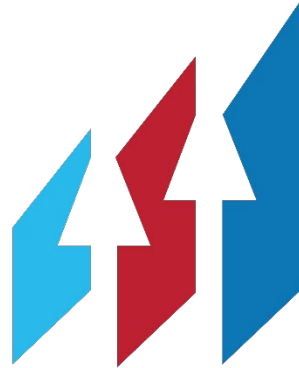


MBDA Rural Business Center Program NOFO
Funding Opportunity Number MBDA-OBC-

FY 2026 Notice of Funding Opportunity



MBDA
MINORITY BUSINESS
DEVELOPMENT AGENCY
UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

MBDA Rural Business Center Program

MBDA Rural Business Center Program NOFO
Funding Opportunity Number MBDA-OBC-

NOTICE OF FUNDING OPPORTUNITY

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Federal Awarding Agency Name	Minority Business Development Agency (MBDA), U.S. Department of Commerce (DOC)
Funding Opportunity Title	MBDA Rural Business Center Program
Announcement Type	Initial: This Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO) is publishing application submission requirements and application review procedures for MBDA’s Rural Business Center Program through which MBDA plans to award cooperative agreements to eligible entities to operate MBDA Rural Business Centers.
Funding Opportunity Number	MBDA-OBC-2026-00003
Assistance Listing Number(s)	11.805 Minority Business Center
Key Dates and Application Submission Instructions	<p>Application Deadline: Due June 29, 2026, by 11:59 p.m. Eastern Daylight Time.</p> <p>Applications may be submitted starting from the publication date of this NOFO up to the deadline above. Applications must be submitted electronically via grants.gov. Applications sent via email, regular mail, or any other method must be pre-approved by MBDA. See section IV D.</p> <p>Applicants are encouraged to apply early to allow adequate time to make any corrections to errors found in the application during the submission process by the due date.</p> <p>Applicants should be aware that on-time submission means that an application is submitted error free (of both Grants.gov and eRA Commons errors) by 11:59 PM Eastern Daylight Time on the application due date.</p> <p>Applicants are responsible for ensuring the completeness of their application.</p>
Funding Opportunity Description	The Rural Business Center Program will provide awards to support technical assistance, capacity building, and entrepreneurial development services to rural business enterprises at all stages, from ideation to maturity.

MBDA Rural Business Center Program NOFO
Funding Opportunity Number MBDA-OBC-

Funding Instrument	Assistance will be in the form of cooperative agreements.
Funding Details	Approximately \$14,500,000 for 5 - 7 awards.
Cost Share and Match Requirements	The eligible Applicant shall provide a cost share or match of 20% of the total amount of Federal funding to be made available for the award. See section III.B. below.
Eligible Applicants	<p>Under the MBDA Act (15 U.S.C. § 9551(2)), eligible Applicants are limited to institutions of higher education described in any of paragraphs (1) through (7) of section 371(a) of the Higher Education Act of 1965 (20 U.S.C. § 1067q(a)). Consortia of institutions of higher education are also eligible so long as the designated lead Applicant that would enter into the award agreement with MBDA and assume primary operational and financial responsibility for completing the project should an award be made, is an eligible institute of higher education described in any of paragraphs (1) through (7) of section 371(a) of the Higher Education Act of 1965 (20 U.S.C. § 1067q(a)).</p> <p>Requests from individuals will not be considered for funding.</p> <p>See section III.A. below.</p>
Pre-Application Technical Assistance Webinars and Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) Document	<p>MBDA will conduct a pre-application technical assistance webinar. The webinar is designed to help prospective Applicants understand the Program so they can prepare competitive applications.</p> <p>Dates and times for the webinar described above and any additional webinars will be posted on the MBDA website. Participants should register at least 24 hours in advance of any webinars. Please visit the MBDA website at www.mbda.gov to register and view recordings of the webinars, as well as other additional information.</p> <p>MBDA will post responses to questions in a compilation of “Frequently Asked Questions” (FAQ) on its website. The FAQ will be updated regularly throughout the application period.</p> <p>Webinar participants can submit questions for possible MBDA inclusion in the FAQs. In addition, Applicants may send questions to MBDA via email at RBC@mbda.gov. Please note that MBDA will not provide individual responses to questions.</p>
Award Notification	If selected for potential award and approved by the Selection Official, the Applicant can anticipate receiving an award within a

MBDA Rural Business Center Program NOFO
Funding Opportunity Number MBDA-OBC-

	reasonable time after the closing date of the NOFO.
Agency Contacts	For questions concerning this NOFO, including requests for technical assistance with application requirements, please contact MBDA via email at RBC@mbda.gov .

MBDA Rural Business Center Program NOFO
Funding Opportunity Number MBDA-OBC-

TABLE OF CONTENTS

I.	Program Description.....	7
A.	Program Objectives and Priorities.....	7
B.	Statutory Authority.....	8
II.	Award Information	8
A.	Funding Availability	8
B.	Project/Award Period.....	8
C.	Type of Funding Instrument.....	9
III.	Eligibility Information.....	9
A.	Eligible Applicants.....	9
B.	Cost Share or Matching Requirement	10
C.	Other Criteria That May Affect Eligibility	11
IV.	Application and Submission Information.....	11
A.	Address to Request Application Package.....	11
B.	Content and Form of Application.....	11
C.	Unique Entity Identifier and System for Award Management (SAM)	18
D.	Submission Requirements	18
E.	Submission Dates and Times	21
F.	Intergovernmental Review	22
G.	Funding Restrictions	22
V.	Application Review Information.....	22
A.	Evaluation Criteria	23
B.	Review and Selection Process.....	25
C.	Anticipated Announcement and Federal Award Dates	27
VI.	Award Administration Information.....	27
A.	Award Notices.....	27
B.	Administrative and National Policy Requirements.....	28
C.	Reporting.....	30
VII.	Agency Contact(s).....	32
VIII.	Other Information	32
A.	Conferences.....	32
B.	Collaboration with MBDA.....	33

MBDA Rural Business Center Program NOFO
Funding Opportunity Number MBDA-OBC-

C. Past Performance and Non-Compliance with Award Provisions..... 34

D. Limitation of Liability 34

E. Audit Costs 34

F. Right to Use Information..... 34

G. Freedom of Information Act Disclosure 35

H. NOFO Changes Communicated on Grants.gov 35

I. Termination 35

[J. Executive Order 14173: Ending Illegal Discrimination and Restoring Merit-Based Opportunity](#) 36

K. Prohibition on Using Federal awards to Promote or Support Theories of Disparate-Impact Liability 37

APPENDICES

MBDA Rural Business Center Program NOFO
Funding Opportunity Number MBDA-OBC-

I. Program Description

A. Program Objectives and Priorities

Through this Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO) from the Minority Business Development Agency (MBDA), MBDA will provide awards to eligible entities to operate MBDA Rural Business Centers (“RBCs” or “Centers”). RBCs will provide technical assistance, capacity building and entrepreneurial development services to businesses in rural areas throughout all phases of the business process, from ideation to launch and growth, including supporting rural businesses. These could range from the ideation stage (*e.g.*, pre-start-up) to any level of revenue and profitability.

MBDA is soliciting competitive applications from eligible entities for the operation of RBCs as described in this Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO).

The Act established key priorities for this Program designed to overcome the unique challenges faced by rural businesses. In addition to providing technical assistance, capacity building, and entrepreneurial development services, RBCs also will serve as a resource navigator to help strengthen the entrepreneurial ecosystem and support businesses with issues related to:

- Adoption and accessibility of broadband internet access;
- Digital literacy skills, including but not limited to specialized focus on understanding, engaging with, and safely using AI to advance and supplement business activities;
- Leveraging e-commerce;
- Promoting U.S. manufacturing, particularly advanced manufacturing in the United States by encouraging entrepreneurs to support skilled trades training for their workforce;
- Promoting trade and export opportunities;
- Securing financial capital;
- Facilitating entrepreneurship in rural areas;
- Creating jobs in rural areas;
- Helping rural businesses meet gaps in the supply chain of critical supplies and essential goods and services for the United States;
- Improving the connectivity of rural businesses through transportation and logistics;
- Promoting workforce skills development in support of rural business endeavors; and
- Any other issue relating to the unique challenges faced by rural business.

See 15 U.S.C. § 9552(c).

An RBC may be located in any U.S. state or territory and must provide services that benefit rural businesses.

Rural Business Center Program Requirements

a) Each proposed Center must align, complement, and support priorities to promote the growth and global competitiveness of America’s rural businesses. The Applicant should demonstrate how they will leverage public and private sector resources, strategic partnerships

MBDA Rural Business Center Program NOFO
Funding Opportunity Number MBDA-OBC-

and alliances, and inherent resources available through their region's academic institutions, consortium(s), partnership(s) and/or subcontractors that will further support rural businesses through training, consulting, and development.

b) Service Population and Area – MBDA seeks to fund projects with clearly defined geographic service areas; however, a Center may serve any rural business located in any U.S. state or territory.

c) Services – Funded projects must align with the MBDA program objectives and priorities in this section (*i.e.*, section I.A. of the NOFO). The Center must provide management and technical assistance (*i.e.*, business consulting services, business training services, business triage, and referral) to rural business clients that support their respective entrepreneurial development and capacity building journey. The Center will provide education, training, legal, financial, and technical assistance to rural businesses directly and/or through partner(s).

d) Performance – Funded projects shall be monitored regularly to track progress. The defined measures and goals are aligned to key outputs, outcomes, and impacts under this program.

B. Statutory Authority

The statutory authority for the MBDA Rural Business Center Program is 15 U.S.C. §§ 9551-9552.

II. Award Information

A. Funding Availability

In fiscal year (FY) 2026 under this NOFO, MBDA expects to obligate approximately \$14.5 million for 5-7 financial assistance awards for selected proposals. The awards, which MBDA anticipates funding at approximately \$2,250,000 to \$3,000,000, will have an overall three-year period of performance (*see* 15 U.S.C. § 9552(b)(3)).

At this time in FY2026, MBDA will fund three-year awards at approximately \$2,250,000 to \$3,000,000.

Publication of this NOFO does not oblige MBDA or the DOC to award any specific project or to obligate any available funds.

B. Project/Award Period

Subject to availability of funding, MBDA expects to issue awards for a total period of performance of three years from approximately September 1, 2026 – August 31, 2029. Each budget year within the three-year period of performance will be 12 months. Anticipated budget periods are as outlined below.

MBDA Rural Business Center Program NOFO
Funding Opportunity Number MBDA-OBC-

Budget Year	Months	Anticipated Start and End Dates – for budget planning	
Year 1	12 months	September 1, 2026	August 31, 2027
Year 2	12 months	September 1, 2027	August 31, 2028
Year 3	12 months	September 1, 2028	August 31, 2029

C. Type of Funding Instrument

Funding will be made through a cooperative agreement. After the award is made, MBDA will be substantially involved in the activities of this Program, including but not limited to the following anticipated activities:

- Providing training relating to the purpose of this Program, eligible activities, and program performance measures.
- Requiring recipients to participate in a pre-implementation conference with MBDA to review the proposed services and performance measures that the recipient will provide and measure.
- Providing necessary guidance that encourages collaboration between other MBDA programs and initiatives.
- Facilitating collaborations with DOC programs and other federal agency programs as appropriate.
- Monitoring activities carried out by the awardee, including by soliciting feedback from enrolled businesses.
- Conducting periodic Program evaluations and providing findings for improvement.
- Establishing and enforcing administrative, communications, and reporting requirements for each awardee.
- Providing access to and training for a performance management reporting system.

III. Eligibility Information

A. Eligible Applicants

Under the MBDA Act (15 U.S.C. § 9551), eligible Applicants are limited to:

(1) institutions of higher education described in any of paragraphs (1) through (7) of section 371(a) of the Higher Education Act of 1965 (20 U.S.C. § 1067q(a)). Therefore, eligible Applicants are limited to:

- a Historically Black College or University (see definition of “part B institution” in 20 U.S.C. § 1061(2));
- a Hispanic-serving institution (as defined in 20 U.S.C. § 1101a);
- a Tribal College or University (as defined in 20 U.S.C § 1059c);
- an Alaska Native-serving institution or a Native Hawaiian-serving institution (as defined in 20 U.S.C. § 1059d(b));

MBDA Rural Business Center Program NOFO
Funding Opportunity Number MBDA-OBC-

- a Predominantly Black Institution (as defined in 20 U.S.C. § 1067q(c)(9));
- an Asian American and Native American Pacific Islander-serving institution (as defined in 20 U.S.C. § 1067q(c)(2)); or
- a Native American-serving nontribal institution (as defined in 20 U.S.C. § 1067q(c)(8)); or

(2) a consortium of institutions of higher education that is led by an institution of higher education described in paragraph (1) above.

Note: In a consortium application, there must be a designated lead Applicant; the lead Applicant would enter into the award agreement with MBDA and assume primary operational and financial responsibility for completing the project should an award be made. For this Program, the lead Applicant must be an institution of higher education described in paragraph (1) above.

MBDA is not authorized to provide cooperative agreements to individuals under this NOFO, and such requests will not be considered for funding.

B. Cost Share or Matching Requirement

A non-Federal cost share of 20% of the Federal funding is required for awards issued pursuant to this NOFO. Non-federal cost sharing is that portion of the project costs not borne by the Federal Government. The applicant's share of expenses may include cash, services, and third-party in-kind contributions, as described at 2 CFR §200.306. The source and detailed rationale of the cost share, including cash, full- and part-time personnel, and in-kind donations, must be documented in the Budget Narrative and Justification submitted with the application. As with the Federal share, any proposed costs included as non-Federal cost sharing must be an allowable/eligible cost under this program and under the Federal cost principles set forth in 2 CFR part 200, Subpart E.

In accordance with section B.03 of the *Department of Commerce Financial Assistance General Terms and Conditions*, the non-Federal share, whether in cash or third-party in-kind contributions, is to be paid out at the same general rate as the Federal share.

Non-federal cost sharing incorporated into the budget of an approved financial assistance award is subject to audit in the same general manner as Federal award funds. See 2 CFR part 200, Subpart F.

Revenue (*e.g.*, program income) may be, but is not required to be, generated from fees for service, client fees, membership fees, or other appropriate fees associated with services or activities funded through this Program as long as they are pre-approved by MBDA. Any program income generated may be used towards the matching requirement unless the matching requirement is met from other cash or in-kind sources. Any income generated in excess of the matching requirement must be used to carry out the activities of the program authorized by the

MBDA Rural Business Center Program NOFO
Funding Opportunity Number MBDA-OBC-

award ([2 CFR § 200.307\(b\)\(2\)](#)). MBDA will review proposed fee structures during application to ensure awardees do not charge fees so high that Program-funded services and activities are not accessible to a broad range of rural businesses.

In accordance with 15 U.S.C. § 9552(b)(2)(B), MBDA may determine, based upon a demonstration by the Applicant of substantial need, that the Applicant shall not be required to provide the full match with respect to the funding to be provided. To qualify for a lower match requirement or no match requirement, an Applicant must submit a request with the application, including an explanation of the substantial need, supporting documentation, and the amount being sought.

C. Other Criteria That May Affect Eligibility

In accordance with 15 U.S.C. § 9552(c)(1), a MBDA Rural Business Center shall primarily serve clients that are rural minority business enterprises, or minority business enterprises that are located more than 50 miles from an MBDA Business Center (other than that MBDA Rural Business Center).

An applicant's consideration of geographic service area may affect MBDA's evaluation of submitted materials.

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 will be made available on the MBDA website (www.mbda.gov).

B. Content and Form of Application

Applications for the Program must be complete and follow the format described in this NOFO. A complete application packet consists of the following forms and required submissions described below. Applications that fail to include all the necessary elements may not be reviewed or considered and may be disqualified.

Required Application Content		
1	Project Abstract	One (1) page limit
2	Project Narrative	Twenty (20) page limit
3	Supporting Documents (<i>i.e.</i> , Letters of Commitment, resumes)	
4	Standard Forms	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none">SF-424 (Application for Federal Assistance)	

MBDA Rural Business Center Program NOFO
Funding Opportunity Number MBDA-OBC-

Required Application Content		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SF-424A (Budget Information Non-Construction Programs) • CD-511 (Certification Regarding Lobbying) • SF-LLL (Disclosure of Lobbying Activities) (if applicable) 	
5	Budget Narrative	
6	Indirect Cost Rate (ICR) Agreement Documentation (if applicable)	
7	Project Performance Worksheet (see section IV.2.c., below, for requirements)	

1. Project Abstract (One (1) page limit)

At a minimum, the Project Abstract page must provide the Applicant’s name, address, telephone number, email address, date of submission, project executive summary, brief description of project goals (the intended impact and what the Applicant hopes to accomplish), and the Funding Opportunity Number. Applicants should also provide the following additional information: the project title, total budget, and start and end dates. Note: The executive summary should be no more than 250 words and include a description of the proposed services and activities as well as the priorities that will be addressed. If your application is selected for funding, MBDA may publish this executive summary, or portions of it, on its or other relevant websites and via social media. See Appendix B for a template.

2. Project Narrative (Twenty (20) page limit)

All applications must contain a detailed Project Narrative with defined sections as described below. All pages of the application must be consecutively numbered. Material beyond 20 pages may not be read or considered. Applicants are encouraged to provide a clear and concise narrative that includes a compelling justification for the project and articulates the needs of the geographic area, the efficacy of the proposed services and activities, and rural businesses to be served.

3. Project Description: The Applicant should fully describe and explain what is being proposed, including:

- i. The geographic region where services will be provided and a clear description of rural business needs in that region. This section must include the Applicant’s planned location for the Center and a rationale justifying the location of the Center. The location and geographic area should directly correspond to Questions 14 and 16 on the SF-424 (see section V.A.1.a. (*i.e.*, Evaluation Criterion 1.a.)).
- ii. A detailed description of the proposed approach that will be utilized (including what services will be provided, how they will be provided, and the types of businesses that will be served – *e.g.*, ideation phase entrepreneurs, growth-stage businesses, any industries of focus, etc.) and how it will meet the needs of eligible participants in the region. Proposed approaches and services must address the Program’s priorities and objectives (see section I.A., above).

MBDA Rural Business Center Program NOFO
Funding Opportunity Number MBDA-OBC-

As part of this section, Applicants must demonstrate an understanding, backed by data, of target business needs (see section V.A.1.b. (*i.e.*, Evaluation Criterion 1.b.)).

- iii. The names, affiliations, complete mailing addresses, email addresses, and telephone numbers of all key person(s) who will lead the project. Identification and description of key stakeholders and partners that will be leveraged to accomplish the Program's objectives. If the Applicant proposes to leverage third-party partnerships and their respective resources to accomplish the proposed project under this NOFO, the Applicant must provide proof of commitment by the third-party as an attachment to the proposal (*i.e.*, Letters of Commitment). The Applicant should also describe any strategies to leverage and collaborate with existing Department of Commerce programs and other federal, state, or local government programs in the geographic region, including those that support rural businesses' access to capital (see section V.A.1.c. (*i.e.*, Evaluation Criterion 1.c.)).
- iv. A description of the strategies the project will implement to drive the participation of rural businesses in the project. This includes but is not limited to the Applicant's outreach strategy. If the Applicant proposes to leverage stakeholders or other partners for outreach or awareness raising, the Applicant should provide a description of those stakeholders'/partners' roles and an indication that they have agreed to collaborate with or partner with the project. These strategies must ensure wide dissemination to ensure maximum participation of rural businesses of all types in the project (see section V.A.1.d. (*i.e.*, Evaluation Criterion 1.d.)).

4. **Applicant Capability: The Applicant must present information describing the experience and qualifications of the organization to carry out the proposed project. The application should include the following information:**

- i. **Organization Profile:** A concise summary of the Applicant's organization, its mission and programs, past experience with similar projects or services as those proposed, and a list of previous or current projects or services relevant to the proposal (see section V.A.2.a. (*i.e.*, Evaluation Criterion 2.a.)). As part of the Organization Profile, the Applicant must detail:
 - The space, facilities, and staffing for the MBDA Rural Business Center;
 - The Applicant's understanding of the current challenges facing rural businesses and their awareness of resources available to support rural businesses;
 - The Applicant's knowledge of the community that the Applicant serves and the ability to conduct effective outreach to that community to advance the goals of an MBDA Rural Business Center;
 - Experience leveraging other federal resources and track record of working with other federal resources; and

MBDA Rural Business Center Program NOFO
Funding Opportunity Number MBDA-OBC-

- The Applicant must be able to demonstrate a referral relationship with at least one community-based organization with a track record of serving the target rural business population in the service area proposed.
- ii. **Documentation** of status as an eligible entity (see section III.A.).
- iii. **Organizational Background.** An overview that emphasizes the Applicant's knowledge of strategies for enhancing economic development; growth, and technical assistance provided to rural businesses; and accomplishments dealing with the specific issues facing rural business enterprises, including the following organizational abilities:
- The ability to collaborate with governmental and private sector entities to enhance the capacity of rural businesses through public-private partnerships;
 - The ability to provide innovative business solutions, including access to contracts, capital, and markets;
 - The ability to leverage resources from within the eligible entity to advance the MBDA Rural Business Center; and
 - The ability to provide services that advance the development of science, technology, engineering, and math skills development within rural businesses to the end of improving business skills (i.e. digital literacy, advanced manufacturing, etc.).
- (see section V.A.2.b (*i.e.*, Evaluation Criterion 2.b)).
- iv. Proof of capability to implement and manage a project of the scope and breadth proposed. This should include a discussion of financial and management infrastructure and can include but is not limited to, public records of accomplishments, public citations, and/or letters of referrals or recommendations as attachments to the proposal (see section V.A.2.c. (*i.e.*, Evaluation Criterion 2.c)).
- v. A chart showing the Applicant's organizational structure, including a functional statement noting the duties and/or responsibilities of all units that will comprise the organization during the period for which the proposal applies. Applicants must also provide a brief narrative outlining the reporting structure and/or governance of the Project (see section V.A.2.d. (*i.e.*, Evaluation Criterion 2.d)).
- vi. Applicants must provide a one-page bio or resume for each of the Applicant's key personnel(s) showing relevant experience of the leader(s). MBDA expects that an Administrator or Department Head or other staff with similar authority will serve as the Project Director, to oversee the success of the proposed project. The biographies and

MBDA Rural Business Center Program NOFO
Funding Opportunity Number MBDA-OBC-

attachments should be included as attachments to your proposal and will not count toward the 20-page limit. Applicants must identify a Project Director; however, if the identified person is not currently employed by the Applicant, the Project Start-up Narrative should note when the person will be onboarded (see section V.A.2.d. (*i.e.*, Evaluation Criterion 2.d.)).

5. **Project Performance and Start-up**: The Project Performance and Start-up part of the Project Narrative communicates how the proposed project's progress, production, and impact will be measured. This narrative should clearly describe how the project's activities will generate results for MBDA's performance measures. Applicants are encouraged to be data driven, which may require them to collect more data than what MBDA requires for performance reporting. The Project Performance and Start-up narrative has three components: 1) Project Impact Narrative, 2) Project Performance Worksheet, and 3) Project Start-up Narrative.
- i. The Project Impact Narrative should clearly describe what your proposed intervention intends to accomplish; how the goals, activities, and measures align; and how project activities will generate results for MBDA's and project specific performance measures; and how the proposed services and activities will yield improved entrepreneurial outcomes for rural businesses. Applicants must present a clearly articulated theory (or theories) of change for their proposed services and activities. Importantly, Applicants must describe how data will be collected and how data will be used to inform project delivery (see section V.A.3.a. (*i.e.*, Evaluation Criterion 3.a.)).
 - ii. The Project Performance Worksheet must be in a spreadsheet format that will present the core measures that are required by MBDA as well as project-specific measures that the Applicant proposes to track through the life of the project. For each measure, the Applicant must propose a numeric target. The template must include the following:
 - a. Core Measures (Clients Served, Capital Infusion, New Business Starts, Jobs Supported, Percentage of Businesses Realizing Revenue Growth), which are quantifiable indicators used to determine if a project or program is achieving its desired objectives (see section V.A.3.b. (*i.e.*, Evaluation Criteria 3.b.)). See Appendix C for additional details.
 - b. Numeric Targets keyed to each Core Measure (*i.e.*, the anticipated number of clients you will serve, new business starts to be realized, jobs supported, and the dollar value of capital that program participants will obtain) (see section V.A.3.c. (*i.e.*, Evaluation Criteria 3.c.)).
 - c. Project-specific measures and related numerical targets, if applicable.
 - d. Note: Applicants should ensure that their proposed numeric targets for the beginning of the program reflect project ramp-up and

MBDA Rural Business Center Program NOFO
Funding Opportunity Number MBDA-OBC-

anticipated start date for delivery/implementation of services and activities.

- iii. The Project Start-up Narrative should clearly describe the operational processes and procedures that will be deployed to launch the project, such as hiring key staff (*i.e.*, Director); securing locations to house the project; meeting with potential partners and finalizing partnership agreements; and ensuring readiness for transmitting data to MBDA (see section V.A.3.d. (*i.e.*, Evaluation Criteria 3.d.)). Awardees are able to use the systems of their choice to collect data. However, MBDA will provide post-award guidance on the submission of data and participation in the evaluation of the MBDA Rural Business Center program.

6. Supporting Documents

If cited in the proposal, the Applicant must provide the following additional documentation that supports the proposed project, including:

- Memoranda of Understanding or Memoranda of Agreement between project partners.
- Letters of Support, Letters of Commitment, or other evidence of existing strategic relationships, collaborations, or alliances. Letters of Support or Commitment should be signed by an individual authorized to commit the organization. Letters of Support or Commitment that provide detail about how the entity intends to support the Applicant and/or engage with the project will be viewed as more competitive.
- Resumes of the proposed project director and key project staff
- Data/literature cited in the Project Narrative.
- Letters of recommendation from past recipients of services, including businesses, if available.
- Project Timeline.

7. Standard Forms (SF), Budget Narrative and Matching Commitment

The Applicant must provide the required Standard Forms, attachments, and budget information as described in the section below.

- a. **Standard Application Forms.** Please refer to the application package available through grants.gov. Please review each form to determine which is required with the application. 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 organization representative. Electronic signatures submitted through grants.gov satisfy this requirement. **ONE SF-424 form will cover all budget years.** Please note that the authorized organization representative will be recognized as the main point of contact to receive official notifications on the application throughout the competition and to sign on behalf of the organization.

MBDA Rural Business Center Program NOFO
Funding Opportunity Number MBDA-OBC-

- ii. **SF-424A.** Budget Information-Non-Construction Programs. **Applicants must submit a SEPARATE 424A for EACH budget year within the three-year period of performance.** In Section B of the form, include the federal fund amounts in column 1 and the non-federal matching share amounts in column 2. Federal and non-federal matching share funds must be separated out for each budget year. These should be clearly labeled. In Section C, include the breakdown of projected non-federal sources of match.
 - iii. **Budget Narrative.** A detailed budget narrative must be completed and submitted for all non-construction applications that describes the specific goods or services to be purchased in each cost category. The Federal and non-federal share amounts must be separated out for each budget year within the three-year period of performance (see additional information below in section IV.B.4.b.).
 - iv. **Commerce Department (CD)-511.** Certification Regarding Lobbying.
 - v. **SF-LLL.** Disclosure of Lobbying Activities (if applicable).
- b. **Budget Narrative.** Applicants **MUST** provide a clear budget narrative that identifies and justifies how funds in each cost category will be used to support the proposed project. The budget narrative should specifically address each budget line item (including both the Federal and matching non-Federal share). Please note that the budget narrative total should match exactly the total project costs listed in both the SF-424, Question 18, Line g (“TOTAL”) and the appropriate Federal and non-Federal total fields of the SF-424A. Please also note that successful Applicants will be required to develop and maintain a project-specific webpage through the duration of the project. Applicants should plan their budgets accordingly. MBDA will provide post-award guidance regarding webpage requirements and branding requirements.

8. Indirect Cost Rate Agreement Documentation (as applicable)

Applicants requesting to use an established indirect cost rate 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 indirect cost rate established by a cognizant Federal agency, provide a statement to this effect. If a successful Applicant includes indirect costs in the budget that exceed the de minimis rate (discussed below) and has not established an indirect cost rate with a cognizant Federal agency, the Applicant will be required to obtain such a rate in accordance with Section B.06 of the [Department of Commerce Financial Assistance General Terms and Conditions](#), dated September 22, 2025 (available at <https://www.commerce.gov/oam/policy/financial-assistance-policy>).

Alternatively, in accordance with 2 CFR § 200.414(f), a non-Federal entity that does not have a current negotiated indirect cost rate may elect to charge a *de minimis* rate of 15 percent of modified total direct costs. Applicants proposing a 15 percent de minimis rate pursuant to [2 CFR](#)

MBDA Rural Business Center Program NOFO
Funding Opportunity Number MBDA-OBC-

[§ 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.

9. Format Requirements

All pages should be single-spaced and should be composed in at least 11-point font with one-inch margins. The total proposal shall not exceed 30 pages, including the Project Abstract, Project Narrative, literature cited, Budget Narrative, project timeline, and organizational structure. The following items are **not** included in the 30-page limit:

- Resumes/bios of key personnel
- Required forms (*i.e.*, Standard Forms 424, CD-511, etc.)
- Letters of Support and/or Letters of Commitment
- Letters documenting provision of matching funds
- Letters of recommendation from past recipients of services, including businesses, served by the Applicant

Failure to follow these requirements may result in the rejection of the application. Any PDFs 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 eligible for an exception under 2 CFR § 25.110 is required to:

- **Register** in the System for Award Management (SAM), before applying.
- **Provide** a valid unique entity identifier in the application; and,
- **Continue** to maintain an active SAM registration with current information during the entire period that the Applicant has an active Federal award or an application 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 Requirements

Applicant organizations must complete and maintain three registrations to be eligible to apply for or receive an award. These registrations include SAM.gov, grants.gov, and eRA Commons. All registrations must be completed prior to the application being submitted. The complete registration process for all three systems **can take 4 to 6 weeks, or longer, so Applicants should begin this activity as soon as possible.**

MBDA Rural Business Center Program NOFO
Funding Opportunity Number MBDA-OBC-

Prior to registering with eRA Commons, Applicant organizations must first obtain a Unique Entity Identifier (UEI) from SAM.gov, if needed. Organizations can register with eRA Commons in tandem with completing their full SAM and grants.gov registrations; however, all registrations must be in place by time of application submission. eRA Commons requires organizations to identify at least one Signing Official (SO) and at least one Program Director/Principal Investigator (PD/PI) account in order to submit an application.

The first PD/PI listed on the application must include their eRA Commons ID in the "Credential, e.g. agency login" Applicant Identifier field on the SF424 form. Failure to register in the Commons and to include a valid PD/PI Commons ID in the Applicant Identifier field will prevent the successful submission of an electronic application.

Registration Requirements

NOTE: We strongly encourage all prospective Applicants to begin required registrations as early as possible. Completing the required registrations can take four to six weeks, or longer. Submission due dates will not be extended because of registration delays. Submissions received after the due date will be considered late and will not be accepted.

See below for more detailed information on each required registration process.

1. System for Award Management (SAM.gov): SAM.gov registration is required to do business with the U.S. government. After registering with SAM.gov, you will receive a 12-character Unique Entity Identifier (UEI) that you will use throughout the application process. We recommend allowing at least three weeks for initial SAM.gov registrations and at least two weeks for SAM.gov registration renewals. Additional information on SAM.gov registration is available here: <https://sam.gov/content/entity-registration>. You must update your SAM.gov registration any time your entity's information changes. You must also renew and revalidate your entity's SAM.gov registration at least every 12 months from the date you last certified to and submitted the registration. The renewal process may take up to two weeks. Your SAM.gov account's primary point of contact will receive an email message alerting them to the renewal requirement at 60 days, 30 days, and 15 days prior to expiration. If you do not renew your registration by the deadline, it will expire.

2. eRA Commons: After completing your SAM.gov registration and receiving your Unique Entity Identifier (UEI), you must register with eRA Commons and create several required user accounts. National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST) Financial Assistance Agreements Management Office (FAAMO) uses eRA Commons to process grant applications and manage grant awards. NOTE: eRA Commons requires Applicants to create one ORGANIZATIONAL PROFILE and two USER ACCOUNTS before submitting an application. These requirements are described in detail below. We recommend allowing at least three weeks for eRA Commons registration. This process can be completed concurrently with your grants.gov registration. Additional information on the eRA Commons registration process is available here: <https://www.era.nih.gov/register-accounts/register-in-era-commons.htm>.

MBDA Rural Business Center Program NOFO
Funding Opportunity Number MBDA-OBC-

After creating an overall account for your “institution”, which may be for your organization or yourself as an individual, eRA Commons requires you to set up at least two user accounts: one SO account and one PD/PI account. The SO user account must be assigned to an individual with signature authority to legally bind the organization in grants administration matters. The SO will receive 4-5 emails throughout the registration process. The PD/PI account must be assigned to an individual with primary responsibility for the project(s) described in the grant application. The eRA Commons User ID (Username) for the PD/PI must also be listed on the SF-424 form for item 4 (Applicant Identifier). Your SO and PD/PI user accounts must be active before you submit an application. Both accounts can be assigned to the same individual if appropriate.

3. Grants.Gov: After completing your SAM.gov registration and receiving your Unique Entity Identifier (UEI), you must complete a one-time registration process with grants.gov. Grants.gov is a government-wide portal used to solicit and accept grant applications. We recommend allowing at least two weeks for grants.gov registration. This process can be completed concurrently with your eRA Commons registration. Additional information on the grants.gov registration process is available here: <https://www.grants.gov/applicants/applicant-registration>.

Submission Validation

The grants.gov and eRA Commons validation processes for a submitted application can take up to two business days after submission. Only validated applications are sent to NIST FAAMO for review. To ensure successful submission of an application, we strongly recommend that you submit a final and complete application at least two business days prior to the submission deadline.

Grants.gov and eRA Commons will not accept submissions if the Applicant has not been authorized or if credentials are incorrect. Submissions may also be rejected if:

- The PD/PI’s account username within eRA Commons is not provided on the SF-424 form for item 4 (Applicant Identifier).
- The UEI from SAM.gov is not provided on the SF-424 form for item 8.c (UEI).
- The Congressional District is not entered in the correct format on the SF-424 form for item 16 (Congressional Districts). The correct format is: [State Abbreviation]-[three digit district number]. For example, Virginia’s 1st Congressional District would be listed as VA-001.
- PDF files are not flattened. To flatten a fillable PDF, you can use the “Print to PDF” function from any web browser or PDF reader application.
- File sizes exceed 100 MB.
- Page sizes are greater than 8.5x11.
- File names exceed 50 characters (including spaces).
- File names include special characters.

After you submit your application, you will receive an automatic acknowledgment of receipt that contains a grants.gov tracking number. This notification indicates receipt by grants.gov only, not receipt by NIST FAAMO. Applications submitted through grants.gov will be accompanied by FOUR automated responses 1. Grants.gov Submission Receipt; 2. Grants.gov Submission Validation Receipt for Application; 3. Grants.gov Grantor Agency Retrieval Receipt for Application; and 4. Grants.gov Agency Tracking Number Assignment for Application.

MBDA Rural Business Center Program NOFO
Funding Opportunity Number MBDA-OBC-

In addition to the grants.gov automated notification messages, you may receive automated email notifications of any errors or warnings identified by eRA Commons. You must resolve all eRA Commons errors prior to the application due date in order for the application to be processed. Once an electronic application is accepted in eRA Commons, you will receive an additional automated notification that the completed application was received and that an application number will be assigned. You should save and print the proof of submission messages from both grants.gov and eRA Commons. If you do not receive an acceptance message from both grants.gov and eRA Commons, you should follow up with the agency contact listed in section VII to confirm NIST FAAMO's receipt of the complete submission.

E. Submission Dates and Times

Organizations must submit applications to Grants.gov (the online portal to find and apply for grants across all Federal agencies). Applicants must then complete the submission process by tracking the status of the application in the eRA Commons, NIST FAAMO's electronic system for grants administration. Once submitted, an application will go through system validation checks to identify any errors in first Grants.gov and then in eRA Commons. Any errors identified by a system must be corrected in that specific system. **All applications must be free and clear of any errors in both Grants.gov and eRA Commons in order to be accepted and considered.**

All applications must be received on or before **June 29, 2026**, at 11:59 pm Eastern Daylight Time. Applications may be submitted starting from the publication date of this NOFO up to the deadline above.

If Grants.gov identifies any errors in an application, it will be rejected. The applicant must correct their application and then submit the updated application in Grants.gov prior to the application due date and time. If eRA Commons identifies any errors in an application, the applicant must log into eRA Commons to make any necessary corrections to their application directly in that system. If a Changed/Corrected application is submitted after the deadline, the application will be considered late. The electronic submission will receive a date and time stamp 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. Applicants are strongly encouraged to submit applications as early as possible. Late applications will not be accepted.

In addition, please note the following:

- MBDA will not accept any unsolicited changes, additions, revisions, or deletions to applications after the submission deadline.
- Throughout the review and selection process, MBDA reserves the right to seek clarification from Applicants whose applications are being reviewed and considered.
- Applicants may be asked to clarify objectives and work plans and modify budgets or other specifics as necessary to comply with federal requirements and provide supplemental information required by the agency before award.
- See section V of this NOFO for application review and selection information.

MBDA Rural Business Center Program NOFO
Funding Opportunity Number MBDA-OBC-

Applicants should **SAVE AND PRINT WRITTEN PROOF** of an 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 grants.gov immediately. You can find contact information for grants.gov on its website, including at <https://www.grants.gov/support> at the time of publication of this NOFO.

MBDA, in its sole discretion, may pre-approve in writing submission via an alternate method (e.g., email) due to a systems issue at Grants.gov only insofar as any such systems issue is beyond the control of the Applicant. However, any submission via this alternate method must have email or facsimile receipt timestamps no later than the application deadline or must be postmarked on or before the application deadline. **LATE APPLICATIONS WILL NOT BE ACCEPTED for any reason**, including but not limited to late submissions caused by issues with grants.gov, SAM, or Authorized Organization Representative (AOR) registrations. **An application that is not timestamped, as applicable, by the application deadline WILL NOT BE REVIEWED.**

Applicants are responsible for ensuring the completeness of their application

F. Intergovernmental Review

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

G. Funding Restrictions

The following activities and associated costs are not allowable under this Program. Such costs may not be charged to the Federal share or matching share of the award.

- **Construction:** Construction activities are not allowable under this Program. For the purposes of an award made pursuant to this NOFO, construction includes any activity that disturbs the ground or modifies a structure.
- **Capital Investments & Loans:** The use of award funds for equity investments, loans, or grants to entrepreneurs or businesses is not allowable under this Program. Thus, the cost of any capital investment, loan, or grant is not an allowable cost under an award. Neither Federal nor matching share funds may be invested in startups or other companies, whether through capital, debt, hybrid, or another mechanism. Similarly, services funded by Federal or matching share cannot be exchanged for equity or otherwise used as the basis for an equity stake in a company.

V. Application Review Information

MBDA Rural Business Center Program NOFO
Funding Opportunity Number MBDA-OBC-

Throughout the review and selection process, MBDA reserves the right to seek clarification and corrected or missing documents in writing from Applicants whose applications are being reviewed. MBDA may additionally ask Applicants to clarify application materials or modify budgets or other specifics necessary to comply with Federal requirements.

A. Evaluation Criteria

Each application will be evaluated based on criteria included below. The number of points that can be earned for each category of criteria is listed below. A maximum total of 100 points may be earned for required criteria for a maximum possible total of 100 points.

Summary of Evaluation Criteria		
1	Project Description	50 points
2	Applicant Capability	25 points
3	Project Objectives, Metrics, and Implementation	25 points
Total Available Application Points		100 points

1. Project Description (50 points total)

This criterion considers the proposal’s alignment with rural businesses’ needs and the geographic context in which the project will operate, the strength of the proposed activities under this Program, the proposal’s alignment with the Program priorities and objectives, and the strength of the proposed partnerships. Accordingly, the proposal will be assessed on the following specific criteria:

- a. The proposal’s clear identification of the geographic region where services will be provided *and* the strength of the Applicant’s rationale for the location of the Center. (10 points)
- b. The strength of the Applicant’s data-driven understanding of rural businesses’ needs *and* the strength of the project’s proposed approach to providing services to address those needs. (25 points)
- c. The strength of the proposal’s strategy to leverage key stakeholders and partners to implement the project and accomplish the Program’s objectives (other than driving participation in the project, see section immediately below). This criterion includes a clear identification of key stakeholders and a clear explanation of how the project will engage with those stakeholders and/or proposed partners. This criterion also includes the strength of the proposal’s strategy to leverage and collaborate with existing Department of Commerce programs and other federal, state, or local government programs in the geographic region, including those that support rural businesses’ access to capital. (10 points)
- d. The strength of the Applicant’s strategies to drive the participation of rural businesses in the project, including a clear statement backed by data demonstrating how the Applicant’s proposed activities and outreach strategy maximize the number of rural businesses served. This element may include the strength of the proposed partnerships (as illustrated through Letters of

MBDA Rural Business Center Program NOFO
Funding Opportunity Number MBDA-OBC-

Commitment and/or Memoranda of Understanding) and the strength of the proposal's plan for outreach. (5 points)

2. Applicant Capability (25 points total)

This criterion assesses whether the Applicant has the resources and organizational capacity to execute their proposed project successfully, including the ability to manage a federal award and past experience with developing and delivering technical assistance services and activities.

- a. The clarity and strength of the Applicant's organization profile (see section IV.B.2). (6 points)
- b. The clarity and strength of the Applicant's organizational background (see section IV.B.2), including its discussion of its organizational abilities and accomplishments. (7 points)
- c. The degree to which the Applicant demonstrates a strong organizational capability to implement and manage a project of the scope and breadth proposed. This includes the overall financial stability of the organization as demonstrated by strong accounting systems, fiscal, and administrative controls in place to properly manage federal funds, and previous grants management experience. (7 points)
- d. The strength of the Applicant's personnel devoted to the project, including the qualifications and experience of key personnel and other staff assigned to significant roles and responsibilities proposed in the application, and an effective organizational structure consistent with successful implementation of the project. (5 points)

3. Project Performance and Start-up (25 points total)

This criterion considers the Applicant's approach for collecting and utilizing data to manage performance and demonstrate impact; the congruity of targets with the geographic area to be served; and the clarity with which it describes its plan to successfully implement key implementation milestones.

- a. The strength of the Project Impact narrative (see section IV.B.2), including the clarity with which the Applicant describes and justifies the project's goals, the connection between the Applicant's theory of change and its proposed activities, approach to data collection, and the system it will use to manage and synthesize client data. (5 points)
- b. The extent to which the Applicant describes the full range of core performance measures (Clients Served, Capital Infusion, New Business Starts, Jobs Supported, Percentage of Businesses Realizing Revenue Growth) and project specific performance measures and how the proposed numerical targets align with the project's theory of change. Where required, numeric targets for performance goals must be provided on an annual basis. Additionally, MBDA assesses performance on a semi-annual basis. If achievement of annual goals is reliant upon a "scaling"

MBDA Rural Business Center Program NOFO
Funding Opportunity Number MBDA-OBC-

or “ramp-up” approach, Applicants should be clear within their project proposal if/how their proposal plans to address semi-annual (6 month) assessment of their performance. Grantees should make every effort to reflect seasonality in their projections (seasonality is the presence of regular fluctuations in a time series with peaks and troughs that can be observed and measured). (see section IV.B.2). (5 points)

- c. The feasibility of the project’s proposed numerical targets for the core performance metrics, particularly whether the proposal demonstrates that the targets and activities are ambitious, realistic, achievable, and reasonable given the amount of funding requested by the proposal (see section IV.B.2). (5 points)
- d. Clearly describes and justifies a sound plan for meeting the preliminary steps during the planning phase to ensure that the following key benchmarks are reached: hiring key staff, securing locations for operations, meeting with potential partners, and ensuring readiness for transferring or entering data to MBDA (see section IV.B.2). (10 points)

B. Review and Selection Process

1. Initial Screening (Technical Review)

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 may not be evaluated by the review panel if:

- a) The application is received after the closing date.
- b) The application package does not contain mandatory items (see section IV.B.).
- c) The project fails to address program objectives and priorities (see section I.).
- d) The Applicant is not an eligible entity as defined by this NOFO.

MBDA, in its sole discretion, may continue review of applications with minor defects that may be easily rectified or cured.

2. Merit Review

Each responsive application will receive an independent, merit review by a panel (Merit Review Panel) qualified to evaluate the applications submitted based on the published evaluation criteria. The Merit Review Panel will consist of at least three (3) individuals. Each reviewer on the Merit Review Panel shall evaluate and provide an individual score for each proposal based on the criteria set out in this section (see Application Review Information, above) for a maximum of 100 points. The Merit Review Panel may discuss the application(s) but will not provide a consensus on scores for each Applicant. During the review process, Applicants may receive a written request from the MBDA program office to clarify items contained in the Applicant’s proposal.

MBDA Rural Business Center Program NOFO
Funding Opportunity Number MBDA-OBC-

disadvantaged individuals;¹

- Has a history of serving socially or economically disadvantaged individuals; or
- In the determination of the Under Secretary, has not received an equitable allocation of land and financial resources under the First Morrill Act or the Second Morrill Act.

In addition to considering the application and supporting documentation, the Selection Review Panel may rely upon publicly available information to inform its application of the selection factors. The Selection Review Panel will recommend a final portfolio of proposals for final funding decision by the Selecting Official or their delegee.

The Selecting Official retains discretion to select and recommend an application for funding that was not recommended by the Selection Review Panel based on one or more of the selection factors enumerated above.

Prior to making a final recommendation for funding to the Selecting Official, 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.

There is no appeal process for denied applications.

C. Anticipated Announcement and Federal Award Dates

MBDA anticipates that the awards under this NOFO will be made with a start date of September 1, 2026. Successful Applicants may be eligible for pre-award costs (see 2 CFR § [200.458](#)). See section VI. A for additional information.

VI. Award Administration Information

A. Award Notices

The Notice of Award is executed by the NIST FAAMO through the eRA Commons electronic grants management system to the Authorized Representative of the recipient organization. The Notice of Award will include the DOC Financial Assistance General Terms and Conditions and any other required Specific Award Conditions. The Authorized Representative will receive instructions from eRA on how to access the eRA system to accept the award.

MBDA will notify unsuccessful Applicants, in writing, after final selections have been made and after all offers have 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.

PRE-AWARD COSTS. Per 2 CFR § 200.458, recipients must receive written prior approval from NIST FAAMO authorizing award recipients to expend pre-award costs up to 90 days before the period of performance start date. Pre-award costs must be in accordance with the

¹ The Act's definition of "socially or economically disadvantaged individual" can be found at 15 U.S.C. § 9501(15).

MBDA Rural Business Center Program NOFO
Funding Opportunity Number MBDA-OBC-

Applicant's internal policies and procedures and are assumed at the Applicant's own risk without approval from NIST FAAMO. Such costs are allowable only to the extent that they would have been allowable if incurred after the date of the federal award. This does not include direct proposal costs.

GRANTS OFFICER SIGNATURE. Proposals submitted in response to this solicitation are not considered awards until the Grants Officer has signed the grant or cooperative agreement. Only Grants Officers can bind the Government to the expenditure of funds. The Grants Officer's digital signature constitutes an obligation of funds by the federal government and formal approval of the award.

B. Administrative and National Policy Requirements

1. *Department of Commerce Pre-Award Notification Requirements For Grants And Cooperative Agreements – 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/departments-of-commerce-pre-award-notification-requirements-for-grants-and-cooperative-agreements>.
2. Awards made under this NOFO are subject to the *Department of Commerce Financial Assistance General Terms and Conditions*. This document will be provided in the award package. This document can be found at: <https://www.commerce.gov/oam/policy/financial-assistance-policy>. [https://www.commerce.gov/sites/default/files/2024-09/DOC Financial Assistance General Terms and Conditions as of 01 October 2024.pdf](https://www.commerce.gov/sites/default/files/2024-09/DOC_Financial_Assistance_General_Terms_and_Conditions_as_of_01_October_2024.pdf) Successful Applicants may also be required to agree to additional Specific Award Conditions as a condition of funding. These conditions will be provided in the award package.
3. *Uniform Administrative Requirements, Cost Principles, and Audit Requirements*: Through 2 CFR § 1327.101, the Department of Commerce adopted Uniform Administrative Requirements, Cost Principles, and Audit Requirements for Federal Awards at 2 CFR Part 200, which apply to awards in this program. Refer to <http://go.usa.gov/SBYh> and <http://go.usa.gov/SBg4>.
4. *Review of Risk*: After applications are proposed for funding by the Selecting Official, the Grants Office will perform administrative reviews, including an assessment of risk posed by the Applicant under [2 CFR § 200.206](#). These may include assessments of the financial stability of an Applicant and the 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. Special conditions that address any risks determined to exist may be applied. Applicants may submit comments to SAM.gov Responsibility/Qualification, which replaced the Federal Awardee Performance and Integrity Information System (FAPIIS) as the OMB-designed integrity and performance system, about

MBDA Rural Business Center Program NOFO
Funding Opportunity Number MBDA-OBC-

any information included in the system about their organization for consideration by the awarding agency.

5. *U.S. Department of Commerce Office of Inspector General*: The U.S. Department of Commerce Office of Inspector General (OIG) seeks to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of the Department's programs, including deterring and detecting fraud, waste, abuse and mismanagement. The OIG accomplishes this mission primarily through investigations, audits, and inspections of Department activities, including grants, cooperative agreements, loans, and contracts.

a. Disclosures:

Recipients of financial assistance originating from the U.S. Department of Commerce, including MBDA, shall timely disclose, in writing, to the OIG and awarding agency, whenever, in connection with the award, performance, or closeout of this grant or sub-award thereunder, the recipient has credible evidence that a principal, employee, agent, or sub-recipient has committed:

(i) A violation of federal criminal law involving fraud, conflict of interest, bribery, or gratuity violations found in Title 18 of the United States Code; or

(ii) A violation of the civil False Claims Act (31 U.S.C. §§ 3729-3733).

b. Reporting:

The OIG maintains a hotline to receive allegations of fraud, waste, or abuse. To report such allegations, please visit <https://www.oig.doc.gov/Pages/Hotline.aspx>. Upon request, the OIG will take appropriate measures to protect the identity of any individual who reports misconduct, as authorized by the Inspector General Act of 1978, as amended. Reports to the OIG may also be made anonymously.

c. Whistleblower Protection:

Recipients, sub-recipients, and employees working on this grant award will be subject to the whistleblower rights and remedies established under 41 U.S.C. § 4712.

An employee of a recipient or sub-recipient may not be discharged, demoted, or otherwise discriminated against as a reprisal for disclosing information that the employee reasonably believes is evidence of: gross mismanagement of a federal contract or award; a gross waste of federal funds; an abuse of authority (*i.e.*, an arbitrary and capricious exercise of authority that is inconsistent with the mission of MBDA or the U.S. Department of Commerce or the successful performance of a contract or grant awarded by MBDA or the Department) relating to a federal contract or award; a substantial and specific danger to public health or safety; or a violation of a law, rule, or regulation

MBDA Rural Business Center Program NOFO
Funding Opportunity Number MBDA-OBC-

related to a federal contract (including the competition for or negotiation of a contract) or grant.

The recipient or sub-recipient shall inform its employees and contractors, in writing, in the predominant language of the workforce or organization, of employee whistleblower rights and protections under 41 U.S.C. § 4712, as described above and at <https://www.oig.doc.gov/whistleblower/protection-program/>.

6. Requirements for recipients with more than \$10 million in Federal-wide funding:

As required by [Appendix XII to 2 CFR Part 200](#), a recipient with more than \$10 million in Federal-wide funding must maintain the currency of information reported to SAM that is made available in the designated integrity and performance system (formerly FAPIIS) about civil criminal, or administrative proceedings.

C. Reporting

1. Reviews

MBDA may, in its sole discretion, conduct an operational assessment three months after the award date of the project, and thereafter as determined by MBDA. MBDA will conduct performance assessments every six months, or at any time MBDA determines necessary, to determine progress made toward achievement of performance targets. These assessments may be conducted in-person onsite at the project or virtually. Projects will be monitored throughout the funding award period and there will be ongoing communication with key project staff. As such, awardees will be required to provide data and outcomes for participants. The level of monitoring will be at MBDA's sole discretion.

2. Reporting Requirements

The project is required to provide the following reports using the systems and format required by MBDA. Additional guidance will be provided to successful Applicants during the post-award process.

- a) *Federal Financial Reports (FFR SF-425)* – (a). The SF-425 are due by April 30 and October 30 after the semi-annual reporting periods ending March 31 and September 30 for the cumulative project period of the award. (b). The SF-425 is required for any recipient using ASAP for payment.
- b) *Final Federal Financial Report* – A final comprehensive SF-425, which is a cumulative report for the entire award performance period, must be submitted within 120 days following the period of performance end date.

MBDA Rural Business Center Program NOFO
Funding Opportunity Number MBDA-OBC-

- c) *Performance Progress Reports (PPRs)* – (a). PPRs are due on a semi-annual basis unless otherwise specified in a specific award condition, no later than 30 days following the end of each six (6) month period. PPRs are due by April 30 and October 30 after the semi-annual reporting periods ending March 31 and September 30. (b). The last semi-annual performance report is required.

The PPRs must include data and information to determine project progression and success. MBDA will rely on these reports, data, and information as evidence for success stories, 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 delayed and/or terminated access to Federal funds.

If awarded, further instructions on where and how to submit reports will be provided via a specific award condition. Reports will be due within thirty (30) days after the end of the reporting period. PPRs shall contain information as prescribed in [2 C.F.R. § 200.329](#) and Department of Commerce Financial Assistance Standard Terms and Conditions (September 2025), Section A.01. Reports may include requests for additional data not explicitly defined within the NOFO, but still aligned to the primary areas of focus and program objectives for Rural Business Centers as outlined in Section I.A. and 15 U.S.C. § 9552(c)(2).

- d) *Final Performance Progress Report* - The final PPR, which summarizes activities conducted during the entire award performance period, must be submitted within 120 days following the period of performance end date. Subrecipients must submit final reports to the pass-through entity, no later than 90 days after the period of performance end date.
- e) *Ongoing Data Reporting* - All required project data reporting to MBDA shall be conducted via a performance collection tool to be designated. Guidance regarding the form and frequency of data collection will be provided by MBDA and will be aligned with MBDA needs, including but not limited to the planned comprehensive evaluation of the Program.
- f) *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, or its successor on all sub-awards over \$30,000. Please see the OMB guidance published at 2 CFR Parts 170 and 200, which can be accessed at http://www.ecfr.gov/cgi-bin/text-idx?tpl=/ecfrbrowse/Title02/2cfr200_main_02.tpl.

MBDA Rural Business Center Program NOFO
Funding Opportunity Number MBDA-OBC-

- g) *Operational assessment input* – The project is required to provide information as requested by MBDA related to the project’s operational status, including but not limited to branding, website, hiring and training of staff, office space, and compliance with information technology requirements.

VII. Agency Contact(s)

Prospective Applicants may contact:

Office of Business Centers

Minority Business Development Agency

U.S. Department of Commerce

Email: RBC@mbda.gov

For all questions regarding this NOFO, prospective Applicants should email RBC@mbda.gov. Direct replies to Applicants generally are prohibited to avoid giving an unfair advantage to any particular Applicant. MBDA may answer questions received through updates to its FAQs posted to mbda.gov.

VIII. Other Information

A. Conferences

1. Pre-Application Webinar

MBDA will conduct a pre-application technical assistance webinar. The webinar is designed to help prospective Applicants understand MBDA’s Rural Business Center Program and to assist Applicants to prepare competitive grant applications. The webinars will cover the following topics:

- Competition Overview, Program Priorities and Objectives, Key Dates, Application Review Criteria, Budget best practices and pitfalls to avoid, Measuring success, and performance

MBDA may also announce and hold additional webinars during the competition period. Dates and times for the webinars will be posted on the MBDA’s webpage. Participants must register at least 24 hours in advance of the teleconference. Please visit the MBDA website at www.mbda.gov to register and view recordings of the webinars, as well as other competition information.

MBDA will post responses to questions in “Frequently Asked Questions” (FAQ) on its website. The FAQ will be updated regularly throughout the application period. Webinar participants can submit questions for possible MBDA inclusion in the FAQs. In addition, Applicants may send questions to MBDA via email at RBC@mbda.gov. Please note that MBDA will not provide individual responses to questions.

National MBDA Rural Business Center Implementation Meeting (Post-Award Webinar)

MBDA Rural Business Center Program NOFO
Funding Opportunity Number MBDA-OBC-

Awardees will be required to attend a post-award virtual conference (webinar) conducted by MBDA to ensure that awardees have a clear understanding of the project award, terms, conditions, and expectations. During the post-award webinar, MBDA will orient the awardees and key project staff on the purpose and goals of the Program, explain project reporting requirements and procedures, identify available Federal resources that can enhance the capabilities of the project, and provide detailed information about MBDA and other relevant Federal resources, branding requirements, and other online systems the recipient will use during the period of performance. Post Award implementation activities may include learning opportunities, keynote speakers, workshops, and other training elements that inform attendees information related to program implementation.

2. Grants Management Workshop

The recipient will also be required to attend one or more virtual Grants Management Workshops facilitated by the Department of Commerce and/or MBDA's financial management team, unless otherwise noted by MBDA. Workshops are designed to review key Financial Assistance requirements from MBDA and NIST FAMMO.

B. Collaboration with MBDA

Collaboration with MBDA may include items such as: issuance and adherence to the Program guidelines, grantee site visits, promotion of MBDA-sanctioned events and conferences, annual nomination of entrepreneurs/businesses for MBDA recognition, submission of project success stories and/or profiles for MBDA social media promotion, and co-promotion of project-led and MBDA-led activities.

MBDA expects to further support awardees under this Program by:

- Assistance with facilitating and fostering relationships as well as understanding the mechanics around how to work with a range of key public and private sector stakeholders at the local, state, and Federal levels and private sector.
- Assigning program staff to support programs with:
 - Project monitoring and advisement
 - Maintaining performance scorecards and dashboards
 - Providing program information, guidance, and support
- Providing support related to the Department of Commerce electronic grants system, if necessary.
- Providing strategic subject matter and ecosystem expertise, including updated information about federal programs that support small and medium size enterprises.
- Coordinating and participating in a comprehensive evaluation of the RBC program. Awardees are required to cooperate with all site visits and evaluation activities conducted by or funded by MBDA or the Department of Commerce.
- Providing support that fosters collaboration amongst the MBDA national network, including MBDA Business Centers, programs, initiatives, and pilot programs.

MBDA Rural Business Center Program NOFO
Funding Opportunity Number MBDA-OBC-

- Fostering collaboration with Department of Commerce and other federal government programs, as appropriate.

C. Past Performance and Non-Compliance with Award Provisions

Unsatisfactory performance under prior Federal awards may result in an application not being considered for funding. Per [2 CFR § 200.339](#), failure to comply with any or all of the provisions of an award – including but not limited to mismanagement or misuse of funds – 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 remedies for noncompliance: establishment of an account receivable, withholding payments under any Department of Commerce awards to the recipient, disallowing all or part of the cost of the project or action not in compliance, changing the method of payment from advance to reimbursement only, imposition of other special award conditions, suspension or termination of any active Department of Commerce awards.

D. Limitation of Liability

Funding for awards listed in this NOFO is contingent upon the availability of appropriations. In no event will MBDA or the Department of Commerce be responsible for preparation costs for the Applicant's proposal. Publication of this NOFO does not obligate MBDA or the Department of Commerce to award any specific project or to obligate any available funds.

E. 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, Subpart F](#). Recipients expending \$1,000,000 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 \$1,000,000 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.

F. Right to Use Information

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 Department of Commerce—either

MBDA Rural Business Center Program NOFO
Funding Opportunity Number MBDA-OBC-

through its staff or by hiring a third party—in conducting reviews and evaluations of its financial assistance programs.

For this purpose, Applicant information and data may be accessed, reviewed, and evaluated by Department of Commerce 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 Department of Commerce and external program evaluators. In accordance with 2 CFR § 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 Department of Commerce financial assistance award. Additional terms and conditions on this topic may be included as a condition of funding.

G. Freedom of Information Act Disclosure

MBDA may publish any applications it receives, including any supporting documentation, on its website or through other means.

In addition, Department of Commerce regulations implementing the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA), 5 U.S.C. § 552, are found at [15 CFR Subtitle A, Part 4, Disclosure of Government Information](#). These regulations set forth rules for the Department regarding making requested materials, information, and records publicly available under FOIA. Applications submitted in response to this Notice of Funding Opportunity may be subject to requests for release under FOIA. If 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.

H. NOFO Changes Communicated on Grants.gov

MBDA may make changes or additions to this NOFO. All changes will be communicated on grants.gov. It is recommended that Applicants set up a grants.gov account and subscribe to this funding opportunity “**MBDA-OBC-2026-00003**” in order to be notified of any updates or changes. DOC or MBDA may cancel, modify, or withdraw this NOFO at any time. MBDA is not obligated to make any Federal award or commitment as a result of this announcement.

I. Termination

MBDA Rural Business Center Program NOFO
Funding Opportunity Number MBDA-OBC-

In accordance with 2 CFR § 200.340(a), this Federal award may be terminated in part or in its entirety as follows:

1. By DOC or the pass-through entity if the recipient or subrecipient fails to comply with the terms and conditions of this Federal award;
2. By DOC or the pass-through entity with the consent of the recipient or subrecipient, in which case the two parties must agree upon the termination conditions. These conditions include the effective date and, in the case of partial termination, the portion to be terminated;
3. By the recipient or subrecipient upon sending DOC or the pass-through entity a written notification of the reasons for termination, the effective date, and, in the case of partial termination, the portion to be terminated. If DOC or the pass-through entity determines that the remaining portion of this Federal award will not accomplish the purposes for which this Federal award was made, DOC or the pass-through entity may terminate this Federal award in its entirety.
4. By DOC or the pass-through entity to the extent authorized by law, if the award no longer effectuates the program goals or agency priorities.

J. Executive Order 14173: Ending Illegal Discrimination and Restoring Merit-Based Opportunity

1. This award term implements Executive Order 14173, 90 FR 8633 (Jan. 21, 2025). By accepting this Award or Award Amendment (as the case may be) and expending federal funding thereunder, the recipient:
 - a. Agrees that compliance in all respects with all applicable Federal anti-discrimination laws is material to the government's payment decisions for purposes of section 3729(b)(4) of Title 31 United States Code;
 - b. Certifies to the Department that it does not operate any programs promoting diversity, equity, and inclusion that violate any applicable Federal anti-discrimination laws; and
 - c. Further certifies to the Department that it does not participate in any illegal preferences, mandates, policies, programs, activities, guidance, regulations, enforcement actions, consent orders, and requirements, that violate any applicable federal anti-discrimination laws.
2. **Affirmative Duty to Monitor for and to Report Potential Inconsistencies:** The recipient must actively monitor its administration of this award to ensure that its activities do not violate the requirements of this award, including this SAC. At any time during the period of performance of this award, if the recipient believes that any of the activities in its approved scope of work may be inconsistent with the policies as outlined above, the recipient has an affirmative duty to immediately stop work on those potentially inconsistent activities and immediately contact the Grants Officer named in the Notice of Award (NoA) to determine whether the potentially inconsistent activities may proceed under this award. The

MBDA Rural Business Center Program NOFO
Funding Opportunity Number MBDA-OBC-

performance of activities that violate or are otherwise inconsistent with requirements as outlined above will result in appropriate enforcement action pursuant to 2 C.F.R. § 200.339, including the disallowance of costs and possible termination of a portion or all of this award.

K. Prohibition on Using Federal awards to Promote or Support Theories of Disparate-Impact Liability

In accordance with Executive Order 14281, Restoring Equality of Opportunity and Meritocracy (April 23, 2025), it is the policy of the Federal Government to eliminate the use of disparate-impact liability in all contexts to the maximum extent possible and as permitted by law.

MBDA Rural Business Center Program NOFO
Funding Opportunity Number MBDA-OBC-

APPENDIX A: DEFINITIONS

1. Capital Infusion- Capital infusion includes all forms of capital debt and/or investments from all sources (*i.e.*, lines of credit, consumer debt products used specifically for the business, angel investors, owner’s capital contributions, etc.).
2. Clients Served- Number of unique clients counseled and/or trained. Counted as a count of unique program participants with a reported counseling session or training in the time period indicated.
3. Jobs Supported- Jobs that are directly or indirectly generated or retained with assistance from the Recipient. Jobs created includes the business owners(s) who are employed in the business.
4. Measures- Are quantifiable indicators used to determine if a project or program is achieving its desired objectives.
5. Minority Business Enterprise - a business enterprise— (i) that is not less than 51 percent-owned by 1 or more socially or economically disadvantaged individuals; and (ii) the management and daily business operations of which are controlled by 1 or more socially or economically disadvantaged individuals. (see 15 U.S.C. § 9501(9)).
6. New Business Starts- A new business start is realized when after enrollment a client served has completed required registration(s), if applicable, with the local, state, and/or Federal Government (*e.g.*, DBA registration, get a business license, agency issued tax identifications, etc.) AND at least one of the following:
 - a. Has documented a transaction from the sale of a product or professional or personal service for the purpose of gain or profit; or
 - b. Has contracted for or compensated an employee(s) or independent contractor(s) to perform essential business functions; or
 - c. Has acquired debt or equity capital to pursue business operations (*e.g.*, to purchase inventory, equipment, building, business, etc.); or
 - d. Has incurred business expenses in the operation of a business.
7. Notice of Award - The official document, signed (or the electronic equivalent of signature) by a Grants Management Officer that:
 - a. Notifies the Recipient of the award of a grant;
 - b. Contains or references all the Terms and Conditions of the grant and Federal funding limits and obligations; and
 - c. Provides the documentary basis for recording the obligation of Federal funds in the MBDA accounting system.
8. Percentage of Businesses Realizing Revenue Growth – Individual business revenue increased from recent 12-month period to next 12-month period. Most recent 12-month period of revenue is compared to revenue reported from previous 12-month period. Number of observations with a positive result are divided by the total number of observations.

MBDA Rural Business Center Program NOFO
Funding Opportunity Number MBDA-OBC-

9. Program – The MBDA Rural Business Center Program

10. Project – a successful Applicant’s implementation of its proposal that was selected for funding under this Program. Multiple projects will operate under the MBDA RBC Program.

11. Project Period - The total period of performance for an award made under this Funding Opportunity.

12. Recipient - An Organization that has had its application accepted and has been awarded funding under this Funding Opportunity.

13. Rural area - The term “rural area” is defined from section 343(a) of the Consolidated Farm and Rural Development Act (7 U.S.C. § 1991(a)) as a city or town that has a population of fewer than 50,000 inhabitants and is not an urbanized area adjacent to and contiguous with a city or town that has more than 50,000 inhabitants. A rural business could range from the ideation stage (*e.g.*, pre-start-up) to any level of revenue and profitability.

14. Targets- defined as the numeric benchmark to be reached under a particular measure (*e.g.*, anticipated number of clients you will serve).

MBDA Rural Business Center Program NOFO
Funding Opportunity Number MBDA-OBC-

APPENDIX B: PROJECT ABSTRACT SAMPLE

At a minimum, the project abstract page must provide the Applicant's name, address, telephone number, email address, date of submission, and the Funding Opportunity Number. Applicants should also provide the following additional information: the project title, total budget, and the names, affiliations, complete mailing addresses, email addresses, and telephone numbers of all key persons affiliated with the proposal.

PROJECT ABSTRACT

APPLICANT NAME:

APPLICANT ADDRESS:

APPLICANT TELEPHONE NUMBER:

NAME FOR PRIMARY CONTACT:

EMAIL ADDRESS FOR PRIMARY CONTACT:

PROPOSED PROJECT TITLE:

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY (NO MORE THAN 250 WORDS):

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF PROJECT GOALS (the intended impact and what the Applicant hopes to accomplish):

APPLICATION SUBMISSION DATE:

FUNDING OPPORTUNITY NUMBER:

TOTAL FEDERAL FUNDING REQUESTED:

MBDA Rural Business Center Program NOFO
Funding Opportunity Number MBDA-OBC-

APPENDIX C: PERFORMANCE MEASURE DEFINITIONS

The following are the four required measures under the Program. For each required measure, the Applicant must propose specific numeric targets that the Applicant proposes to reach, broken out by quarter. These numeric targets will form the basis for MBDA’s assessment of successful Applicants’ performance under their projects throughout the project’s performance period.

Required Measure	Definition
Clients Served	Total number of unique clients receiving training or counseling services during a specific period. If a client had at least one counseling or training session during the period, the client will be counted as one unique client served.
New Business Starts	<p>A new business start is realized when after enrollment a client served has completed required registration(s), if applicable, with the local, state, and/or Federal Government (<i>e.g.</i>, DBA registration, get a business license, agency issued tax identifications, etc.) AND at least one of the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Has documented a transaction from the sale of a product or professional or personal service for the purpose of gain or profit; or ▪ Has contracted for or compensated an employee(s) or independent contractor(s) to perform essential business functions; or ▪ Has acquired debt or equity capital to pursue business operations (<i>e.g.</i>, to purchase inventory, equipment, building, business, etc.); or ▪ Has incurred business expenses in the operation of a business.
Capital Infusion	Capital infusion includes all forms of capital debt and/or investments from all sources (<i>i.e.</i> , lines of credit, consumer debt products used specifically for the business, angel investors, owner’s capital contributions, etc.). Credit lines and other revolving debt facilities/instruments such as credit cards are to be recognized for the full amount of the line of credit when established and not to be based on individual drawdowns.
Jobs Supported	Jobs Supported- Jobs that are directly or indirectly created or retained with assistance from the Recipient. Jobs created include the number of new full time and/or part time employment opportunities reported for a client’s payroll during the funding year. Jobs retained include the number of existing full time and/or part time employee positions retained and reported on the client’s payroll during the funding year. Job retention pertains to maintaining the status quo of persons employed by

MBDA Rural Business Center Program NOFO
 Funding Opportunity Number MBDA-OBC-

	<p>the client in lieu of subjective and objective decisions made by the client to reduce its work force due to economic conditions, lack of capital, failure to secure necessary contracts and/or sales (documentation will be needed to show that the client did not reduce the workforce as a result of the Center operations).</p>
<p>Increased Gross Revenue</p>	<p>Individual business revenue growth reported by clients the recent 12-month period to the next 12-month period. Most recent 12-month period of revenue is compared to revenue reported from previous 12-month period. Number of observations with a positive result are divided by the total number of observations. <i>To capture this performance metric, awardees should seek to capture baseline revenue data (previous year) for each client during intake.</i></p>

OPTIONAL PROJECT-SPECIFIC MEASURES

Project-specific measures are those logically connected to the overall goal of the project and its activities. Applicants are encouraged to propose and collect project-specific measures, but these project-specific measures and associated numeric targets are optional.