

Successful Practices for Establishing and Modifying Entrepreneurship Programs for Women: Resources for Entrepreneurship Centers & Non-Credit Programs



II. A Resource Guide for Establishing or Modifying Entrepreneurship Centers & Non-Credit Training Programs for Women



National Women's Business Council

with
Evaluation Edge, LLC
1st Choice Staffing and Consulting
and
3D Studios



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About NWBC and the Contributors

NWBC

The National Women's Business Council is a bi-partisan federal government council created to serve as an independent source of advice and counsel to the President, Congress, and the U.S. Small Business Administration on economic issues of importance to women business owners. Members of the Council are prominent women business owners and leaders of women's business organizations. The Council's mission includes conducting and supporting research on issues of importance to women business owners and their organizations in order to promote bold initiatives, policies and programs designed to support women's business enterprises at all stages of development in the public and private sector marketplaces.

For more information about the Council, its mission and activities, contact: National Women's Business Council, 409 3rd Street, SW, Suite 210, Washington, DC 20024; phone: 202-205-3850; fax: 202-205-6825, e-mail: info@nwbc.gov; Web site: www.nwbc.gov.

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1st Choice Staffing and Consulting provides services to local, state and federal government agencies, as well as the commercial and non-profit business communities. Established in 2000, 1st Choice is headquartered Silver Spring, Maryland, with offices in Richmond, VA and Baltimore, MD. We provide nationwide services in the areas of *Administrative Support, Business Management Services, IT Support, Human Resources Management, Organizational Development and Records Management*.

1st Choice is an SBA certified 8(a) and HUBZone firm that holds both the MOBIS and TAPS Federal GSA supply schedules. 1st Choice is also an MDOT and NMSDC certified Minority Business Enterprise and a WBENC certified Woman Business Enterprise.

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3D Studios is a certified small, black and women owned graphic communications company that has been providing professional imaging services since 1997. As a certified small minority and women owned business 3D has extensive experience in the collegiate and non-for-profit arenas and in addressing the hurdles and pitfall inherent to Small & Women-Owned businesses as speakers in seminars and conferences addressing these specific issues.

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Introduction

This reference guide is a companion piece to the National Women’s Business Council’s report *Successful Practices for Establishing and Modifying Entrepreneurship Programs for Women: Resources for Entrepreneurship Programs & Non-Credit Programs – I. Report of Findings from an Exploratory Literature Review & Interview Study*. Recognizing the success of Women’s Business Centers (WBCs) in their ability to provide specialized training to aspiring and current women entrepreneurs, NWBC set out to provide suggestions to the community of two-year and four-year colleges or other training organizations, such as adult education programs, wanting to establish or modify similarly successful entrepreneurship centers or non-credit training programs with an emphasis on training and support services for women. The goal is to encourage these institutions to increase the reach of entrepreneurial training for current and aspiring women business owners in their communities as well as to encourage a larger audience of female college students to consider entrepreneurship.¹

The reference guide includes *Checklists* of various items that community colleges, universities, and other organizations providing training should take into consideration when establishing or modifying entrepreneurship centers and non-credit training programs for women. *Checklists* are included for the following activities: *Knowing the Audience of Women Entrepreneurs*, *Understanding the Local Audience*, *Developing Support Services*, *Creating Collaborations*, *Marketing and Promoting Entrepreneurship Centers & Non-Credit Programs to Women*, and *Evaluating Entrepreneurship Centers & Non-Credit Programs for Women*.

Each *Checklist* is followed by a list of *Resources* to assist program designers in developing or modifying their programs. The *Resources* may include 1) *Web References* or 2) *Successful Practices*. The table of web references includes a number of web sites that provide information or tools that could be useful. The successful practices table shows the WBCs, colleges, or other organizations mentioned in the companion report as a successful practice model. Finally, a list of *References and Suggested Readings* is presented. It includes articles, books, or other documents that were used in the original report and which may be useful for program developers establishing or modifying entrepreneurship centers and non-credit programs for women. While these resources and references are not exhaustive, they give program designers a good place to start. In addition, this guide is intended to be a “living document,” designed to be periodically updated according to new research or based on input from the field and practitioners. NWBC welcomes feedback and suggestions of other successful examples for establishing and modifying entrepreneurship centers or non-credit training programs for women. Please contact us at 202-205-3850 or info@nwbc.gov.

There are many WBCs throughout the country engaging in activities such as those listed here in their efforts to support aspiring and current women business owners. Additionally, several other national, regional, and local business organizations and educational institutions throughout the United States are already engaged in growing their support for the women’s audience. We encourage you to seek-out and build relationships and partnerships with these organizations in your community as you develop or modify your own entrepreneurship centers, non-credit training programs, and business management training for women.

¹ Please see the Appendix for the methodology of the companion research report and its implications for practice.

Establishing or Modifying Entrepreneurship Centers & Non-Credit Programs for Women

Knowing the Audience of Women Entrepreneurs: Checklist

Women Entrepreneurs as Students

Women's Business Centers (WBCs) have learned the training needs and preferences of aspiring and current women business owners through many years of successful programming. Additionally, research has identified a number of issues for the audience of women that entrepreneurship centers and non-credit programs should address. The following is a list of programmatic activities for developing an entrepreneurship center or a non-credit training program that meets these needs and preferences.²

Actions for Meeting the Training Needs and Preferences of Women

- Create a **relationship-oriented** learning environment
- Create a **holistic approach** to learning
- Provide a **safe space** for women students
- Include programming that features female role-models as instructors or speakers
- Increase women entrepreneurs' access to **human, social, and financial capital**
- Create experiential hands-on learning opportunities
- Provide access to formal business and social support networks
(See: *Developing Support Services* and *Creating Collaborations* of this guide.)

Definitions:

1. *Financial capital* – the amount of start-up capital that often determines the size of the start-up, the type of industry, and the circumstances under which a business is started; for continued growth, businesses require continued and favorable access to financial capital.
2. *Human capital* – what a person brings to a specific situation-his or her attributes and achievements including such things as education, experience, social class, and knowledge.
3. *Holistic approach* – teaching business skills that are applicable in all areas of life including at home and in business, not in a piece-meal fashion.
4. *Relationship-oriented* – closely related to “creating safe spaces” a relationship-oriented program provides a comfortable, nurturing, supportive, non-judgmental atmosphere where students and instructors build meaningful relationships.
5. *Safe space* – as defined in the report section “Learning Styles and Learning Environments,” a space in which relationships are built between women educators and women learners, free from concerns of being dismissed because of gender or race.
6. *Social capital* – the networks, friends, organizations, clubs, churches, and other people and entities relied upon for advice, suggestions, and introductions to people and opportunities.

² For further information, refer to the following sections of the companion report: *Introduction and Purpose* and *The Audience of Women Business Owners*.

Knowing the Audience of Women Entrepreneurs: Resources

Web References

The organizations and resources in the following list offer information and services relating to women entrepreneurs and business owners.

Organization	Website
The Aspen Institute	www.aspeninstitute.org
Association of American Colleges and Universities	www.aacu.org
Association of Women's Business Centers	www.awbc.biz
Center for Women's Business Research	www.womensbusinessresearch.org
Ewing Marion Kauffman Foundation – Entrepreneurship	www.entrepreneurship.org
Forte Foundation	www.fortefoundation.org
Global Entrepreneurship Monitor	www.gemconsortium.org
Institute for Women's Policy Research	www.iwpr.org
International Center for Research on Women	www.icrw.org
National Association of Women Business Owners	www.nawbo.org
National Women's Business Council	www.nbc.gov
Quantum Leaps, Inc.	www.quantumleapsinc.org/
Survey of Small Business Finances	www.federalreserve.gov/ssbf/
U.S. Census Bureau: 2002 Survey of Business Owners	www.census.gov/csd/sbo/
U.S. Small Business Administration, Office of Advocacy	www.sba.gov/advo
Women-21.gov	www.women-21.gov
U.S. Small Business Administration, Office of Women's Business Ownership	www.sba.gov/womeninbusiness
Women Presidents' Organization	www.womenpresidentsorg.com
Womenable	www.womenable.com
Women's Business Enterprise National Council	www.wbenc.org
Women Impacting Public Policy	www.wipp.org

Understanding Your Local Audience: Checklists

Understanding Your Local Target Audience

The following checklist addresses steps for conducting a needs assessment of a local audience. First, it is important to conduct a local needs assessment to see how well your audience matches the characteristics of WBCs from which much of the research on knowing the women's audience was gathered for this document. This will help establish how appropriate the "Actions for Meeting the Training Needs and Preferences of Women" (on page 6) are for your local audience. In addition, knowing the local audience is also important for understanding not only the audience of current women entrepreneurs in the community, but for understanding the audience of aspiring women entrepreneurs and current female students who may not yet be considering entrepreneurship.

The second checklist addresses the factors to consider when conducting a needs assessment including the characteristics, needs, and preferences of the target audience. A needs assessment can be exploratory in nature helping to narrow the target audience, or it can help to further understand an audience that has already been selected.³

Steps for Conducting a Needs Assessment

- Review previous research and surveys about your audience or potential audience
- Determine if the college or university has conducted previous surveys of students or the community that could be of use
- Determine if there are other organizations currently serving women entrepreneurs to avoid duplicating efforts
- Contact local leaders of WBCs, business or economic development organizations, or chambers of commerce to determine if and where gaps are in services to women
- Conduct surveys, interviews, or focus groups with populations whose needs have not been adequately addressed such as:
 - _____ Current students in degree seeking programs
 - _____ Current students in non-degree seeking programs
 - _____ Members of local women's business organizations or chambers of commerce

³ For further information, refer to the following sections of the companion report: *Introduction and Purpose*, *Understanding the Local Audience*, and *Conducting a Needs Assessment*.

Sample Characteristics, Needs, and Preferences to Address in a Needs Assessment

- Learning styles and preferences of your target audience
- Cultural or diversity sensitivities or needs
 - _____ Language needs
- Size and stage of businesses
 - _____ Characteristics of female students who may not yet be considering entrepreneurship
 - _____ Needs of aspiring women entrepreneurs
 - _____ Usefulness of discussions of entrepreneurial growth options
 - _____ Needs of women entrepreneurs with small to mid-sized businesses facing challenges advancing to the next stage of business growth
 - _____ Needs of high-growth oriented women entrepreneurs
- Preference for course topics or industries of interest
- Location and time of programming
- Dependent care or other unique needs
- Demographics such as: age, educational attainment, work/student status, type of profession or job titles, and family/age of children

Definition:

Size and stage of business – Size of business usually refers to a business’ revenue and number of employees, while stage of business refers to a combination of the number of years in business and the desire and/or propensity for growth. The U.S. Small Business Administration (SBA) has defined sizes and stages of businesses as 1) Start-up Firms: those that have been in business for less than 2 years, regardless of the number of employees or annual revenues, 2) Micro-businesses: those with 1-5 employees and up to \$250,000 in annual revenues no matter how long they have been in business, 3) Small Businesses: those that have been open for 2-5 years, with 2-10 employees or \$250,000-\$1,000,000 in annual revenues, 4) Mid-sized Businesses: those that have been open for more than 5 years, with 11-99 employees or \$1-5 million in annual revenues, 5) Large Businesses: those that have been in business for more than 5 years, with 100 or more employees or \$5 million plus in annual revenues, and 6) High-Growth Firms also known as “gazelle” businesses: those with annual growth of at least 20 percent for 4 continuous years.

Understanding Your Local Audience: Resources

Web References

Organization	Website
American Evaluation Association Needs Assessment Topic Interest Group	www.megaplanning.com/aea/ www.eval.org
The Claus Group Drew Clausen has worked with colleges establishing entrepreneurial education programs for their local communities such as the one at Santa Fe Community College	drewclaus@aol.com
Community Tool Box Needs Assessment (Developed for health programs, but informative)	http://ctb.ku.edu/tools/sub_section_main_1019.htm
Ericae.net Clearinghouse on Assessment and Evaluation Instructional Assessment Resources	http://ericae.net/ http://www.utexas.edu/academic/diia/assessment/iar/
Iowa State University Extension Needs Assessment Strategies for Community Groups and Organizations	http://www.extension.iastate.edu/communities/tools/assess/
National Association for Community College Entrepreneurship (NACCE publishes a quarterly journal available online)	www.nacce.com/
NOAA Coastal Services Center Needs Assessment Training Online	www.csc.noaa.gov/needs/

Successful Practices Examples

WBC or Other Organization	Successful Practice Modeled (Page Number in Companion Report)
Center for Women & Enterprise Boston, MA http://cweonline.org	Spanish Language Programming (p. 18) & Programming for Stage of Business (p. 20)
Dakota County Technical College, Institute for Business, Innovation & Entrepreneurship Apple Valley, MN http://www.dctc4business.com/	Conducting a Needs Assessment (p. 24)
Entrepreneurship Institute at Santa Fe Community Santa Fe, NM http://www.sfccnm.edu/programs/entrepreneur	Online Training Format (p. 23)
Jacksonville Women's Business Center Jacksonville, FL http://www.myjaxchamber.com	Programming for Stage of Business (p. 20)

Successful Practices Examples (Continued)

WBC or Other Organization	Successful Practice Modeled (Page Number in Companion Report)
ONABEN – A Native American Business Network Tigard, OR http://www.onaben.org	Native American Programming (p. 18)
Rural Enterprise Assistance Project: Women’s Business Center Lyons, NE http://www2.cfra.org/reap/womens_business_center.htm	Rural Programming (p. 17)
The Microbusiness Advancement Center– Women’s Business Center Tucson, AZ http://mac-sa.org	Programming Topic: Technology (p. 21)
Virginia Community College System (VCCS) Virginia http://www.vccs.edu/	Conducting a Needs Assessment (p. 24)
Women’s Economic Self-Sufficiency Team Albuquerque, NM http://www.wesst.org	Spanish Language Programming & Native American Programming (p. 18)
Women’s Enterprise Development Center Westchester, NY http://www.wedc-westchester.org	Programming Industry Topic: Child Care (p. 22)

Developing Support Services: Checklist

Developing Support Services

Entrepreneurs must be sufficiently adept at a wide variety of skills in order for their businesses to succeed. To that end, there must be a pipeline of support that provides services other than just training to current and aspiring entrepreneurs. In addition, research has shown that support services can help narrow the gap between women and men for accessing human, financial and social capital. Networking, mentoring and counseling opportunities are among the most important support services centers can provide their clients. These services are also important for inspiring female students across various fields and professions to consider future entrepreneurship. The following checklist includes the types of support services to include as part of a comprehensive entrepreneurship center or non-credit training program for women.⁴

Support Services for Comprehensive Entrepreneurship Centers and Non-Credit Programs for Women

- Increase women's access to formal business networks
 - _____ Provide access to networking events designed to introduce aspiring and current women entrepreneurs to members of the business community
 - _____ Provide access to women-only networking events
 - _____ Ensure that women role-models or speakers are featured at general networking events
 - _____ Provide opportunities for younger women students to meet successful women entrepreneurs
 - _____ Establish large networking events as well as smaller ongoing events
 - _____ Create networking events that serve ethnic and cultural diversities
- Establish mentoring programs
 - _____ Provide opportunities for women business owners or female students to build relationships with successful role models
 - _____ Foster mentoring relationships between women mentees and role models who are in similar industries or who have faced similar challenges
 - _____ Implement creative mentoring approaches such as mentorship roundtables and mentoring teams
- Provide aspiring and current women business owners with access to counseling
 - _____ Include opportunities for women business owners to meet one-on-one for immediate assistance with business issues as they arise
 - _____ Consider using the term "consulting services" instead of business counseling

⁴ For further information, refer to the following sections of the companion report: *Networking, Mentoring, and Counseling or Consulting Services*

Developing Support Services: Resources

Successful Practice or Other Featured Examples

WBC or Other Organization	Successful Practice Modeled (Page Number in Companion Report)
The Alliance Women's Business Center Orlando, FL http://www.allianceflorida.com/wbc.html	Mentoring: WNET Monthly Mentorship Roundtables (p. 29)
Center for Women & Enterprise Boston, MA http://cweonline.org	Networking Events: Annual and Ongoing Programming (p. 28)
Jacksonville Women's Business Center Jacksonville, FL http://www.myjaxchamber.com	Mentoring: Roundtables and Mentor Teams (p. 29)
The Wharton School Small Business Development Center Philadelphia, PA http://whartonsbdc.wharton.upenn.edu/	Networking Event: Featured Successful Woman Entrepreneur (p. 27)
Women's Business Center of Northern Virginia Springfield, VA http://www.cbponline.org/	Networking Event: Annual Women Entrepreneurs Expo (p. 27)
Women's Economic Self-Sufficiency Team Albuquerque, NM http://www.wesst.org	Consulting: One-on-One Consulting with Gender and Cultural Sensitivity (p.30)

Creating Collaborations: Checklist

Creating Collaborations

In working together, organizations can share resources, potentially lowering costs and focusing more resources on serving clients. Research shows that much of the success of the WBCs lies in their ability to leverage their assets and the assets of other organizations to the benefit of their female clients. When establishing or modifying entrepreneurship centers and non-credit training programs for women, program developers should consider what resources are already available from the campus and surrounding business community. By collaborating, community colleges, universities, or other training organizations can offer a wider set of services and formal networks to female students. The following checklist includes a list of considerations for creating partnerships and collaborations for building a complete entrepreneurship program for women.⁵

Considerations for Building Collaborations to Provide More Comprehensive Entrepreneurship Centers and Non-Credit Programs for Women

- Don't recreate the wheel
 - _____ Utilize the resources and expertise of other organizations to enhance your program
 - _____ Don't duplicate services that are already being provided by WBCs, SBDCs, etc.
- Establish strategic alliances with local and regional organizations
- Determine what resources are available throughout the campus community
- Bring together partners who can help establish a spirit of entrepreneurship with an emphasis on supporting current and aspiring women business owners
- Consider how collaborations can provide opportunities for all women students to learn about entrepreneurship

⁵ For further information, refer to the *Creating Collaboration* section of the companion report.

Creating Collaborations: Resources

Web References

Organization	Website
Association of American Colleges and Universities	www.aacu.org
Association of Women's Business Centers	www.awbc.biz
Business.gov	www.business.gov
InSites: Communities of Learning, Inquiry, and Practice	http://www.insites.org/CLIP_v1_site/overview.html
National Association of Women Business Owners	www.nawbo.org
National Women's Business Council	www.nwbc.gov
Quantum Leaps, Inc.ss	www.quantumleapsinc.org/
SCORE – Counselors to America's Small Business	www.score.org
U.S. Small Business Administration, Office of Advocacy	www.sba.gov/advo
U.S. Small Business Administration, Office of Women's Business Ownership	www.sba.gov/womeninbusiness
Women's Business Enterprise National Council	www.wbenc.org

Successful Practice or Other Featured Examples

WBC or Other Organization	Successful Practice Modeled in Collaboration <i>(Page Number in Companion Report)</i>
Babson College – The Center for Women's Leadership & The Lewis Institute Babson Park, MA http://www3.babson.edu/eship/	Campus-wide Entrepreneurial Education <i>(p. 36)</i>
Jacksonville Women's Business Center Jacksonville, FL http://www.myjaxchamber.com	Extensive Network of 20 Organizations <i>(p. 32)</i>
The Microbusiness Advancement Center – Women's Business Center Tucson, AZ http://mac-sa.org	Community Development <i>(p. 35)</i>
Rural Enterprise Assistance Project: Women's Business Center Lyons, NE http://www2.cfra.org/reap/womens_business_center.htm	State-wide Initiatives <i>(p. 33)</i>
Women's Enterprise Development Center Westchester, NY http://www.wedc-westchester.org	Providing Expertise to Colleges <i>(p. 34)</i>

Marketing and Promoting Entrepreneurship Centers & Non-Credit Programs to Women

Marketing Entrepreneurship Centers & Non-Credit Programs to Women: Check List

A lot of effort goes into establishing and modifying an entrepreneurship center or non-credit training program for women. It is important to make sure that once programmatic elements are in place that steps should be taken to effectively market the program to aspiring and current women entrepreneurs. The following checklist includes elements of basic marketing planning, as well as elements specifically important to the audiences of female students as well as current or aspiring women entrepreneurs.⁶

Marketing Entrepreneurship Programs to Women

- Develop a marketing plan which mirror practices taught in business training
- Develop a marketing plan that uses:
 - _____ Basic marketing tools such as press releases; advertising in newspapers, websites, TV and radio spots; and speaking engagements
 - _____ Creative market approaches such as magazine articles about female students with successful businesses or hosting local TV programs
 - _____ Social media tools such as blogs, message boards, and podcasts
- Use the techniques for “Knowing the Audience of Women Entrepreneurs” and “Understanding Your Local Audience” to design and market your program
 - _____ Review current research and information from academics, WBCs and other organizations to keep up-to-date on issues of importance to female students as well as current and aspiring women entrepreneurs
 - _____ Use ongoing needs assessments to understand your local audience
- Consider using the marketing plan as an experiential learning opportunity for current female students
- Promote your programs frequently in a number of ways in order to make sufficient contact with women entrepreneurs – three (3) or more contacts are needed for attracting a woman business owner to a program
- Provide orientations to your center or program so female students and women business owners can become acquainted with your program offerings, staff, and space
- Continue to contact previous clients and supporters, since women entrepreneurs tend to remain loyal clients to the centers which they patronize
- Leverage collaborations and partnerships for co-referral, co-branding, and co-marketing opportunities

⁶ For further information, refer to the *Marketing and Promoting Entrepreneurship Programs to Women* section of the companion report.

Marketing Entrepreneurship Centers & Non-Credit Programs to Women: Resources

Web References

In addition to the resources listed here, there are a number of independent blogs that can easily be located through a web search using the search term “marketing to women.”

Organization	Web site
American Marketing Association Resource Library	http://www.marketingpower.com/ResourceLibrary/Pages/default.aspx
Inc. com How to Guides: Market Research	http://www.inc.com/guides/write_biz_plan/24018.html
The Six Costliest Mistakes You Can Make in Marketing to Women	http://www.inc.com/articles/2003/01/25019.html
M2M Marketing to Women Conference Fast Facts	http://www.m2w.biz/fast_facts.php
Promoting Marketing Association, Inc.	https://www.pmalink.org/
Quirk’s Marketing Research Review	http://www.quirks.com/index.aspx

Successful Practice or Other Featured Examples

WBCs or Other Organization	Successful Practice Modeled (Page Number in Companion Report)
Community Business Partnership Springfield, VA www.cbponline.org	Marketing: Co-branding and co-marketing in a collaboration (p. 39)
Dakota County Technical College, Institute for Business, Innovation & Entrepreneurship Apple Valley, MN http://www.dctc4business.com/	Marketing: Implementing Findings of a Needs Assessment (p. 38)
The Microbusiness Advancement Center–Women’s Business Center Tucson, AZ http://mac-sa.org	Marketing: Outreach to Past Clients (p. 38)

Evaluating Entrepreneurship Centers & Non-Credit Programs for Women

Evaluating Entrepreneurship Centers & Non-Credit Programs for Women: Checklist

Program evaluations help determine the success of an entrepreneurship program and the impact it is having on female students and women business owners. Most importantly, program evaluations can help identify opportunities to make program improvements. By taking a proactive approach to evaluation, program designers can empower all stake-holders to define program success in their own terms. The following checklist includes elements of basic evaluation principles, as well as elements that have been used in measuring WBC success.⁷

Use Evaluation for Documenting Success and Creating Program Improvement

- Be proactive about creating a positive approach to evaluation
- Emphasize using evaluation for program improvement
- Begin evaluation planning in conjunction with program design
- Explore the resources available within the college or business community for conducting evaluations; find staff, faculty, or students who can be advisors
- Build organizational capacity for program assessment with staff and students who are not familiar with evaluation practices
- Determine if and what data will be collected to measure the economic impacts of the entrepreneurship program. Consider collecting data in relation to the cost per student, including:
 - _____ Number of clients trained, mentored or counseled
 - _____ Number of hours clients were trained, mentored or counseled
 - _____ Number of businesses started by women students
 - _____ Business revenues of the women students
 - _____ Jobs created by the businesses of women students
- Determine if and what data, other than economic indicators, will be collected to measure program success
 - _____ Gather stories regarding challenges and successes of women students who are starting or growing their businesses
- Determine if and what data will be collected to assist continued program improvement. For example:
 - _____ Student attendance
 - _____ Student feedback

⁷ For further information, refer to the *Evaluating Entrepreneurship Programs for Women* section of the companion report.

Evaluating Entrepreneurship Centers & Non-Credit Programs for Women: Resources

Web References

Organization	Website
American Evaluation Association	www.eval.org
CDC Evaluation Working Group	http://www.cdc.gov/eval/index.htm
Community Tool Box – Evaluating Community Programs and Initiatives (Developed for health programs, but informative)	http://ctb.ku.edu/tools//chapter_1036.htm
Ericae.net Clearinghouse on Assessment and Evaluation	http://ericae.net/
Innovation Network, Inc.	http://www.innonet.org
Instructional Assessment Resources	http://www.utexas.edu/academic/diia/assessment/iar/
National Association for Community College Entrepreneurship. (NACCE publishes a quarterly journal available online)	www.nacce.com/
National Science Foundation: Online Evaluation Resource Library (OERL)	http://oerl.sri.com/
University of Wisconsin –Extension Program Development and Evaluation	http://www.uwex.edu/ces/pdande/index.html
Virginia Tech University Libraries Bibliography on Evaluating Web Information: Sample Evaluation Forms	http://www.lib.vt.edu/help/instruct/evaluate/evalbiblio.html#forms
W.K. Kellogg Foundation Evaluation Toolkit	http://www.wkkf.org/default.aspx?tabid=75&CID=281&NID=61&LanguageID=0
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Appendix

Methodology

The exploratory research for this project began in 2007 as an effort of the National Women's Business Council (NWBC) to expand entrepreneurial training opportunities for women. Specifically, NWBC hoped to provide a rationale for educational institutions, such as entrepreneurship centers or non-credit programs at two- and four-year colleges and universities, to incorporate programmatic elements targeted to the audience of women. In addition, the project aimed to provide guidelines and successful practice examples for these institutions and organizations for establishing or modifying entrepreneurship centers and non-credit training programs for women. These guidelines have been compiled in this document, *II. Resource Guide for Establishing or Modifying Entrepreneurship Centers & Non-Credit Training Programs for Women*, which is intended to be a "living document," designed to be periodically updated according to new research or based on input from the field and practitioners.

Research Questions, Methods, & Successful Practice Selection

For this resource guide and the first part of the report, *I. Report of Findings from an Exploratory Literature Review & Interview Study*, an exploratory review of research was conducted along with an examination of documents and websites describing Small Business Administration (SBA) Women's Business Centers (WBCs), Small Business Development Centers (SBDCs), and two- and four-year colleges or universities providing programming in entrepreneurship for women. This process provided a number of the findings regarding what are considered to be successful practices, in general, regarding the delivery of entrepreneurial programming for women.¹ Several key research questions guided the exploratory review of successful practices:

1. What does past research of WBCs show to be key program components that make WBCs successful at meeting the needs of women business owners?
2. What does research show as important training opportunities for women business owners?
3. What have some two- and four-year colleges and universities done to establish or modify entrepreneurship programs to meet the needs of women?

In addition, as part of this research, phone interviews were conducted over a period of two months with representatives from WBCs, two- and four-year colleges and universities, and SBDCs. These interviews were followed by further review of the programs and follow-up conversations with the organizations to ensure programmatic information provided in this report would be as current as possible.

During the interview and review process representatives from ten (10) WBCs, three (3) SBDCs and business collaboratives, and five (5) college programs were interviewed. The respondents represent organizations and institutions widely distributed throughout the United States.

As WBCs are the primary focus of the analysis of this report, it is important to understand the characteristics of this population. As of 2008, there were 114 Women's Business Centers in 48 states and territories.¹ In 2007 alone, WBCs served more than 148,000 clients—an increase of 18 percent from 2005.² Women who attended WBCs reported \$550.2 million in receipts for FY 2007 which included a \$40.8 million increase in profits. That year, WBC clients created approximately 3,300 new businesses and 8,750 new jobs.³ Currently, minority women lead 26 percent of all women-owned firms⁴ and they are nearly half (48 percent) of WBC clientele.⁵ Furthermore, more than half (58 percent) of WBC clients are nascent entrepreneurs.⁶

The selection process of WBCs, SBDCs, and colleges was based primarily on suggestions from the NWBC staff and Council members, and the Office of Women's Business Ownership (OWBO), which collects data and administers the WBC program. Because there is a need to provide resources not only to nascent women entrepreneurs, but also to women business owners at other stages of business growth, NWBC made an effort to include some WBCs that featured programs for women across the spectrum of business development to capture some of the practices for those populations.

In addition, as representatives from WBCs were contacted, colleges and universities known to have partnerships with

¹ For a list of these references and other recommended readings see the companion guide to this report.

the WBCs were added to complete the picture of those programs. These interviews provided examples of successful practices in business management and entrepreneurship training programs for women.

All interviews conducted were open-ended and differed slightly depending on the successful practices of that organization as well as the type of organization. Sample interview questions included:

- How do people find out about your program?
- How many students do you see in a year?
- Do you have relationships with other organizations in the community, chambers of commerce, schools, etc.?
- What is the nature of those relationships?
- Do you have statistics on the past participants of your program (annual sales, success rate, etc.)?
- What other programs other than the core curriculum do you provide?
- Do you have networking events?
- What makes these networking events especially suited for women entrepreneurs?
- Do you have programs geared toward business that aren't start-ups?
- What is your evaluation process?

The final exploratory literature review and interview process led to the inclusion of nine (9) WBCs, seven (7) two- and four-year college, universities, or college systems, and three (3) SBDCs, highlighted as successful practices or other featured examples in this report. It is important to note that some of the featured colleges and universities are mentioned in regard to their partnership with a WBC. In addition, though not counted as a college institution in the final count, all SBDCs are either housed within or have a partnership with a college or university system.

Limitations of the Research and Implications for Interpretation of the Findings

Practitioners using the information and suggestions in this report and the companion guide should take into consideration the exploratory nature of this research review.

First, the selection process of successful practices in WBCs, SBDCs, and colleges was based on opinions by the NWBC, OWBO, further WBC suggestions, and from exploratory reviews of WBC, SBDC, and two- and four-year institutions, rather than a comprehensive review and selection process based on all WBCs, SBDCs, and two- and four-year colleges. The practices described here are considered successful practices based on the various organizations' self-assessment of the programming as well as author review of the programming to address issues that previous research regards as challenges for women business owners. As such, inclusion was also a matter of convenience, in that the authors contacted interviewees and invited them to participate. An area for future research could be to incorporate some of this report's findings into a list of successful practices, perhaps in conjunction with findings from other similar studies, on which to rate WBCs, SBDCs, 2-year or 4-year college entrepreneurship centers, or other organizations' non-credit programs (such as adult education programs), to do a systematic review of "best practices."

A second limitation of this exploratory research is the reliance on the WBCs. As the primary resource for successful practices, practitioners establishing or modifying entrepreneurship centers and non-credit training programs for women must take into account the characteristics of the WBC when interpreting the findings and applying them to their settings. As mentioned above and in the report, the majority of WBC clients are nascent entrepreneurs. While the finding may then be suitable for a college audience of female students who may not yet be considering entrepreneurship, it is also important to note that the age and race/ethnicity of the female students in a target audience may or may not be similar to that of the WBC clientele and therefore, some of the characteristics of successful programming in WBCs may not be applicable. As mentioned in the report, a crucial step in establishing or modifying an entrepreneurship center or non-credit training program for women is to conduct a local needs assessment of the current and targeted populations before establishing or modifying the program.

Another consideration for the suggestions listed here is that a comprehensive look into the costs of establishing or modifying programs for women entrepreneurs have not been fully addressed. While the review indicates that collaborations may help a program operate more efficiently by pooling programmatic and marketing resources, this report does not fully address the financial needs of institutions in terms of such things as space and staffing. While

collaborations may assist in this area, there is clearly more room for future research and suggestions to meet this important need.

Finally, a key limitation of this research is that it does not delve into the important arena of curriculum development. This report was not an academic review of curriculum. So while examples of university curriculum may be mentioned, they are noted as suggestions for non-credit training programs, entrepreneurship centers, support services, or experiential learning.

Many academics in the field of women's entrepreneurship have been researching the continued gaps in and the need for more focus on the needs of women students in curriculum development. For instance the study, *The Role of Case Studies in Presenting Continuing Challenges for Women Entrepreneurs*, which included a selection of Harvard Business school cases from 1980 to 2008 showed bias treatment of women in business cases.⁷

The authors of this report recognize that future research by organizations, such as NWBC, will need to expand into new areas, as partnerships between academic institutions and non-credit training providers increase, and as researchers further advance the study and practice of entrepreneurship curriculum to focus on support for women's entrepreneurship.

Updating the Resource Guide

Finally, because of the exploratory nature of the selection process, the authors of this report recognize that there are other 2-year and 4-year colleges and universities, non-credit training programs, adult-education programs, and other organizations applying many of the successful practices described in the report and the companion guide in terms of programming specifically for women. In addition, it is recognized that there are other practices that have not been identified in this exploratory research endeavor. This remains an area for further research and continued exploration of what is being practiced in the field.

As such, this resource guide, *II. Resource Guide for Establishing or Modifying Entrepreneurship Centers & Non-Credit Training Programs for Women*, is designed to be a practical tool that can be updated periodically with new ideas for successful practices, examples of organizations applying those practices, and new references and suggested readings for practitioners. NWBC welcomes feedback and suggestions of other successful examples for establishing and modifying entrepreneurship centers or non-credit training programs for women. Please contact us at 202-205-3850 or info@nwbc.gov.

¹ U.S. Small Business Administration, Women's Business Centers, http://www.sba.gov/idc/groups/public/documents/sba_program_office/sba_pr_wbc_ed.pdf, Retrieved January 2009.

² U.S. Small Business Administration. (2008). *Office of Entrepreneurial Development: Annual Report, Fiscal Year 2007*.

³ Ibid.

⁴ Center for Women's Business Research. (2008). *Accelerating the Growth of Businesses Owned by Women of Color: Key Facts*. Washington, DC.

⁵ Richtermeier and Fife-Samyn, *Analyzing the Economic Impact of the Women's Business Center Program*.

⁶ Ibid.

⁷ Mattis, M. and Levin, L. (2008). *The Role of Case Studies in Encouraging or Discouraging Women's Entrepreneurship*. Presented at the Academy of Management Annual Meeting.