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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Enterprising Women of Color Business Center at YWCA O'ahu Seeks Applicants for Cohort 3 Business Certification Courses and Welcomes New Team Members

HONOLULU, HI — The new Enterprising Women of Color (EWOC) Business Center at YWCA O'ahu seeks applicants for its Cohort 3 Business Certification training courses that are slated to start on May 18, 2021.

Applications are now available and due by 12 noon Hawaii Time on May 13. Interested candidates can learn more at www.ywcaoahu.org/mbda-ewoc or email mbdaewoc@ywcaoahu.org

The courses will be held online and are **free** to qualified businesses, with a focus on minority women-owned businesses, thanks to funding from the U.S. Department of Commerce, Minority Business Development Agency (MBDA).

Cohort 3 has two phases:

- **Cohort 3A is an overview course** with three Zoom sessions on Tuesdays, 5:30-7:30 p.m. Hawaii Time. The sessions will take place on May 18, May 25 and June 1. This

includes an introduction to government and corporate supplier diversity programs and benefits; certifying agencies/processes; and requirements and required documents. Anyone interested is welcome to apply.

- **Cohort 3B is a more in-depth course after Cohort 3A ends.** It includes six Zoom sessions: Five sessions on Tuesdays, 5:30-7:30 p.m. Hawaii Time (June 8, June 15, June 22, June 29 and July 6) and one session on Saturday, July 10, 9:30-11:30 a.m. Hawaii Time. To maximize the purpose of Cohort 3B and limited spots available, the Business Center seeks qualified applicants who: (1) work fulltime on the business they are interested in certifying; (2) have monthly financial statements; and (3) have filed personal or business taxes the last three calendar years (i.e., 2017, 2018 and 2019).

The courses aim to expand contracting opportunities for local entrepreneurs. Instructors Mari and José Villa of Villa Business Consulting, Inc. have been working with these certification programs since 2008 and will provide expertise and in-depth knowledge to help participants navigate and thrive in these areas.

“There are more than 44,000 women-owned businesses in Hawai‘i,” said Shan Wirt, Director of the EWOC Business Center at YWCA O‘ahu. “However, according to WBENC (Women’s Business Enterprise National Council), there are only 23 certified women-owned businesses in the state. Our goal is to grow that number. Local businesses can indeed compete for government and corporate contracts. It is our hope that our trainings help guide the way.”

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, Hispanic/Latina, Pacific Islander and Hasidic Jewish business owners across the country.

The federal government sets aside approximately \$115 billion annually in contracts primarily for certified women-owned, minority-owned, and veteran-owned small businesses (including service-disabled), and other categories. Generally, FORTUNE 1000 corporations also set aside contracts in similar categories.



However, many Hawai'i small businesses are unaware that: (1) they can qualify to get certified federally and nationally; and (2) these certification programs would allow them to sell their products or services to government agencies or large corporations.

The EWOC Business Center at YWCA O'ahu 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. These opportunities are pivotal in ensuring the sustainability of our local small business community, especially during the difficult times presented by COVID-19.

EWOC Business Center at YWCA O'ahu Welcomes New Team Members

Marla Momi Musick

Business Development Manager

As the EWOC Business Development Manager, Marla Momi Musick helps to ensure strategic deployment of services and resources for women of color entrepreneurs looking to expand their capabilities and grow their business endeavors. She has 20+ years of leadership experience in fund development, community outreach and communications in the non-profit sectors in New York City and Honolulu, and managed her own consulting practice for 6 years before joining the EWOC Business Center. She has a BFA in Design from the University of Hawai'i, and a MA from New York University.

Joann Malaca

Fiscal Administrator

Joann Malaca, EWOC Business Center Fiscal Administrator, has an MBA from the University of Phoenix and over 20 years of accounting experience in Guam and Hawai'i. Her professional career ranges from serving as a business manager, accountant, business consultant, and sweeping and mopping floors at NASA to establishing a gourmet popcorn business where she secured her first contract with Duty Free Shops and Navy Exchange Guam.

Liyan Wan

CRM System Administrator

As Client Relationship Management System Administrator at the EWOC Business Center, Liyan Wan draws from her own client management experiences from both her academic tutoring



and design businesses, as well as her technical expertise as an Industrial Engineer and Architectural Designer. Prior to joining the EWOC Business Center, she was an architectural designer for international resorts. She has a B.S. degree in Industrial Engineering from Penn State University and a Master of Architecture degree from University of Illinois at Chicago.

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ABOUT MBDA ENTERPRISING WOMEN OF COLOR BUSINESS CENTER

YWCA O'ahu is one of only five organizations in the nation awarded a \$1,000,000 two-year grant by the Minority Business Development Agency (MBDA) to launch an Enterprising Women of Color Business Center. The Center helps minority women-owned businesses grow with federal, state, and private contract opportunities, through free minority certification training, business analysis, market access and access to capital. It offers business certification trainings, one-on-one counseling, innovative workshops and other resources. For more information, visit www.ywcaoahu.org/mbda-ewoc.

ABOUT YWCA O'AHU

YWCA O'ahu celebrated its 120th anniversary in 2020, noted as the oldest and largest women's membership organization in Hawai'i. As a 501(c)(3) organization, YWCA O'ahu supports women and girls by providing opportunities for economic advancement, leadership/business development, and health and wellness. YWCA O'ahu has three facilities on O'ahu: YWCA Laniākea in downtown Honolulu, YWCA Fernhurst in Makiki and YWCA Kokokahi in Kāne'ohe. To support YWCA O'ahu, visit www.ywcaoahu.org/donate.