

## Minority Business Assistance Center (MBAC) Program

**State Fiscal Year 2022-2023**

*(Program Year: July 1, 2021– June 30, 2023)*

**Request for Proposals (RFP)**

**RFP # DEVMBD2101**

### TIMELINE

Dates	Events and Announcements
April 15, 2021	Pre-Bid Conference at 11:00 a.m. via Microsoft Teams Registration required and meeting link will be sent to all who registered
April 22, 2021	Development Closes Applicant Q&A at 8:00 a.m.
April 29, 2021	Deadline for Proposal Submission at 3:00 p.m.
By May 30, 2021	Development Issues Award Notifications
July 1, 2021	New Program Year Begins
June 30, 2023	Project Completion

**RFP Administered by:**

The Ohio Development Services Agency  
Minority Business Development Division  
77 South High Street, 28<sup>th</sup> Floor  
Columbus, Ohio 43215

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- Attachment #2: Fiscal Year 2022 – 2023 Budget-Administrative Cost Detail
- Attachment #3: Key Performance Measures
- Attachment #4: Key Performance Measures Definitions
- Attachment #5: Proposed Service Areas
- Attachment #6: Letter of Commitment

## Minority Business Assistance Center Program

Fiscal Year 2022-2023

*(Program Year: July 1, 2021 – June 30, 2023)*

### Request for Proposals (RFP)

## 1 Introduction

### 1.1 Purpose

This competitive Request for Proposal (RFP) is being issued to award grants under the Minority Business Assistance Center (hereinafter “MBAC”) Program. The Ohio Development Services Agency (hereinafter “Development”) partners with community-based nonprofit organizations, economic development organizations and educational institutions with strong experience in business and economic development to host regional MBACs. MBACs serve the needs of Ohio's small, minority and socially and economically disadvantaged businesses by providing services including technical assistance, professional consulting, access to capital and assistance obtaining contracts. A primary objective of MBACs is to identify emerging businesses and cultivate their growth and sustainability. This objective will strengthen the minority business community, support job creation and help grow Ohio’s economy.

The MBAC Program leverages services and resources available through Development and third-party resources to help develop and grow Ohio minority-owned businesses.

Local community needs and resources vary. Having complete program coverage is unrealistic for every center; thus, each MBAC selects programs best suited for their client base. However, all program areas must be addressed in some manner either by the MBAC Program or in conjunction with other local third-party resources.

### 1.2 Issuing Division

This RFP is released by Development’s Minority Business Development Division (hereinafter “Division”). Entities selected for regional MBACs will enter into a grant agreement with Development, and the agreement will incorporate the terms of this RFP by reference. The Division fosters the growth and sustainability of Ohio's small, minority and socially and economically disadvantaged businesses. Supporting these businesses means providing them with technical and professional assistance, access to capital and bonding, and connecting them to business opportunities. The Division leverages these resources to support achievement of the State of Ohio 15% Minority Business Enterprise (hereinafter “MBE”) goal and Encouraging Diversity, Growth and Equity (hereinafter “EDGE”) 5% overall Ohio Department of Transportation spend. The Division, which will administer grant agreements issued under this RFP, will be responsible for state-level supervision of all MBAC activities.

### 1.3 Background

As the lead facilitator in the State of Ohio efforts to grow minority and disadvantaged businesses, the Division assists in the creation and development of minority-owned and socially and economically disadvantaged business enterprises throughout the state.

The Division's mission is to be a catalyst for high-performing minority-owned businesses by providing consulting, training, financial assistance, strategic management, and technical support. A key priority of the Division is to provide high-quality professional services to businesses throughout Ohio.

MBAC Program Goals include:

- Increasing the number of state-certified MBE and EDGE businesses.
- Supporting job creation and retention.
- Providing assistance through loan and bonding programs.
- Helping minority businesses secure procurement contracts.

### 1.4 RFP Rules and Selection Guidelines

Selected applicants will be responsible for the effective management of all MBAC functions and activities supported by the grants awarded under this RFP. The MBAC Program is a critical component of implementing the Division's overall mission.

The Division will consider proposals that ***best demonstrate*** the following:

- A history of economic development, accomplishment, and leadership.
- An efficient and successful grant management history, exemplifying success in regional business development and sustainability.
- A proven ability to create and implement a strong strategic plan to reach and exceed Key Performance Measures (hereinafter "KPMs").
- A comprehensive and definitive plan to service a defined geographic area, including providing knowledgeable insight of the selected region, its business environment, opportunities and potential challenges for minority and disadvantaged businesses.
- A strong commitment of quality cash match, in-kind services and additional resources above and beyond the minimum requirements.
- A plan to collaborate and cultivate relationships with Division staff, and network partners, including Small Business Development Centers (SBDC), SBDC Export Assistance Network, Procurement Technical Assistance Centers (PTAC), Manufacturing Extension Partnerships

(MEP), Entrepreneurial Services Providers Program (ESP), and the Ohio Department of Transportation.

- An integration and collaboration of the MBAC's activities with Division network partners to reduce administrative costs, maximize the use of available resources and promote stronger regional coordination of all business assistance services.
- Documentation of any formal relationship with the Division's network partners such as Memoranda of Understanding, Cooperative Agreements or Letters of Intent to formalize the relationship.

The documentation should be identified and included as a part of **Section 8** of the Applicant's proposal, if applicable.

## 2 RFP and Award Process

### 2.1 Request for Proposal Issuance

Any and all information developed by the applicants during the course of this project will be provided to Development upon request and will become the property of Development. The applicant shall not assert any claims arising under copyright or otherwise inconsistent with the transfer of ownership of such documents. All information submitted in response to this RFP shall be public record unless a statutory exception exists that would protect the information from release to the public.

Applicants are advised that there will be no opportunity to correct mistakes or deficiencies in their submitted materials after the RFP's due date. Proposals that are incomplete or otherwise missing required information will not be evaluated. No supplementary or revised materials will be accepted after the due date unless specifically requested by Development.

It is the applicant's responsibility to ensure timely submission of a complete proposal. **Late proposals will not be scored or given consideration.** Development is under no obligation to consider proposals that are received after the due date. Proposals that are not submitted in the format requested will not be scored.

All costs incurred in the preparation of the proposal shall be borne by the Applicant alone and Development shall not contribute, in any way, to the cost of the preparation of the proposal.

In accordance with federal and state statutes and Development policy, no person shall be excluded from participation or subject to discrimination in the RFP process on the basis of race, color, age, sex, national origin, military status, religion, or disability.

The Division reserves the right to:

- Adjust the RFP Calendar of Event dates as needed and deemed appropriate.
- Accept or reject any and all proposals and/or bids if Development determines that it is in the best interests of the state to do so.
- Rebid this RFP, requesting new proposals from qualified organizations.
- Make no award at the end of the evaluation process (this RFP is not to be interpreted or construed to guarantee that one or more applicants submitting responses will be awarded contracts).
- Fund any proposal in full or in part (any assignments of work by Development under the scope of this RFP will be made dependent on need and the availability of adequate, specific funding).
- Fund only those proposals determined to be the best and most responsive.
- Request additional information to assist in the review process.
- Waive or modify minor irregularities in proposals received.
- Contact Applicants to clarify any portion of the Applicants' proposals.
- Require the submission of modifications or additions to proposals as a condition of further participation in the selection process.
- Request that certain selected Applicants make presentations and participate in interviews with Development's staff and reviewers.

## 2.2 Funding Opportunity Description

Funding under this RFP will be awarded for a period of twenty-four (24) months beginning July 1, 2021, through June 30, 2023. A single organization or consortium of organizations meeting the operating guidelines established herein may submit a proposal. A single lead Host Organization must be identified in the proposal.

Unsatisfactory performance in reaching identified KPMs and deliverables under prior funding for the MBAC Program or other Development programs may result in a proposal receiving an unsatisfactory rating and/or not being considered. Failure to comply with any or all of the provisions of an agreement executed with Development may have a negative impact on future funding and may be grounds for termination.

## 2.3 Timeline

*See Cover Page*

Selected applicants that receive grants under this RFP must be prepared to comply with the following mandates **no later than July 1, 2021**:

- The MBAC office will be distinguishable and identifiable from its fiscal agent and include prominent MBAC signage in and/or on the building (at the location) that can be easily visible to the public.
- The MBAC must provide adequate client parking and publicly list the MBAC's telephone number and contact information.
- The MBAC must be managed by a full-time director and full-time business advisor who must be interviewed by Division staff prior to filling the position.
- The MBAC must provide internet access and have an easily accessible and identifiable standalone website or webpage on the Host Organization's website.
- The MBAC's operating hours must be commensurate with the Division's operating hours (8 a.m. to 5 p.m. Monday through Friday).
- The MBAC must be fully operational\* and open to the public for service.
- The MBAC office must provide a safe, professional and accessible venue for prospective clients.

\*Fully operational means that the MBAC's staff, required signage, furniture and equipment (e.g., hardware, software, website, phones, fax machine, etc.) are in place and operational by **July 1, 2021**. Failure to comply with these requirements is grounds for termination of any grant awarded under this RFP.

\*\*For the duration of the COVID-19 pandemic reasonable accommodation to maintain operations to as close to fully operational and provision of services to MBAC clients is expected in accordance with applicable health orders for the MBAC service area.

#### **2.4 Question-and-Answer Period (RFP Clarification Opportunity)**

Applicants may make inquiries or seek clarifications regarding this RFP any time during the inquiry period listed in the RFP Timeline. To make an inquiry, prospective Proposers must use the following process:

1. Access the State Procurement website at <http://www.ohio.gov/procure>.
2. From the Navigation Bar on the right, select "Bid Opportunities Search"
3. Select "Doc/Bid/Schedule #" as the Type.
4. Enter the RFP Number found on Page 1 of this document.
5. Click the "Search" button.
6. On the document information page, click the "Submit Inquiry" button.
7. On the document inquiry page, complete the required "Personal Information" section by providing the following:
  - a. First and last name of the prospective Proposer's representative who is responsible for the inquiry.
  - b. Name of the prospective Proposer.
  - c. Representative's business phone number.
  - d. Representative's e-mail address.
8. Type the inquiry in the space provided, making certain to include the

following:

- a. A reference to the relevant part of this RFP.
  - b. The heading for the provision under question.
  - c. The page number of the RFP where the provision can be found.
9. Click the "Submit" button.

Applicants submitting inquiries will receive an immediate acknowledgement by e-mail that their inquiry has been received. **The applicant who submitted the inquiry will not receive an e-mail response to the question, but will need to view the response on the State Procurement web site where it will be posted for viewing by all applicants.**

Prospective Proposers may view inquiries using the following process:

1. Access the State Procurement website at <http://www.ohio.gov/procure>.
2. From the Navigation Bar on the right, select "Bid Opportunities Search"
3. Select "Doc/Bid/Schedule #" as the Type.
4. Enter the RFP Number found on Page 1 of this document.
5. Click the "Search" button.
6. On the document information page, click the "View Q & A" button to display all inquiries with responses submitted to date.

**Development will try to respond to all properly posed inquiries within 48 hours, excluding weekends and state holidays. Development will not respond to any inquiries received after 8:00 a.m. April 22, 2021.** Applicants who attempt to seek information or clarifications verbally will be directed to reduce their questions to writing in accordance with the terms of this RFP and state purchasing policy. No other form of communication is acceptable and use of any other form of communication or any attempt to communicate with Development staff or any other agency of the State to discuss this RFP may result in the Proposer being deemed ineligible.

It is the responsibility of the Applicant to check the website on a regular basis for responses to questions, as well as for any amendments or other pertinent information regarding this RFP.

### 3 Proposal Format, Submission and Organization

#### 3.1 Proposal Format and Submission Information:

Development requires proposal submissions in an electronic format. The proposal must be prepared and submitted in accordance with instructions found in this Section.

Applicant's complete proposal submission must be received by **Development no later than 3:00 p.m. Thursday, April 29, 2021.**

All proposals must be received by the due time/date, electronically submitted to: [Procurement@development.ohio.gov](mailto:Procurement@development.ohio.gov)

The Applicant's original proposal must contain all information and documents specified in Section 3.2 – Proposal Organization.

### **3.2 Proposal Organization**

An Applicant's proposal must contain the following components organized in eight sections as described below. Any other information thought to be relevant, but not applicable to a specific RFP section, may be provided as an appendix in **Section 8**. Applicants must organize their proposals in the following order:

**3.2.1 Cover Sheet:**

*The cover sheet must include the following information:*

**Host Agency Information**

Legal Name of Organization:

Address:

City, State, ZIP Code:

Federal Tax I.D. Number:

Primary Contact Name:

Telephone Number:

Email Address:

Secondary Contact Name:

Telephone Number:

Email Address:

Proposed Host Region (see options below):

Funds Requested:

Host Region	Counties Serviced
Akron	Ashland, Carroll, Harrison, Holmes, Richland, <b>Stark, Summit</b> , Tuscarawas, and Wayne
Cincinnati	Adams, Brown, Butler, Clermont, Clinton, Fayette, Gallia, <b>Hamilton</b> , Highland, Jackson, Lawrence, Meigs, Pike, Ross, <b>Scioto</b> , Vinton, and Warren
Cleveland	<b>Cuyahoga</b> , Erie, Geauga, Huron, Lake, <b>Lorain</b> , Medina, and Portage
Columbus	<b>Athens</b> , Coshocton, Delaware, Fairfield, <b>Franklin</b> , Guernsey, Hocking, Knox, Licking, Marion, Morgan, Morrow, Muskingum, Noble, Perry, Pickaway, Union, and Washington
Dayton	Auglaize, Champaign, Clark, Darke, Greene, Logan, Madison, Mercer, Miami, <b>Montgomery</b> , Preble, and Shelby
Toledo	<b>Allen</b> , Crawford, Defiance, Fulton, Hancock, Hardin, Henry, <b>Lucas</b> , Ottawa, Paulding, Putnam, Sandusky, Seneca, Van Wert, Williams, Wood, and Wyandot
Youngstown	Ashtabula, Belmont, Columbiana, Jefferson, <b>Mahoning</b> , Monroe, and <b>Trumbull</b>

### 3.2.2 Sections (be succinct)

#### **Section 1**

- Executive Summary

#### **Section 2**

MBAC Proposed Model and Narratives addressing the following:

- Deliverables (Section 5.1)
  - Client Needs
  - Geographic Region
  - Key Performance Measures
  - Collaboration with the Division and partners
- Proposed Service Region (Section 5.2)
- Scope of Services (Section 5.3)

#### **Section 3**

- Proposed MBAC Strategic Plan

#### **Section 4**

Required Materials and Documentation

- Nonprofit Host Organizations: Articles of Incorporation under the laws of Ohio and a copy of the 501(c)(3) or 501(c)(6) Certificate.
- Documentation by the Host Organization and its commitment to minority, socially and economically disadvantaged business development (via a copy of the organization's mission statement and/or strategic plan).
- Roster of Advisory Board Members: The Advisory Board is comprised of individuals representative of the counties located within the proposed region. The roster of Advisory Board members must contain the following contact information: professional business phone numbers, email addresses, and organizational affiliations.

#### **Section 5**

- Key Personnel Worksheet (Attachment #1)
- Staff Resumes and Capabilities
- Proposed MBAC and Host Organizational Chart(s)
- Contracts, as applicable for non-host employee staff

#### **Section 6**

- Proposed twenty-four (24) Month Budget – Administrative Cost Detail (July 1, 2021 – June 30, 2023). (Attachment #2)

**Section 7**

- Proposed Key Performance Measures (Attachment #3)  
Chart to include defined expectations

**Section 8**

- Minority Business Assistance Center Letter of Commitment (Attachment # 6)
- Documentation of Collaboration (i.e., Memoranda of Understanding, Cooperative Agreements, and Letters of Support)

## **4 Host Organization Qualifications**

### **4.1 Mandatory Qualifications**

In order to be considered for the grant, Development requires that interested Applicants and Host Organizations meet all of the following mandatory qualification requirements:

#### **4.1.1 Applicant Eligibility:**

- The Applicant is incorporated as a 501(c)(3) or 501(c)(6) organization under the laws of Ohio or is a municipality, Chamber of Commerce, or public education institution.
- The applicant is legally able to operate as evidenced by a completed W-9 form or other documentation of an Employer Identification Number.
- The applicant has been in operation for at least three years or has comparable, documented business experience.

#### 4.1.2 Host Organization Eligibility:

- The Host Organization must have a local advisory board for the proposed MBAC.
- Part of the Host Organization’s mission must be related to promoting the growth and development of minority and socially and economically disadvantaged businesses.
- The Host Organization must demonstrate an ability to provide or add significant value to the minority business community.
- The Host Organization’s cash match must be equal to or greater than twenty-five (25) percent of the MBAC’s annual budget.
- The Host Organization must commit to providing the required physical facilities (i.e., library, consulting area, adequate parking, and prominent signage).
- The Host Organization must provide reliable internet, telecommunications technology, and standard facility operations, including heat, air, and running water.

Documentation supporting the “Applicant Eligibility” and “Host Organization Eligibility” should be included in **Section 4** of the Applicant’s proposal.

## 5 Deliverables

### 5.1 Deliverables

The MBAC Program is designed as a performance-driven system that produces quantifiable outcomes to enhance the growth of small businesses throughout Ohio. The purpose is to assist small, minority, socially and economically disadvantaged businesses by providing them with professional services to further their development and facilitate greater market success.

The sustainability of this initiative is predicated on producing tangible, quantifiable results, including increasing the following:

- Number of high-quality client interactions.
- Recruiting and aiding with the certification of new MBE, EDGE and WBE companies.
- Capital Infusion.
- Number of Ohio jobs that are created or retained.

The goal of this initiative is to leverage the work performed at the MBACs to aid in the growth, development, and sustainability of our minority business partners, in addition to supporting the state's MBE and EDGE goals. The MBACs work with minority businesses to understand what their needs are and to help educate them on resources available through the Division, Development, and other third-party resources identified by the Division that can help them achieve their business goals. These resources include numerous financing options; surety bonding; assisting with identifying state and federal contracting opportunities; developing relationships with local city and county municipalities for potential contracting opportunities; and developing private-sector business opportunities. The MBACs are expected to meet KPMs that are established and documented in contracts executed between Host Organizations and Development. The MBACs also will assist with identifying, recruiting, and certifying businesses. Proposals should provide responses to the following:

**Client Needs:**

- List the services that will be provided through the proposed center and how those resources will be utilized to identify and meet client needs.
- Provide a description of the method you will employ to facilitate client intake and/ the consulting process.
- Describe how you will assist clients at different stages of their growth and development.
- Explain the value of a minority-owned business becoming state certified to a business owner in order for him/her to be able to take advantage of pending contract opportunities.

**Geographic Region:**

- Provide a Strengths, Weakness, Opportunities and Threats (SWOT) analysis of the business environment in the geographic region covered in your proposal.
- Explain in detail the strategies and tactics you will employ to develop the opportunities and overcome the threats in the region.
- Explain the current economic health within the region.
- Describe prevalent industries or market sectors located within the region.
- What community-based resources exist within the region that support small, minority, and women-owned businesses? Discuss opportunities for collaboration.
- Explain in detail, the marketing and communications strategies you will use to inform minority business owners of the services you will provide through the MBAC.

**Key Performance Measures:**

- Describe specific strategies and tactics you will implement to achieve KPMs.
- If you have previously hosted an MBAC, describe your own past performance relative to achieving the KPMs.
- Describe how the Host Organization will provide support and leverage to measure grant outcomes.

**Collaboration with the Division and partners:**

- Describe how you will interface and collaborate with Division staff to ensure alignment and goal achievement.
- How will you communicate program challenges and opportunities in order to improve client interactions or outcomes?
- Indicate the process you will utilize to respond to time-sensitive requests, such as identifying clients for specific contract opportunities?
- Indicate how you will qualify prospective loan and bonding clients to connect them with state financial and insurance products.
- How will you determine when to refer clients to non-state sources for loans and insurance products?
- How (and with whom) will you collaborate in order to support a full range of client development needs?

**5.2 Proposed Service Regions**

The Division is seeking nonprofit business assistance providers to serve minority, small, and socially and economically disadvantaged businesses located in seven regions throughout Ohio. Applicants must be located within the proposed service regions or have connections to provide outreach to the regions served. Each submitted response should identify the proposed service region and provide a detailed plan for providing services to targeted businesses located within the entire service region. Proposed service regions are shown on Attachment 5.

For each of the service regions, there are counties designated as primary and secondary service areas. Primary service areas include counties with the largest concentrations of self-identified, minority-owned businesses. MBAC staff are expected to focus the majority of their efforts and resources on businesses within primary service areas.

While the number of minority-owned firms located in secondary service areas is smaller, MBACs are expected to provide services to any qualified business that requests support and is located in secondary service areas. By designating primary and secondary service areas, every minority-owned business in the state can seek and receive support from an MBAC.

### 5.3 Scope of Services

MBACs are required to perform work in three (3) basic areas – market development, client services, and operational quality. These elements are designed to increase the exposure and visibility of minority and small business enterprises. The MBAC's efforts in these areas should produce *quantifiable* results. The COVID-19 pandemic will likely continue to impact an MBAC's ability to provide services in a historically typical manner for at least a portion of the grant period. Reasonable accommodations should be anticipated to safely meet the needs of clients within the requirements of applicable health orders and to meet KPMs. The proposal should contain a detailed plan to accomplish all three of the service areas:

#### 5.3.1 Market Development

This basic MBAC function facilitates identifying prospective and potential existing minority business owners, soliciting potential clients, and identifying and leveraging public- and private-sector resources and business opportunities for clients. A core function of the MBAC is to promote minority businesses to the public and private sectors and build market awareness of their capability, talent, and capacity. Under the market development function, the MBAC staff matches qualified minority and disadvantaged businesses with identified opportunities and resources.

#### 5.3.2 Client Services

The MBAC must provide direct client assistance through an individualized intake process and assessment. Under the client services function, the MBAC director and consulting staff provide detailed business consulting services to minority businesses and individuals who have agreed in writing to become MBAC clients. Clients shall be assisted primarily through one-on-one business consulting, strategic team counseling, and training workshops led by the MBAC.

Business consulting services shall include, but are not limited to:

- **Marketing:** market research, promotion, advertising, sales, sales forecasting, market feasibility studies, pricing, and customer service.
- **Financial Management:** capital budgeting, general accounting, break-even analysis, cost accounting, financial planning and analysis, budgeting, tax planning, and business consulting (excludes bookkeeping, tax preparation, and audits).
- **Financial Assistance:** identification, preparation, and packaging of state loan and bond program applications, standard commercial

and alternative debt (loans, lines of credit, etc.), other public and private bonding, leases (property and equipment), equity (venture capital, angel capital, etc.), and trade credit opportunity.

- Procurement Assistance: preparation and planning to identify private- and public-sector contracting opportunities, developing capability statements, teaming, and joint venturing relationships.
- Certification Assistance: provide a review of the application, supporting documentation and submission for MBE and/or EDGE certification and as appropriate, expediting the application process.

MBAC advisors shall conduct client assessments that provide each client with a fundamental business evaluation. This process is designed to standardize services across the MBAC network, maintain the quality of center operations, and facilitate the client referral process through the network. This process requires that an interview be conducted between the client and advisor. This assessment function is designed to provide:

- Client background and contact information.
- Client business analysis with respect to core competency, organizational structure, market and industry placement, production of products/delivery of services, marketing plan, resources, and financial viability.
- Analysis and benchmarking of the client.
- Identification of immediate and long-term client needs and expectations.
- Development of action plans.
- Strategic referrals.
- Identification of resources.
- Implementation of targeted action plans for increasing size, scale, and capacity.
- Increased exposure and visibility of the MBAC Program and MBE and EDGE companies.
- Promotion and achievement of client outcomes.

### **5.3.3 Operational Quality**

This function addresses operational efficiency and effectiveness and the quality of client services. The proposal should address:

- An action plan that will be implemented for all operations and client services.
- The methodology that you will use to achieve your Action Plan's objectives for each client based on individualized client assessments.
- A process for ensuring that all client files contain accurate supporting documentation, including assessment, action plan, work assignments, baseline economic data, jobs created or

retained, financial awards, and certifications and/or contracts obtained.

- A process for ensuring that all client intake data and related work efforts are entered into the approved reporting system. The MBAC is *required* to enter client information, consulting data, staff work effort, awarded transactions, job creation and retention, also any other pertinent data within seventy-two (72) hours from the time of service.
- A process to promote and utilize the services and resources of other Development programs, particularly the financial assistance programs within the Division.
- Professional development plan to train the MBAC's staff, including but not limited to, the following training sessions offered by the Division:
  - All full-time MBAC Directors must be a current Certified Business Advisor<sup>®</sup>s (CBA<sup>®</sup>) or must become certified within six (6) months of employment. The CBA<sup>®</sup> program is an innovative, online learning certification program that certifies MBAC Advisors through focused instruction at the graduate level in accounting/finance, human resources, and marketing. Upon successful completion of the online coursework and exams, participants receive a certificate from Kent State University, College of Business Administration. CBA<sup>®</sup> is administered by the SBDC Lead Center.
  - A potential MBAC Director must meet the State established minimum qualifications and must agree to participate in the state-mandated CBA<sup>®</sup> process. The inability of a MBAC Director to meet CBA<sup>®</sup> certification within six (6) months could place the participant on probationary status and will result in withholding of funds.
  - All MBAC Directors are required to take continuing professional development courses to maintain CBA<sup>®</sup> certification. MBAC Directors should complete individual professional development plans for all MBAC staff. The plan should ensure all MBAC staff will have access to continuously improve knowledge that will be beneficial to small business clients. Professional development plans and progress will be reviewed during annual site visits.

## 6 Staff Competencies

### 6.1 Staff Experience

The applicant must assign professional staff with significant expertise to key leadership roles. The applicant's proposal must include resumes for each person. Each MBAC must be staffed by at least one full-time Director and Business Advisor. Full-time MBAC staff is greatly preferred over multiple part-time staff. When selecting staff, every effort should be made to choose individuals with previous finance, business management, or banking experience. Staff should understand the fiscal requirements of minority businesses to connect them with appropriate financial resources.

The following are the minimum required qualifications for key personnel.

### 6.2 Director – Qualifications

A Bachelor's or Master's degree in business administration, public administration, economics, or other related field from an accredited college or university is preferred. In place of a degree, a minimum of seven years experience in business ownership and operations and/or equivalent combination of education and experience that demonstrates the required knowledge, skills, and abilities may be acceptable. Extensive knowledge of business management, fiscal planning and accountability, employee training and development, office management and other support functions is required.

Additional requirements for the MBAC Director include:

- Demonstrated ability to organize and manage multiple projects.
- Experience supervising professional staff.
- Ability to develop and manage resources to support the MBAC.
- Strong analytical abilities.
- Strong written and oral communication skills.
- Ability to relate well to people from diverse backgrounds.
- Capacity to work effectively with the business community and private and public organizations.
- Receive CBA® Certification within six (6) months of hire date.
- Possess a valid Ohio Driver's License and the ability to travel.

#### 6.2.1 Director - Responsibilities

The MBAC Director is responsible for coordinating activities that accomplish the Scope of Work and KPMs outlined in the grant agreement awarded under this RFP. This includes defining, developing, and implementing required projects; providing one-on-one consulting to minority and small businesses; originating and conducting meetings with community leaders and state and local officials; and providing and

directing professional services for minority, small, and socially and economically disadvantaged businesses. Duties include:

- Devoting a minimum of forty (40) hours per week of his/her time engaged in MBAC work, with thirty (30) percent of his/her time focused on consulting and a maximum of seventy (70) percent focused on managing the MBAC and performing outreach responsibilities.
- Planning and coordinating programs and activities consistent with the goals outlined by the Division, including the MBAC's objectives and overseeing all client and business development, reporting, and delivery.
- Developing and submitting quarterly expense and narrative reports to the Division.
- Attending regional and state conferences.
- Providing and facilitating in-depth individual business analysis and client referrals to the Division's partners.
- Maintaining relations between the MBAC, Division, local chambers of commerce, banks, trade groups, network partners, and/or the Host Organization.
- Encouraging businesses to provide volunteer consulting services and training.

### **6.3 Business Advisor – Qualifications**

Business Advisor(s) should be a graduate of a regionally accredited four-year college or university with a bachelor's degree in business administration, economics, or other related fields and/or possess a minimum of five years of experience in business management or business ownership. An equivalent combination of education and experience that demonstrates the required knowledge, skills, and abilities may be acceptable.

Additional requirements for the proposed Business Advisor include:

- Thorough knowledge of business principles.
- High level of interpersonal analytical and communication skills.
- Ability to handle multiple assignments, organize and establish work priorities with minimal direction and supervision.
- Receive Growth Wheel Training within six (6) months of hire date.
- Possess a valid Ohio Driver's License and the ability to travel.

#### **6.3.1 Business Advisor - Responsibilities**

A Business Advisor is responsible for providing direct, in-depth client consulting, business research and assistance in preparing business and

strategic plans, identifying suggestions for alternative courses of action, and maintaining the confidentiality of client information. Duties include:

- Interviewing and assessing clients' need and developing an action plan.
- Devoting a minimum of forty (40) hours per week of his/her time engaged in MBAC work, with seventy-five (75) percent of his/her time to in-depth consulting with clients to determine their needs and capabilities and a maximum of twenty-five (25) percent of his/her time providing essential MBAC services to the public and administrative support.
- Working closely with the MBAC Director and/or other agencies to facilitate the operation of the MBAC.
- Attending training sessions for business advisors to facilitate on-going knowledge and ability to provide in-depth consulting.
- Assisting in planning and marketing seminars, training sessions, and conferences.
- Community involvement including public speaking as needed or directed.
- Participating in training events as an instructor or moderator.
- Assisting in efforts to evaluate the effectiveness and impact of training events.
- Other duties as assigned by the MBAC Director.

## 6.4 Conflict of Interest

All MBAC staff, including but not limited to the MBAC Director, Business Advisor(s) and administrative support staff, must certify to the Division by **June 30 of each calendar year** that he/she has not had a conflict of interest with any client seeking or receiving services with the MBAC within the Fiscal Year. Additionally, MBAC staff are required to notify the Division, in writing, of potential or actual conflict of interests that arise during his/her job duties at the MBAC. Both economic interests and fiduciary relationships should be considered.

### 6.4.1 Conflict of Interest - Definitions

Conflict of Interest - a situation in which a private interest or gain leads to or has the potential to lead to a disregard for the needs of the MBAC or the rights of the client.

Client - a business, individual, or legal entity with which the MBAC has entered into a contract, written or verbal, to provide any or all of MBAC available services.

MBAC Services - include but are not limited to consulting, training, business plan development, access to capital, procurement opportunities, referrals to other agencies, provision of printed materials copies or media information, or any other service that the center may commonly or routinely perform for its clients.

Compensation - includes anything of value, such as wages, gifts, and travel expenses, provided to an employee or volunteer in exchange for a service.

Failure to Comply – An MBAC employee has failed to comply if the employee has failed to notify the Division of a Conflict of Interest or engages in a Conflict of Interest while employed by the MBAC or within one year following separation from the MBAC. An MBAC employee's failure to comply is a violation of the employee's terms of employment and may be a violation of the Ohio ethics laws, Ohio Revised Code Section 102.01 et. seq. and 2921.42. Violations of the Ohio ethics laws are criminal offenses that may result in fines and/or prison time.

#### **6.4.2 Standards of Conduct**

All MBAC staff and volunteers shall not:

- Solicit, accept, or use his or her position to secure a gift, meal, entertainment, or anything of value that could have a substantial and improper influence upon his or her duties.
- Solicit or accept anything of value from any source other than the MBAC as compensation for the performance of his or her job duties.
- Use his or her position to obtain financial gain or benefit for his/herself, a family member, or anyone with whom he or she has a business or employment relationship.
- Solicit the private engagement of his or her services by clients at any time during the term of the clients' relationship with the MBAC or one (1) year after separation from the MBAC.
- Use or disclose confidential information protected by law, unless appropriately authorized.
- Invest money, personal services, or property in the business of current clients.

All MBAC staff shall:

- Avoid any action that might give rise to the appearance of impropriety.
- Ensure that the priorities established under the grant agreement take precedence over other Host Organization programs and initiatives.
- Ensure that any outside activity does not interfere with the full performance of the MBAC's activities and responsibilities.
- Abide by Ohio ethics laws and expectations detailed within the Ohio Minority Business Assistance Centers Compliance Manual.

## **7 Key Performance Measures and Budget Considerations**

### **7.1 Key Performance Measures**

The proposal should include the Applicant's projected KPMs (Attachment 3 - Key Performance Measures) and how the applicant will achieve measurable performance outcomes. Failure to fully complete these projections may result in the proposal being rejected as unresponsive.

The KPMs provide the core measurement by which the Division evaluates the overall effectiveness of the MBACs. The KPMs help align the vision and mission of the MBAC with clients.

**MBAC Requirements:**

- Maintain day-to-day operations.
- Manage and evaluate business strategy.
- Monitor operational efficiency.
- Communicate progress to stakeholders.

While all KPMs and requirements are important to the development of the minority businesses, the following are significant goals that are part of the strategic mission of Development and are closely monitored. Applicants should take great care to analyze their capability to successfully meet all KPMs.

Grant funding may be denied if poor performance and lack of accountability is evident upon review of quarterly reports:

- Number of new client's counseled.
- Total number of counseling hours.

- New MBE certifications.
- New EDGE certifications.
- Capital infusion.
- Number of jobs created
- Number of jobs retained.
- Overall fiscal management.

Occurrences of poor progress in reaching Key Performance Measures, fiscal irresponsibility, or failure to meet agreed upon terms of any contractual agreements will initiate the process for probation. **Probation terms and tenure will be discussed on a situational basis and can lead to withholding of grant funds or closure of the center.**

## 7.2 Budget and Cash Match Requirements

The Division provides grant funding, oversight, and administration of the MBAC Program. Funding levels for the MBACs may change based on FY2022 / FY2023 budget and the Division's overall budget. The MBAC must have strong fiscal management, tracking, and documentation of Cash Match and grant monies.

### 7.2.1 Total Costs for the Proposed Center

Each MBAC must project the total cost of the program. Costs include personnel, fringe benefits, travel, marketing, supplies/equipment, contractual, consultants, professional development, marketing, and other costs as well as the source of funds for each line item.

### 7.2.2 Cash Match Requirement

In order to qualify for funding, each applicant must provide an additional amount called "Cash Match" based on the total dollars requested. The minimum match requirement is twenty-five (25) percent of the total dollars requested per center; however, prospective host organizations can propose matches that exceed twenty-five (25) percent. Other Development programs or general revenue funds cannot be used as a Cash Match. The Cash Match funds must be generated from a source with a mission and focus on economic and business development and business and entrepreneurial training. Under no circumstances will a center's proposal be funded without the Cash Match documentation and commitment being included in the proposal.

### 7.2.3 Eligible Costs

- Personnel: MBAC personnel are individuals who provide support to the MBAC program (Host President, Fiscal, Grant Administrator, etc.) and not only those directly servicing MBAC clients. Full-time MBAC staff are

preferred over multiple part-time staff. The Key Personnel Chart is part of the Budget document and should include all individuals supporting the MBAC program.

- **Fringe Benefits:** Employer-contributed benefits related to personnel services costs are eligible costs, provided such benefits are granted in accordance with established Host Organization policies. The individuals listed on the Key Personnel Chart must be included here as well.
- **Travel:** Receipts and documentation are required for mileage (maps), workshops (registration forms with proof of payment), training expenses, meals, lodging, etc. When providing documentation and copies of receipts, please highlight, circle, or otherwise note the charges that are being requested for reimbursement. ***Travel expense projections should be based on state travel guidelines.***
- **Supplies/Equipment:** Cost of goods used in the operation of the program such as office consumables, office and computer supplies, equipment maintenance and equipment under \$5,000 per unit cost should be included in this category. For items exceeding \$5,000, written requests must be submitted and approved by the MBAC Program Manager prior to purchase. Items purchased prior to written approval and acceptance will not be considered an allowable expense.
- **Contractual:** Itemize all costs if not allocated directly throughout the budgeted line items. Include all contractual costs *other* than equipment, consultants, and space; examples include computing, accounting, audit, and other professional services. For services obtained from a source outside of the Host Organization, a contractual agreement is required detailing the services being rendered and the associated cost for the services.
- **Consultants:** The following information must be listed for each proposed consultant: name, number of annual hours planned and hourly rate, and consultant's specialty. Explain how the center will review and approve the consulting activity. Consultants can be reimbursed only for new hours of counseling that are documented in the reporting system. Each consultant must have a contractual agreement detailing the arrangement between the Host Organization and the individual/entity providing consulting services.
- **Professional Development:** Indicate the projected costs for activities related to this category, such as staff training, membership in professional organizations, subscriptions, publications, etc.
- **Marketing:** Indicate the projected cost associated with communicating and positioning the services provided through the center for outreach to clients, prospective clients, and critical stakeholders.
- **Other:** All necessary, justifiable and allowable costs not included elsewhere. Examples include space costs, to include utilities, insurance, interest (for owned properties), printing, copying, operational costs to house the program, and library resource materials. Miscellaneous and

contingency costs are not allowable, and all costs in this line item must be described in detail.

## 8 RFP Evaluation Criteria

### 8.1 Proposal Scoring

Listed below are the factors that will be used to select those applicants that best meet the purpose and objectives of the MBAC Program.

CRITERIA	POINTS
<p><b>HOST ORGANIZATION</b> Host organization’s focus, history, and success in economic development activities. Organization’s alignment with MBAC program. Extent to which the organization has ongoing related business assistance programs. Organization’s experience managing federal grant programs and compliance.</p>	Up To 25
<p><b>REGIONAL AWARENESS AND COLLABORATION</b> Applicant’s awareness of other regional economic development programs that support small business including, but not limited to PTACs, SBDCs, MEPs, ESPs, and other federal, state, and local programs. Understanding of where programs align, overlap and/or compete. Explanation of how the applicants will leverage such programs through referrals or joint programming where appropriate.</p>	Up To 10
<p><b>MARKET UNDERSTANDING</b> Degree to which the proposal exhibits a strong understanding of the small businesses in the regional market or proposed service territory. Identification of any specific market segments for targeted assistance. Awareness of the needs of identified businesses and markets/segments and connecting those needs to services or programming.</p>	Up To 20
<p><b>SERVICE DELIVERY</b> Quality and thoroughness of MBAC Service Delivery plan. Variety and appropriateness of topics to local business needs; effective use of resources. Focus on services producing measurable economic results. Appropriate partnerships that will specifically enhance the MBAC service offering. Leveraging special expertise to increase impact to targeted client segments. Meaningful processes to capture economic impact. Program goals that meet or exceed state recommendations or a thorough and justified explanation of why lower goals are appropriate. Likelihood of achieving the proposed goals.</p>	Up To 40
<p><b>BUDGET AND FINANCE</b> Fiscal program management and grant compliance as demonstrated through a complete, reasonable, allowable, and allocable budget document. Reasonableness of costs. Ability to provide matching funds</p>	Up To 25  <b>+10 for match above 25%</b>

that meet minimum program requirements. Past performance in managing funds and financial controls.	
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>Up to 130</b>

### 8.2 Proposal Evaluation

Eligible proposals will be reviewed by an evaluation committee that consists of state employees and/or stakeholders for the program and scored against the stated criteria. If applicant has prior experience hosting an MBAC, scoring will take into account the past performance, fiscal responsibility, and accountability. An applicant may not contact any member of an evaluation committee except at the State's direction.

In addition to the proposal's submission, the review process will include interviews of selected applicants, if necessary, to obtain additional information. Failure to provide the information requested or failure to provide the information requested in an easily readable manner may adversely impact the assessment of the application's merits.