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October 22, 2020

YWCA O'ahu launches new Enterprising Women of Color Business Center with the support of Minority Business Development Agency

Honolulu, HI – YWCA O'ahu launches the MBDA “Enterprising Women of Color” Center at YWCA Laniākea in downtown Honolulu this month in partnership with the U.S. Department of Commerce, Minority Business Development Agency (MBDA). October is National Women’s Small Business Month.

“Enterprising Women of Color” is a growing nationwide network established by MBDA to promote minority small business owners, with a focus on women entrepreneurs. Clients served by MBDA represent an inclusive group of African American, Asian American, Native American, Latinx, Pacific Islander and Hasidic Jewish business owners across the country.

The MBDA Enterprising Women of Color Business Center provides diverse and dynamic women entrepreneurs with resources, training, mentorship and events aimed at facilitating access to contracts and funding for medium-sized minority businesses.

“The principle of this initiative closely aligns with our mission at YWCA O'ahu of eliminating racism and empowering women. As we partner with the Minority Business Development Agency, we can bring rich offerings to our Hawai'i community,” said Noriko Namiki, YWCA O'ahu CEO.

“This program could not resonate more in our state. Women business owners represent an integral part of our multifaceted entrepreneurial economy and multiethnic local culture. Our current YWCA O'ahu programs – including the Patsy T. Mink Center for Business & Leadership – will complement the MBDA Enterprising Women of Color Business Center and help prepare its clients for success.”



Minority women entrepreneurs are cornerstones of economic growth in their communities. According to the 2019 American Express “State of Women Owned Businesses” report, 6.4 million minority-owned women businesses employed nearly 2.4 million people and generated \$422.5 billion in revenue. Women re-invest approximately 90 percent of their earnings into their families and their communities.

The launch of the YWCA O’ahu MBDA Enterprising Women of Color Business Center is made possible by a \$500,000 MBDA grant to support new staffing, program development and client outreach.

Terri Funakoshi, YWCA O’ahu chief operating officer and previous director of the Patsy T. Mink Center for Business & Leadership at YWCA Laniākea, is serving as interim director of the YWCA O’ahu MBDA Enterprising Women of Color Business Center. A search is underway for a permanent director, manager and fiscal administrator for the program. Applications can be submitted at www.ywcaoahu.org/job-opportunities

Clients interested in joining the MBDA Enterprising Women of Color Business Center can submit inquiries to MBDA@ywcaoahu.org and visit <https://www.ywcaoahu.org/mbda-ewoc>

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About YWCA O’ahu

Founded in 1900, YWCA O’ahu is the oldest and largest women’s membership organization in Hawai’i supporting women and girls through health and wellness, economic self-sufficiency, professional development and housing. YWCA O’ahu has more than 1,800 members and three unique facilities: the flagship YWCA Laniākea in downtown Honolulu, YWCA Fernhurst residence in Makiki, and YWCA Kokokahi recreational site in Kaneohe.

More than two million people participate each year in YWCA programs at more than 1,300 locations across the U.S. YWCA serves about 25 million women and girls in 125 countries worldwide. To learn more, visit www.ywcaoahu.org.