Key Facts

- Multi-Resource Center for Business Growth
- 501(c)(3) Non-Profit Organization
- Founded in 1986
- 8 Offices in the Midwest

Mission

Support and accelerate business development and growth, targeting women and serving all diverse business owners, in order to strengthen their participation in and impact on the economy.

Objectives

- Increase awareness of entrepreneurship as a viable means of economic self-sufficiency
- Accelerate the growth rate of enterprises owned by women and other diverse business owners
- Stimulate public policy and system changes that support and strengthen economic empowerment of women and other diverse business owners
- Increase economic impact on individuals, families, and communities

What We Do

Coaching/Curricula
- Strategic business advising
- Specialized curricula and workshops
- Online/on demand courses

Contracts
- Private sector procurement opportunities
- Federal, state, and local government contracting assistance
- WBE certification

Capital
- Financial education
- Debt and equity placement
- Direct lending
**Economic Impact**

- **7,269** Hours of business advising delivered
- **2,875** Clients advised
- **1,581** Jobs created and retained
- **1,951** Businesses WBE-certified

- **$409,000,000** Public and private sector contracts awarded
- **$3,300,000** Invested through capital infusion

**Clients**

**Gender**
- 87% Female
- 13% Male

**Business Stage**
- 28% Established
- 72% Start-up and Emerging

**Race/Ethnicity**
- African American 44%
- Caucasian 27%
- Hispanic 22.5%
- Asian 3%
- Other 3.5%

**Financial Information**

**Funding Sources**
- Corporation/Foundation 49%
- WBE Certification 29%
- Government 20%
- Interest and Loan Fees 1%
- Other Income 1%

**Revenues**
- **$4,719,797**

**Expenditures**
- Programs and Services **$3,956,603**
- Management and General **$218,568**
- Fundraising **$275,564**

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*Clients advised/trained*
Offerings

The WBDC delivers comprehensive and strategic programs and services for each phase of the business life cycle, giving business owners the resources to start, grow, and innovate, as well as strengthen their impact on the economy and communities they serve. Our program and service offerings are grounded in our mission to support and accelerate business development and growth for women and other diverse entrepreneurs.

The WBDC Advocates for Clients

Founded to advance gender diversity in business, the WBDC has expanded our mission and focus to include other underserved and underrepresented communities. The WBDC advocates for parity in the marketplace and economic empowerment of women as well as other diverse business owners.

The WBDC advocates locally and nationally for programs and initiatives that support diverse entrepreneurs. In 2019, WBDC President and CEO Emilia DiMenco testified alongside some of our Women Business Enterprises (WBEs) at a U.S. Senate Committee on Small Business and Entrepreneurship Field Hearing on “Barriers to Entry in the Tech Industry for Diverse Entrepreneurs”. Emilia’s testimony encouraged Federal officials to prioritize funding for essential programs that fund women and minority businesses, programs which the 2020 federal budget threatened to eliminate.

The WBDC also advocates for our clients. When business owners Raiye Rosado of Rabid Brewing and Ana Majid of Montessori Magpie ran into hurdles and red tape from local officials, the WBDC helped them navigate local grant and licensure processes to get their businesses off the ground. Nationally, longtime client and WBE Rebecca Fyffe, owner of Landmark Pest Management, was named Small Business Person of the Year by the U.S. Small Business Administration, nominated by the WBDC.

When a company is WBE-certified, the owner has access to the support of WBDC staff and supplier diversity professionals. Lusnail ‘Lus’ Haberberger launched LUZCO Technologies, LLC in 2017 and acquired her WBENC WBE certification in 2018. She has developed a top-notch electrical engineering consulting firm and has leveraged her WBE certification for more growth. She has received numerous awards and accolades, including the WBDC’s Rising Star award for the St. Louis market (2019), the Start-up Business of the Year award from the U.S. Small Business Administration’s St. Louis District Office (2019), and she won the St. Louis Business Diversity Connect Pitch Competition (2018) and the Emerging Business of the Year from the Hispanic Chamber of Commerce of Metropolitan St. Louis (2018).

The WBDC helps clients innovate and grow

Innovation is a path to business growth and transformation as well as a means for legacy companies to remain relevant. In a rapidly changing world, innovation is key to staying competitive. Through the WBDC’s Women’s Innovation Network (WIN), the Center assists women business owners in finding new and strategic ways to serve their clients, customers, and communities. WIN’s specialized innovation framework provides businesses the tools they need to innovate in their own companies, while also pairing expert advisors and coaches with business owners to build a long-term vision. From incremental changes to building the next big thing, the WBDC helps women and other diverse business owners, representing all industries, think differently about the future.

One such client is Kimberly Meek, owner and Chief Executive Officer of Hacha Products Corporation. A certified WBE and Minority Business Enterprise, Hacha is the only lab solely dedicated to testing and treating water for per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS), pollutants that have been linked to cancer, high cholesterol, immune deficiencies, liver problems, and reproductive issues. With help from WIN, Kimberly and her team began partnerships with world-class research institutions and best-in-class industry leaders like Agilent Technologies to scale their technology. Hacha now has a dedicated private laboratory in Chicago where their team can prepare, test,
and analyze samples collected by field technicians. Through the innovative partnerships established with the help of the WBDC, Hacha is addressing this large-scale issue with reduced testing times while informing policy, infrastructure, and treatment planning for future protection of our water and our communities.

Dana Todd, a graduate of our Plan for Profit Program, innovates through producing made-to-order clothing from designers and dressmakers around the world. Everything from underwear to eveningwear is created on-demand and precisely to women’s body measurements using new technologies and an innovative business-to-consumer approach. Her company, Balodana, is currently raising $1 million of seed capital.

Top Shelf: High Volume Retail Growth Insights Program is one of the WBDC’s newest curriculum for business development. It helps business owners learn how to do business with big box retailers. Participants gain the knowledge to scale their products so that they can better compete and land deals with national retailers.

Catalina Gaete Bentz started her company, Catan Pisco, in Chicago. Catan Pisco is a distributor of pisco, a traditional spirit from Chile. Working with the WBDC initially as a graduate of the WBDC’s Plan for Profit Program, then as a WBE and a participant in our Top Shelf Program, Catalina has established her unique business proposition as the only pisco brand specifically targeting the U.S. She is also the first Chilean woman to ever own 100 percent of her own pisco business.

Another growth-focused program is our 2019 Innovation Award-winning ScaleUp program. This community-based nine-week cohort curriculum delivers education, tools, and resources to Greater Chicagoland entrepreneurs so they can build capacity and ‘scale’ their businesses. After attending ScaleUp, Martha Razo, owner of Guero Pallets, quickly adjusted her sales style. Originally intimidated by sales, she worked with the WBDC to carve out her target client base: smaller organizations where she could build one-on-one relationships. Establishing this niche customer base built her confidence and, ultimately, increased her sales substantially as she worked directly with clients.

These outstanding women and countless other WBDC clients are driving innovation across industries and inspire our own innovation and growth.

The WBDC Provides Clients with Capital Alternatives

Access to capital remains one of the most significant hurdles for women and other diverse entrepreneurs seeking to establish and grow sustainable, profitable businesses. The WBDC is committed to helping remove this obstacle through our financial education, debt and equity placement, and direct lending services.

The WBDC helps our clients chart a path to success through the development of a financial plan to grow their businesses. Our financial experts help business owners evaluate and identify alternative sources of capital, determine the optimal capital source, prepare loan applications and equity presentation decks, and enhance their overall understanding of financial markets and resources.

For more than three years, Patrice Darby, founder and Chief Executive Officer of GoNanny, an innovative platform for parents to find reliable transportation for their children, has worked with the WBDC to identify funding sources to expand and innovate. What began as a business advising relationship has grown into a partnership that has transformed Patrice’s business model while creating new opportunities for all WBDC childcare clients.

Working alongside the WBDC’s innovation experts, Patrice has transformed her business-to-consumer company to a business-to-business service provider, revolutionizing the childcare industry by creating new ways for childcare providers to bring in revenue and new opportunities for childcare employees to earn a living wage by transporting children in their care to and from the childcare facility.

With this new business model, and the guidance of the WBDC, Patrice was recently selected for the number one seat in Techstars accelerator program. Her final pitch was the only presentation to earn a ‘yes’ vote from all 20 of the Techstars’ esteemed judges. According to Patrice, the backing from Techstars “opens up doors that [she] would never be able to walk through.” Through the program, she anticipates meeting her seed funding goal of $1 million early in 2020.
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Roxanne Ward
Jacinta Witherspoon

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Aurora, Illinois
Richton Park, Illinois
Kansas City, Kansas
Twin Cities, Minnesota
St. Louis, Missouri
Milwaukee, Wisconsin
Contributors

PUBLIC SECTOR ($5,000 and above)

Federal
U.S. Department of Energy
U.S. SBA Office of Women’s Business Ownership
Federal Home Loan Bank of Chicago
Federal Reserve Bank of Chicago
Federal Reserve Bank of Minneapolis
Federal Reserve Bank of St. Louis

State
State of Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity
State of Illinois Tollway
University of Illinois
University of Minnesota

Local
Chicago Department of Business Affairs and Consumer Protection
City Colleges of Chicago Foundation
Cook County Bureau of Economic Development
McCormick Square
Metropolitan Water Reclamation District of Greater Chicago
Minneapolis Public School District
Navy Pier Chicago

CORPORATE AND FOUNDATION ($5,000 and above)

3M Co.
Abbott Laboratories
Ameren
AbbVie
Aon
Aqua Illinois, Inc.
Aurora Health Care
Avis Budget Group
Bank of America
Baxter International Inc.
Best Buy Corporation
Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Minnesota
BlueCrossBlueShield - HCSC
BMO Harris Bank
BP America
Caesars Entertainment
Capital One
Cardinal Health
Cargill, Inc.
CDW
Cedar Concepts Corporation*
C.H. Robinson
CIBC
ComEd
Country Financial
Crown Castle
CVS

Deluxe
Discover
Ecolab
Express Scripts
Federal Home Loan Bank of Chicago
Federal Reserve Chicago
Fifth Third Bank
First Midwest Bank
Fredrikson and Byron, P.A.
General Mills
Hallmark
Harley Davidson
IlliniCare Health
INTREN*
KNOCK, Inc.*
Knutson Construction
Land O’ Lakes
Lurie, LLP
Manilow Suites*
Medtronic
Monsanto
Navistar
NBC Universal Media
New World Van Lines*
Nicor Gas
Northern Trust
Northwestern Mutual

Peoples Gas
PepsiCo
Rose International*
Southwest Airlines
SuperValue
Target
The Huntington National Bank
Thomson Reuters
True Value
U.S. Bank
U.S. Cellular
Uber Technologies
United Scrap Metal Inc*
UnitedHealth Group
Walgrens
Wintrust Bank
Xcel Energy
Dunham Fund
Edward M. Marx Foundation
JP Morgan Chase Foundation
MacArthur Foundation
Newman’s Own Foundation
Polk Brothers Foundation
Tawani Foundation
The Coleman Foundation
Turner Construction Company Foundation
Wells Fargo

*Women’s Business Enterprise (WBE)

IN-KIND ($5,000 and above)

American Airlines
Chicago Woman
Comcast/NBC5/Telemundo

Diversity Comm, Inc.
(Professional Woman)
J & J
Jak Design

KLEO
Negocios Now
Overture
Southwest Airlines

United Airlines
Vosges
VWON

MEDIA

Austin Weekly News
Black EOE Journal
Chicago Sun-Times
Chicago Tribune
Comcast
Crain’s Chicago Business
DiversityComm, Inc.

Enterprising Women
Hispanic Network
Hoy
LaRaza
Lawndale News
Make It Better
MBN USA

Minneapolis/St. Paul Business Journal
NaVObA
NBC Chicago 5
Negocios Now
Reflejos
Spanish Public Radio

Telemundo
Today’s Chicago Woman
Univision
Women’s Enterprise Magazine (WE USA)
WBBM
WVON
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Coverage Area – Major Markets

- North Dakota
- Minnesota
- South Dakota
- Iowa
- Kansas
- Missouri
- Illinois
- Wisconsin
- Nebraska
- Missouri
- Kansas
- North Dakota
- Minnesota
- South Dakota
- Iowa
- Kansas
- Missouri
- Illinois
- Wisconsin
- Nebraska

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