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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

“Enterprising Women of Color” Program at YWCA O’ahu Kicks Off Spring with Business Center Blessing and Free New Workshops

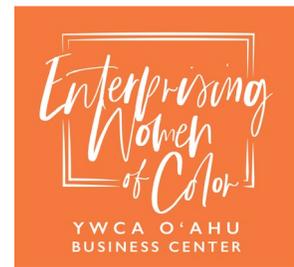
HONOLULU, HI — The Minority Business Development Agency Enterprising Women of Color (MBDA EWOC) Business Center at YWCA O’ahu kicked off the spring with a grand opening of its office, a milestone in the program’s ongoing development of multifaceted resources to support minority women-owned businesses.

On March 18, an official opening ceremony was held at the Center’s new headquarters at YWCA Laniākea in downtown Honolulu. Kahu Kordell Kekoa provided a Hawaiian blessing for the freshly renovated office, located at 1040 Richards Street, Suite 301. The Center is open Monday-Friday, 9 a.m.-5 p.m.

The Center’s focus is to help minority women-owned businesses thrive and expand through business analysis, market access and access to capital. Free one-on-one business and financial counseling, workshops responsive to business needs and other resources are available. These opportunities are pivotal in ensuring the sustainability of our local small business community, especially during the difficult times presented by COVID-19.

“Based on the latest Hawai‘i data, there are over 44,000 women-owned businesses generating over \$7 billion,” said Shan Wirt, director of the MBDA EWOC Business Center, at the opening event.

“However, that revenue is only 7 percent of all business revenue in the state. All to say, we have some ways to go to level the playing field. This Business Center is here to do just that — help women-owned businesses grow by providing counseling, workshops and resources.”



The grand opening was also commemorated with a certificate from the State of Hawai'i House of Representatives, and remarks sent from Governor David Ige supporting the work of MBDA EWOC at YWCA O'ahu.

Remarks from MBDA Acting National Director Edith McCloud were shared as well. The MBDA EWOC Business Center at YWCA O'ahu is one of five in the nation funded by the U.S. Department of Commerce, Minority Business Development Agency.

“For 3 years, the Enterprising Women of Color Initiative has grown to support thousands of Women Minority Business Enterprises through our national programming,” McCloud said.

“It was always our hope to have Business Centers to support this work and serve as an on-the-ground resource for women of color, providing the necessary tools and assistance that would help them grow in size and scale. We applaud YWCA O'ahu and look forward to seeing the numerous success stories that spring from this amazing partnership.”

Due to COVID-19, the MBDA EWOC Business Center at YWCA O'ahu is currently accepting virtual and phone appointments for free business and financial counseling and other meetings. Interested clients can book appointments or register for upcoming events at <https://www.ywcaoahu.org/mbda-ewoc>

FEATURED PROGRAMS THIS MONTH

- **ENTERPRISING WOMEN OF COLOR SPRING FORUM: LEVEL UP! GET IN THE MILLION DOLLAR MINDSET**
Hosted by the Minority Development Business Agency in partnership with The Coca-Cola Company. This will feature panel discussions with distinguished speakers on demystifying global business, joint venture, partnerships, mergers, and acquisitions, and contracting and procurement for women minority business enterprises.
Wednesday, April 21, 2021, 2 p.m.- 5 p.m. EST (8 a.m.- 11 a.m. HST)
- **LAUNCH YOUR E-COMMERCE**
Two-day workshop presented by Veterans Business Outreach Center of the Pacific and MBDA Enterprising Women of Color Business Center. Tuesday, April 27, 2021 + Thursday, April 29, 2021. Classes will run 12 noon-2:30 p.m. both days. FREE and open to everyone.

For the latest information, visit the MBDA EWOC YWCA O'ahu Business Center [website](#), [LinkedIn](#), [Instagram](#), [Facebook](#) and [YouTube](#).



Kahu Kordell Kekoa, Shan Writ, MBDA Director and Noriko Namiki, CEO YWCA Oahu

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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 business owners grow their businesses through obtaining contracts and facilitating funding. It offers business certification trainings, one-on-one counseling, innovative workshops, and other resources.

ABOUT YWCA O'AHU

YWCA O'ahu celebrates 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.