



2012
Women's Business Resource Program
Annual Report

Ohio Development Services Agency
Office of Business Assistance

March, 2013



**Development
Services Agency**

John R. Kasich, Governor

Christiane Schmenk, Director



March 12, 2013

Dear Governor Kasich and the Ohio General Assembly:

I am pleased to share with you a copy of the 2012 Annual Report for the Women's Business Resource Program (WBRP). Under Ohio Revised Code Section 122.941, the Ohio Development Services Agency's Office of Business Assistance (OBA) prepares an annual report on the activities of the WBRP. WBRP manages all outreach programs; collaborations and initiatives that are related to OBA's support of women business owners in Ohio.

The OBA provides resources to help women grow successful businesses through the WBRP. There are many women business owners, professionals and state government employees who have donated their time and effort to build the program. Collaborating with these women has and will benefit the state of Ohio in strengthening women-owned businesses. While there are no grants or loans specifically targeted toward women business owners, many forms of state assistance are available.

This report highlights activities and services that were provided by WBRP. I invite you to review the attached report to further your understanding of resources that we provide to help women grow small and successful businesses in Ohio.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Christiane Schmenk".

Christiane Schmenk
Director
Ohio Development Services Agency

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This report is submitted as required by Section 184.02(B)(2) of the Ohio Revised Code.

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Overview of the Women's Business Resource Program

The Ohio Development Services Agency's (ODSA) Office of Business Assistance (OBA) provides resources to help women grow small and successful businesses through the Small Business Development Center's (SBDC) Women's Business Resource Program (WBRP). The mission of the WBRP is to provide a platform of initiatives and programs for women entrepreneurs that support all stages of business development, from start-up to success.

There are many women business owners, professionals and state government employees who have donated their time and effort to build the program. While there are no state-sponsored grants or loans specifically targeted toward women business owners, many other forms of state assistance are available, including online business directories, workshops and conferences. These assistance mediums provide an opportunity for women business owners to connect with each other and the greater business community, in order to facilitate a stronger connection with the state, national and perhaps international marketplace.

The WBRP manages all outreach programs that are essential to the day-to-day operation of the OBA and the SBDCs of Ohio concerning women business owners, including oversight of the Women's Home-Based Business workshops and women conferences. This includes collaborations with the 41 SBDCs throughout the state of Ohio and the 10 Minority Business Assistance Centers.

The WBRP acts as a primary liaison between:

- Federal, state and local governmental offices;
- Women-owned business operators;
- Women's business advocacy organizations regarding women-owned businesses;
- State officials;
- General public;
- Women business owners; and
- State legislators.

Small Business Development Centers of Ohio (SBDC):

From September 2011 – October 2012 the SBDC has provided start-up, sustainability and growth counseling to 3,615 women businesses across Ohio. Since 1985, the SBDC program has fostered a strong climate for small business growth with many local community partners including college and universities, economic development agencies, chambers of commerce and other community organizations. The 41 centers statewide offer a wide range of services including:

- Business assessment valuation;
- Cash flow analysis;
- Financial projections development;
- Free one-on-one business counseling;
- Identifying sources of capital;
- Inventory control assessment;
- Market feasibility and research;
- Marketing strategy development;
- Strategic business planning; and
- Workshops and training programs.

Women's Business Directory:

The Women's Business Directory was a free on-line tool that gave women the opportunity to market their business and to do business with other Ohio women business owners. In 2011 the directory was merged with Check Ohio First.com (COF), an online roadmap for contracting in Ohio. COF provides fast, free help with contacting needs, to expand the connectivity opportunities for these women business owners. Women business owners who visit the website can connect with buyers or suppliers learn about procurement events and register their company in the directory for free. Entrants into the COF program provide demographic information, business category and contact information for their businesses. As of October 2012, 170 of the 540 businesses in COF are listed as Women-Owned Small Businesses.

Women's Workshops:

In 2009, the OBA created, "The Best Way to Start a Home-based Business for Women." These workshops were sponsored in part through collaborations and partnerships with state, local and federal agencies, as well as, community nonprofit and women organizations. From 2009 to 2012, six workshops were conducted. The workshops assisted Ohio women as they were seeking new ways to generate income to fulfill dreams of entrepreneurship.

Women's Conferences:

In 2012, the WBRP sponsored the Women Educating Women, Inc. (WEW) "Blaze Your Own Trail." The workshop was held on Saturday, August 18, 2012 at the Columbus State Community College Workforce Development Building and sponsored in part by the SBDC. The workshop's goal included creating a personal workbook that assisted new businesses and/or awarded businesses to achieve financial, social media and internet marketing success. There were 93 women in attendance.

Central Ohio Women's Business Center's Brown Bag Lunch Series:

The OBA continued its monthly partnership with the Columbus-based Central Ohio Women's Business Center's (COWBC) Brown Bag Lunch series. Meetings are held on the last Monday of each month and are open to, but not restricted to Central Ohio Women-Owned Businesses. Meetings are structured in an open forum setting, with occasional speakers such as Representative Tracey Maxwell-Heard, Shannon Feucht, SBA Women's Coordinator and professionals in other areas such as banking. COWBC provides women-owned businesses with a forum to network and gain additional information to grow and develop their businesses. Presenters have provided information on Entrepreneurship, JobLeaders, SBA 8a certification, marketing and social networking, financing and Key4Women.