants.gov application process is outlined below.

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

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).

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

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).

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

Download an application package. Use Funding Opportunity Number MBDA-OBD-2020-2006442 and Download a Grant Application Package (same day).

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

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).

Track my application package. Enter the tracking number you received after Step 8 and click the "Submit Tracking Number(s)" button. Note, confirmation of successful submission may require 48 hours (allow 2 days).

Applications must be submitted electronically via www.grants.gov.

V. Application Review Information

A. Evaluation Criteria

The successful applicant will possess experience that is substantive to the area(s) related to the MBDA Priorities (see section I.B.1) and the “Agency Requirements for the Initiative” (see section I.B.2) will be evaluated based on the evaluation criteria included below. It is also anticipated that the mission of the successful applicant organization will align with the mission of MBDA and the MBDA initiative. The successful applicant also will ensure alignment of budget, resources, objectives, outcomes or goals, and timelines to accomplish

the MBDA initiative.

1. Applicant Narrative (65 points) - This section of the Project proposal will be evaluated on the criteria identified below.

a) Project Description (25 Points). The applicant should fully describe and explain the project being proposed, including:

i. a description of the proposed Project that thoroughly explains the approach, methodology, implementation and operation of the proposal over the entire period of performance; (5 points)

ii. an approach that clearly demonstrates innovation, creativity, cost-efficiency, a strong likelihood of achieving the desired outcome, and the capability of being deployed in the near term (2-3 months of award) and of having an impact in the near term (6-12 months of award) or long term (within 1-2 years of award); (5 points)

iii. a concept of operations that clearly describes a process, method, or model upon which the Project will meet specific objectives (i.e., defined measures), outputs and outcomes or goals;
(5 points)

iv. a description of specific work requirements from beginning to end and how the proposed Project will accomplish the stated initiative; (5 points)

v. success indicators using defined and relevant measure(s) and goal(s); and (3 points)
vi. a description of how the Project will be able to adapt to any operational and/or performance challenges. (2 points)

Literature cited in the project description may be submitted to support the project description statements in this section.

b) Applicant Capability (25 points). The applicant must present information describing the experience and qualifications of the organization to carry out the proposal. The application should include the following information.

i. Organizational Outline. A concise outline of what the applicant organization does, a discussion of experience with similar projects or services as those proposed, and an explanation of experience dealing with the specific subject matter involved with the MBDA

initiative the proposal covers, and a list of previous or current projects or services relevant to the proposal.
(5 points)

ii. Organizational Background. An organizational background that emphasizes the applicant's knowledge of the minority business sector and strategies for enhancing its growth, expansion and capacity building related to the MBDA initiative under this BAA. (5 points)

iii. Organizational Structure. A chart showing the applicant's organizational structure during the period for which the proposal applies, along with a functional statement noting the duties and/or responsibilities of all units that comprise the organization. Applicants must also provide a brief narrative background statement outlining the financial operation of the organization.
(5 points)

iv. Organizational Value. A section that highlights the applicant's organizational value to partner with MBDA and other relevant and established/proposed partnerships. If the applicant proposes to leverage third-party partnerships and their respective resources to accomplish the proposed Project under this BAA, the applicant will need to provide proof of commitment by the third party as an attached document in the proposal. (5 points)

v. Biographies or Resumes for Major Participant(s). The applicant should provide a one-page bio or resume showing only relevant experience of the major Project participants. Major participants can be defined as the organization leader, financial management officer, and/or Project manager/daily supervisor of the proposed Project. (0 points)

vi. Proof of Capability. Applicants are also encouraged to provide proof of capability such as (but not limited to) public records of accomplishments, public citations, and/or letters of referrals as attachments in the proposal. (5 points)

c) Project Goals and Objectives (15 points). The applicant must provide a detailed list of Project components and a statement of objectives for each component. This statement must include:

i. clear objectives and specific approaches to achieving its Project description and those objectives; (5 points)

ii. an implementation schedule that specifically outlines the coordination of all Project

components, and organizational activities, timelines, relevant measures with expected outputs, projected outcomes and impact; and (5 points)

iii. annual goals and a break-out of the goals in six-month increments. (5 points)

Evaluation Criteria	Points
Project Description (up to 25 points)	25
Applicant Capability (up to 25 points)	25
Project Goals and Objectives (up to 15 points)	15
Applicant Narrative Total	65

2. Applicant Budget (35 points) - This section of the Project proposal will be evaluated on the criteria identified below, which provides detailed budget and cost proposal requirements.

a) Budget Breakdown (15 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 if provided in the appropriate areas of the SF-424 and SF424A. Costs must align.

b) Budget Narrative (20 points). The applicant must provide justifications for all budget items in sufficient detail to enable the proposal reviewers to evaluate the appropriateness of the funding requested. The budget justification must be broken-out and detailed using the same budget categories as the SF-424A. Costs must align.

All of the applicant's proposed expenditures for the Project must be broken-down into their individual units and discussed. The budget narrative must match the proposed line item budget (as found in the SF-424A). The budget narrative must also align with work activities, goals, staffing, and other proposed resources. Fringe benefits and other percentage item calculations must match the SF-424A, for the proposal year.

(a) Required Travel Item(s). Each applicant should include travel costs for key personnel to attend the following three items:

i. MBDA's post award conference (held via teleconference)
ii. Minority Enterprise Development Week
iii. MBDA National Training Conference

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 in the budget

narrative and align with the SF-424A to enable proposal reviewers to determine if the cost is allowable, allocable and reasonable. One-word descriptions and lump sum amounts are not adequate for justifying costs or narrative descriptions. 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 Project and its objectives.

Evaluation Criteria	Points
Budget Breakdown (up to 15 points)	15
Budget Narrative (up to 20 points)	20
Applicant Evaluation Total	35
Total Available Points	100

All applications must adhere to the submission guidelines provided in this section and section IV.B.1.a, “A Complete Application.” Omissions will result in the deduction of points from the final score according to the table below up to and including disqualification of the entire application.

Mandatory Item	Failure to Adhere Shall Result In
Title Page	- 5 Point Deduction
Table of Contents	- 5 Point Deduction
Applicant Narrative	- Disqualification
Budget Narrative	- Disqualification
Required Standard Forms (SF) and Attachments	- Disqualification

All Project proposals will be evaluated and applicant(s) will be selected based on the level at which the proposal addresses the evaluation criteria above, less any points deducted for failure to include the mandatory items noted above.

B. Review and Selection Process

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

a) The application is received after the closing date;
b) The application package is not complete;
c) The project synopsis/description fails to address the above-listed agency program

objectives (see Section I.B.I “Program Priorities” and Section I.B.2., “Agency Requirements”);
d) The application falls within the scope of an existing MBDA competitive program or announcement for Federal Funding or duplicates a project previously awarded;
e) The principal purpose of the activities in the application is to provide a direct benefit or service to MBDA.

2. 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 criteria. 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 individual scores for each proposal based on the criteria set out in this Section (see Application Review Information, above) for a maximum of 100 points. The Applicant Narrative section of the application will be eligible for a total of 65 points; the Applicant Budget section will be eligible for 35 points. The review panel may discuss the application(s) but will not provide a consensus on scores for each applicant. Each application will be reviewed against the criteria individually (i.e. applications will not be compared to others).

Each merit review panel (through the panel Chairperson) shall complete an evaluation with corresponding score. The Chairperson of the merit review panel will be responsible for averaging reviewers’ scores and collating reviewer comments. Applications that receive an overall average of 75 points or more will be considered for funding. Applications receiving an average score of 60 to 74 points may be given a second consideration for funding if the panel requests additional information or clarification and if the applicant is able to respond to the panel’s request for additional information/clarification within an allotted time. Thereafter, the Merit Review Panel may rescore these applications. Applications receiving fewer than 60 points will not be considered for funding.

C. Selection Factors

3. Recommendation and Selection - Applications receiving an average score of 75 points or higher or given a second consideration (as noted above) will be forwarded to the MBDA Program Manager for review and consideration of the merit panel evaluation, overall average score, and innovation and noted strengths. Upon completion, the MBDA Program Manager will forward funding recommendations to the Selecting Official.

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 Announcement. The Selecting Official will recommend funding for applications evaluated as meritorious based on the merit panel review and any of the following selection factors: the availability of funds and/or Presidential, Department of Commerce, and MBDA priorities.

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

4. Federal Awarding Agency Review of Risk Posed by Applicants - After applications are proposed for funding by the Selecting Official, the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) Grants Management Division (GMD) will conduct pre-award risk assessments in accordance with 2 C.F.R. § 200.205, which may include a review 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. In addition, for any Federal award under this notice where the Federal share will be greater than the simplified acquisition threshold (currently $150,000; see 2 CFR § 200.88) over the period of performance: (1) MBDA 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; and (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.

D. Anticipated Announcement and Award Dates

Anticipated time for processing awards is one hundred twenty (120) days from the receipt of applications. MBDA anticipates that the awards under this BAA will be made with start dates of September 1, 2020. Successful applicants may be eligible for pre-award costs.

VI. Award Administration Information

A. Award Notices

A. Federal Award Notices

The notice of award (CD-450) is executed by the Department of Commerce Grants Officer and is the authorizing 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.

Anticipated time for processing the award is approximately one hundred twenty (120) days from the receipt of application(s). MBDA anticipates award(s) will be made with a start date of September 1, 2020.

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 not ultimately selected for funding will be retained by MBDA for a period of three (3) years 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.

B. Administrative and National Policy Requirements

Administrative and National Policy Requirements

Administrative and national policy requirements for all Department of Commerce awards 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 and may be accessed online at: https://www.federalregister.gov/documents/2014/12/30/2014-30297/department-ofcommerce-pre-award-notification-requirements-for-grants-and-cooperativeagreements

Awards made under this announcement are subject to the Department of Commerce Financial Assistance Standard Terms and Conditions. This document will be provided in the award package. This document can be found at: http://www.osec.doc.gov/oam/grants_management/policy/documents/

Uniform Administrative Requirements, Cost Principles, and Audit Requirements:
Through 2 C.F.R. § 1327.101, the Department of Commerce adopted Uniform Administrative Requirements, Cost Principles, and Audit Requirements for Federal

Awards at 2 C.F.R. Part 200, which apply to awards in this program. Refer to http://go.usa.gov/SBYh and http://go.usa.gov/SBg4

C. Reporting

a. Project Monitoring - The Project is funded for one-year at a time. MBDA will conduct performance assessments every six months from the start date of the project.

MBDA will conduct periodic assessments of the Project to verify progress. MBDA will conduct ongoing monitoring through the funding award period and maintain open communications with key Project staff. The level of monitoring will be dependent on the awarded applicant's proposed performance measures, milestones (e.g., outputs and outcomes), and goals.

b. Financial Reports - The Project is required to provide the following reports:
(1) Financial Reports –The financial report shall include details on the use of Federal funds and contributions of non-Federal funds (if proposed). The financial reports are to be submitted to the Department of Commerce via Grants Online on a semi-annual and annual basis. The semi-annual report is due forty-five (45) days after the end of the initial six-month period. The annual report is due within ninety (90) days after the expiration of the award.

(2) Progress Performance Report - are to be submitted to the Department of Commerce via Grants Online on a semi-annual and annual basis. The semi-annual report is due forty-five (45) days after the end of the initial six-month period. The annual report is due within ninety (90) days after the expiration of the award.

The semi-annual and annual reports must include data and information to determine Project progression and success. MBDA will rely on these reports, data, and information as evidence for future program design, policy recommendations, and/or statistical purposes.
Note: failure to submit reports in a timely manner may result in MBDA award enforcement and/or delay access to Federal funds.

c. Federal Funding Accountability and Transparency Act of 2006 Reporting - The Federal Funding Accountability and Transparency Act of 2006, 31 U.S.C. 6101 note, includes a requirement for awardees of applicable federal grants to report information about first-tier sub-awards and executive compensation under Federal assistance awards. 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 CFR Parts 170 and 200, which can be accessed at:

http://www.ecfr.gov/cgi-in/textidx?tpl=/ecfrbrowse/Title02/2cfr200_main_02.tpl.

d. 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 will be required in a format requested by NOAA before any award will be made under this NOFO.

VII. Agency Contacts

Prospective applicants may contact:

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

VIII. Other Information

A. Pre-Application Teleconference

MBDA will conduct a pre-application teleconference on April 29, 2020. The time of the pre-application teleconference is 2:00 – 3:00 p.m. E.D.T. Participants must register at least 24 hours in advance of the teleconference. Please visit the MBDA Internet Portal at www.mbda.gov to register and view additional information.

B. Post Award Conference (held via teleconfence)

MBDA shall conduct a mandatory post-award conference(s) to ensure that the successful applicant has a clear understanding of the Project award, terms, conditions and expectations. The post award conference will be no more than two (2) hours in duration. During the post-award conference, MBDA will: introduce Federal officers, orient the Project operator and key Project staff, explain Project reporting requirements and procedures, identify available Federal resources that can enhance the capabilities of the Project, and provide detailed information about MBDA’s virtual marketing/promotion resources, branding and logo requirements, and other online systems.

C. National Minority Enterprise Development (MED) Week Conference
The Project operator and key Project staff will be required to attend the MED Week conference unless otherwise noted by MBDA. MED Week is a national recognition of the success and contributions of minority business enterprises to the U.S. economy. MED Week is proclaimed by the President of the United States. MBDA conducts an annual conference featuring workshops, seminars, and business matchmaking activities that inform minority business 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 location of MED week varies annually in major cities across the country.

Note: applicants should include expenses related to MED Week in the proposed budget, including travel and registration. The duration of the conference is approximately 3 days.

D. National Training Conference
The Project operator and key Project staff will be required to attend the MBDA National Training Conference (NTC), unless otherwise noted by MBDA. The NTC is a 2-3-day conference designed to review key MBDA initiatives among all MBDA sponsored programs 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.

Note: applicants should include expenses related to the NTC in the proposed budget, including travel. The duration of the conference is approximately 2-3 days.

E. Collaboration with MBDA
MBDA welcomes working collaboratively with each award recipient and Project to serve the minority business community. The Project and its staff are encouraged to support MBDA by communicating the mission and values of the MBDA to the minority business community. Collaboration with MBDA may include items such as: promotion of MBDA sanctioned events and conferences, annual nomination of minority businesses for MED Week recognition, inclusion of MBDA to Project-lead activities, use of an MBDA designated logo and signage for Project-lead activities and website, submission of Project success stories and/or profiles for MBDA social media promotion, and co-promotion of Project and MBDA lead activities.

F. 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.

G. Limitation of Liability

In no event will MBDA or the Department of Commerce be responsible for preparation costs for the Applicant's proposal. All funding periods under the award are subject to the availability of funds to support the continuation of the Project. Publication of this Announcement does not obligate MBDA or the Department of Commerce to award any specific project or to obligate any available funds.

H. 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 period 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.

I. Right to Use Information

DOC reserves the right to use information contained in applications submitted under this opportunity as well as all reports and performance data submitted by recipients to undertake an evaluation of its programs, either through its staff or by hiring a third party. The applicant acknowledges and understands that information and data contained in applications for financial assistance, as well as information and data contained in financial, performance, and

other reports submitted by applicants, may be used by the DOC in conducting reviews and evaluations of its financial assistance programs. For this purpose, applicant information and data may be accessed, reviewed and evaluated by DOC employees, other Federal employees, Federal agents and contractors, and/or by non-Federal personnel, all of whom enter into appropriate confidentiality and nondisclosure agreements covering the use of such information. As may be provided in the terms and conditions of a specific financial assistance award, applicants are expected to support program reviews and evaluations by submitting required financial and performance information and data in an accurate and timely manner and by cooperating with DOC and external program evaluators. In accordance with 2 C.F.R. § 200.303(e), applicants are reminded that they must take reasonable measures to safeguard protected personally identifiable information and other confidential or sensitive personal or business information created or obtained in connection with a DOC Federal financial assistance award.

J. Freedom of Information Act Disclosure

Department of Commerce regulations implementing the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA), 5 U.S.C. Sec. 552, are found at 15 C.F.R. Part 4, Public Information. These regulations set forth rules for the Department regarding making requested materials, information, and records publicly available under the FOIA. Applications submitted in response to this Notice of Funding Opportunity may be subject to requests for release under the Act. In the event that an application contains information or data that the applicant deems to be confidential commercial information that should be exempt from disclosure under FOIA, that information should be identified, bracketed, and marked as Privileged, Confidential, Commercial or Financial Information. In accordance with 15 CFR § 4.9, the Department of Commerce will protect from disclosure confidential business information contained in financial assistance applications and other documentation provided by applicants to the extent permitted by law.