

2009 AWBC Member Benefits

Membership in the AWBC provides support to Women's Business Centers through the following member benefits:

1. Public Policy and Advocacy

- A. The AWBC is the organization that advocates on your behalf for funding increases supportive legislative bills, re-authorization matters, and other issues of importance with Senate and House Committees on Small Business and Entrepreneurial Development on Capitol Hill. When many programs received flat funding, our efforts in 2008 resulted in an additional \$1,000,000 increase in the WBC program. *In 2009, the AWBC is advocating for a \$30 million appropriation for WBC's.*
- B. Since 1998, many said that WBCs would never receive permanent legislation without which made funding and federal appropriations untenable and uncertain. Working tirelessly on your behalf and with the President of the United States signature, in 2008, the AWBC secured permanent funding for WBCs! All SBA designated WBC programs benefitted. The AWBC members shared their program impact with responses such as: *Now we are able to concentrate on clients and not worry about money; We are able to seek longer term funding from other sources; We have some hope for the future of organization: "Our whole strategic plan is now different"*
- C. The AWBC, recognized as the voice of expertise that represents the SBA WBC program, is *regularly* an invited guest, testifier and participant in Senate and House Small Business Committee Hearings and Roundtables regarding the SBA's Entrepreneurial Development programs.
- D. The AWBC provides public policy alerts and calls to action, sent via email announcements on Run My Club, to alert members on funding or policy matters.
- E. The AWBC holds an Annual Capitol Hill event and training for meetings with legislators.
- F. Member centers are supported by the AWBC Public Policy Committee and Advisory Council in all legislative-related matters.
- G. The AWBC connects with a like mission organization to strengthen our voice, impact and deliverables on matters of common purpose, Organizational alliances include NWBC, Count Me In, WIPP, Quantum Leaps, WPO, NAWBO, WEBENC, AEO.
- H. The AWBC is regularly invited to participate at national women business owner resource roundtables and conferences to discuss the WBC program, clients' challenges and opportunities. In February 2009, the AWBC joined the National Business Women's Council and the other major women business owner associations to discuss reinstatement of the SBA Micro Loan program and related funding, access issues.

2. Partnership Relationship and System-wide Advocacy with OWBO

- A. The AWBC meets regularly with the Office of Women's Business Ownership to discuss OWBO and WBC program directions and needs. 2009 discussions included SBA's demand for program compliance and instruction therefore dictating the move from a national conference to regional conferences. OWBO held several meetings with AWBC leadership regarding the concerns and outcomes of this decision. Newly appointed SBA and OWBO administrators have held introductory meetings with AWBC leadership.
- B. The AWBC raises and addresses systemic issues of concern for WBCs across the nation concerning SBA/OWBO practices, policies or resource needs.
- C. The AWBC, working with Congressional members and OWBO, has worked to solve WBC system-wide issues. A highlight of the solutions are:
 - a. A year long process (2007-2008) of engagement and discussion between WBC program directors and SBA and OWBO leadership to ascertain "what's right" and "what's wrong".
 - b. Creation and delivery of transparency in the review, selection and funding process
 - c. Overhaul of the payment- reimbursement system, resulting in more timely reimbursements, and cash advances.
 - d. Improvement in the communication and feedback system between WBC programs and OWBO
 - e. A new alignment of OWBO Washington DC resources and their roles and responsibilities to better serve the WBC programs and reduce the number of OWBO individuals centers need to interact with.

- D. The AWBC has a seat on the National Women's Business Council and works with member organizations to serve as an independent source of advice and policy recommendations to the President, Congress, and the U.S. Small Business Administration on economic issues of importance to women business owners

3. Training And Peer-To-Peer Educational Exchange

- A. The AWBC collaborates with a network of alliances--stakeholders and bipartisan leadership to ensure that the WBC leaders receive training and best practices in the following areas:
 - 1. Public Policy and Legislation
 - 2. Leadership Development
 - 3. Diversifying Funding Resources
 - 4. Center Growth and Sustainability
 - 5. Best Practices in Information Technology and internet usage
- B. AWBC hosts an Annual Members Only Leadership and Development Conference in Washington, DC.
- C. The AWBC website and Run My Club provide easy to use systems for staying connected to each other for peer-to-peer sharing and mentoring.
- D. In 2008 AWBC instituted free monthly AWBC School Conference Calls; and archives audio files of these calls to its web site for future reference.

4. Research and Impact Studies

- A. AWBC participates in and sponsors research to ensure that all are well informed of the needs of women entrepreneurs including the impact of women business owners on the national and international economies.
- B. Relevant new research and documents are posted to the AWBC web site.
- C. AWBC conducts membership surveys and shares results.

5. Portfolio Of Resource Support

- A. Through its ever growing list of networks and alliances¹ the AWBC and its partners provide funds and resources to help the Women Business Centers grow and develop their portfolio of client resources.
- B. AWBC also links with national partners and allies for discounts and beneficial member partnerships.
- C. AWBC shares information on available federal funding contacts and fundraising opportunities.
- D. AWBC provides your connectivity to national boards that serve members such as National Women's Business Council and Center for Women's Business Research.
- E. AWBC formed partnership with Intuit to provide licensing and free software with an in-kind value of \$35,000.
- F. Web site and Run My Club database provide marketing support and connectivity between centers, directors and potential clients who call the AWBC to find the center near them using *Member Map* (www.awbc.biz)

6. Membership Incentive Programs (identified centers only)

- A. Intuit - Accounting Pro software - made available to ALL AWBC members. The offer provided 30 site licenses of software and a trainer program to use as center curriculum. The offer is valued at \$38,257 in kind contribution of software and training materials per center. More than 30 WBCs took advantage of this offer.
- B. Direct Selling Educational Foundation Direct Sales Days - 3-4 WBCs to be supported in 2009 (Centers helped in 2008 - WV, AL, NV) 2009 Centers - WV (Feb) Others TBD
- C. Prudential Partnership - 25 WBCs were supported in 2008 and again in 2009 by Local Relationship Managers
- D. State Farm/Organization of Chinese Americans program - beta-tested in Northern VA during Fall 2007; ran in Chicago and NYC Spring 2008; expansion continues in 2009

For additional information or to join the Association of Women's Business Centers please contact Ann Marie Almeida, AWBC CEO, at ama@awbc.biz or visit www.awbc.biz.