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AWBC CEO Testifies Before Congress on Women’s Business Centers’

Experience During COVID-19 Pandemic

Testimony detailed the resiliency of women’s entrepreneurship in unprecedented circumstances

MAY 19, 2021–WASHINGTON, D.C.– Today the Association of Women’s Business Centers (AWBC) CEO Corinne Hodges testified before the U.S. House of Representatives Small Business Subcommittee on Innovation, Entrepreneurship, and Workforce Development in a [hearing](#) to examine the United States Small Business Administration’s (SBA) entrepreneurial development ecosystem and offer Members of the Committee the opportunity to review the major technical assistance programs.

In her testimony, Ms. Hodges outlined the WBC Program, the role of AWBC, trends and lessons learned from the COVID-19 experience, WBCs and equity, avenues to strengthen the WBP program, and recommendations for the Committee. Ms. Hodges also detailed the resiliency of women’s entrepreneurship despite the hardship experienced this past year and the impact that the network of 135 WBCs across the country has had on women-owned small businesses and their communities. She urged the new Congress to advance policies that foster the expansion of women’s business ownership by modernizing the WBC program and increasing funding levels in line with the COVID-19 experience and expansion of centers seen over the past few decades.

“AWBCs have a proven track record of producing exceptional results with limited resources. When record funding was allocated to the Women’s Business Center Program via the CARES Act in 2020, WBCs made record-breaking impacts. WBCs exceed goals when it comes to client service and performance, and yet there are serious challenges faced within the walls of the WBCs. For this reason, AWBC continues to advocate for re-authorization and modernization of the WBC Program that has lived well beyond its designed intent.” - Corinne Hodges, CEO, AWBC

Other witnesses at the hearing represented small business partners and companies, including America’s Small Business Development Centers (ASBDC) and Service Corps of Retired Executives (SCORE), and the Kansas City Cattle Company.

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About the Association of Women’s Business Centers (AWBC)

The AWBC (www.awbc.org) is a non-profit 501(c)(3) organization founded in 1998 to support the national network of Women’s Business Centers (WBCs) with programming and advocacy. Each year, our members leverage WBC grants to operate more than 150 locations

throughout the United States. WBCs have more than 30 years of success in providing business training, counseling, mentoring, and access to capital to women entrepreneurs. The WBC program is a public-private partnership with the U.S. Small Business Administration.