



Notice of Funding Opportunity

A.C.E: Advocate, Connect, Engage

Posting Date: October 14, 2022

The Association of Women's Business Centers (AWBC) is seeking to partner with 10 Women's Business Centers (WBCs) to empower and educate women business owners on advocating for social and legislative solutions to break down and overcome barriers to women entrepreneurship and business growth. In this instance, a *Women's Business Center* is defined as an organization that provides free or low cost training, counseling, and access to capital for women starting and/or growing their businesses.

In partnership with the Ewing Marion Kauffman Foundation, the Advocate, Connect, Engage (A.C.E.) Program will utilize the national network's existing hub and spoke structure to deliver advocacy training, first directly to Women's Business Center staff to be then deployed to clients, and will focus on four key areas where women face barriers to entrepreneurship:

- 1) equitable access to capital and discriminatory lending
- 2) insufficient access to procurement and federal contracting opportunities,
- 3) absence of women in male-dominated industries such as construction manufacturing, and technology
- 4) gendered ageism in women enterprises

We aim to award 10 WBCs with \$10,000 to reach a goal of training and engaging with 100 small business owners per awardee on key legislative priorities and methods of engagement and advocacy.

The grantee will receive 50% of the award at the start of the performance period (December 2022), and the remaining funds will be dispersed at the end of the performance period (June 2023). Funding is contingent on the WBC's agreement to complete the following within the performance period:

- Train two staff members on legislative priorities and advocacy curriculum provided by AWBC, identify point person to communicate regularly with AWBC VP of Programs
- Register and educate at least 100 small business owners via webinars and in-person events, collect required demographic and business information, and collect participant survey information
- Commit to attendance in Washington D.C. in March 2023 for AWBC legislative visit (reimbursed)
- Ensure a representative from awardee to attend virtual orientation and monthly cohort check-in calls
- Submit monthly report on grant activities via online form

In addition to on-going support from AWBC, the WBC will have access to an advocacy education toolkit of marketing and promotional assets and resources.



Eligibility:

- Organization is a *Women's Business Center* as defined above. An SBA Office of Women's Business Ownership cooperative agreement is not required to participate in this opportunity, (eg. organization need not be funded by SBA to participate in this opportunity)
- Cohorts/networks/cooperatives/partnerships or any combination of WBC organizations may submit joint applications for a single grant award. One organization from the cohort should be identified as the lead applicant with additional partners listed as co-applicants.
- Must be a current member of AWBC. Contact info@awbc.org to apply or confirm membership status.
- Award may not be used as matching funds on federal funding, including SBA WBC grants.

Application Link: <https://awbc.org/ace2022>

Application Deadline: November 4, 2022