EQUITY IN SMALL BUSINESS RESOURCES

WEBINAR SERIES

SCOPE OF WORK

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OVERVIEW

In early 2021, ACOG’s Community & Economic Development (CED) Department was awarded a grant by the rural division of the Local Initiatives Support Corporation (LISC) with the hopes of understanding the small business ecosystem and the needs of minority-owned businesses in Oklahoma. Since, work has been committed to gathering data (via multiple surveys) from both public officials and directly from minority-owned businesses regarding access to resources that would allow minority-owned businesses to pivot out of the pandemic.

Preliminary survey results have led to the understanding that, not only do minority-owned businesses have a notable and disproportionate need for resources when compared to the broader business ecosystem; but that there is also a stark disparity between public officials’ and minority-owned business owners’ respective understandings of an equitable distribution of resources needed by these businesses in order to achieve prosperity and resiliency.

PROPOSAL

Empowered by its partnership with Rural LISC, informed by new research and concepts presented in the 2021 update of the region’s Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS), and observing a window of opportunity to directly and positively impact the minority-owned business ecosystem in the region, the Association of Central Oklahoma Governments seeks to partner with community development corporation Progress OKC to generate a series of webinars to inform and empower the minority-owned business community in the Oklahoma City region as they enter a new American economy in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic.

CONTENT & AUDIENCE

While ACOG staff intend to provide input on webinar content, final decisions shall be at Progress OKC’s discretion. The topics presented in this series of 2-4 webinars may include, but are not limited to:

* Financial resources for minority-owned businesses, such as KIVA, SOAR, PPP, EIDL, and others
* Non-financial resources for minority-owned businesses, such as banking/investing, IT, networking, administrative, human resources, and others
* Guidance on how chambers, small business coalitions, and other community and economic development entities can and should contribute to building a prosperous and resilient minority-owned business ecosystem in the Oklahoma City region

Modifications to the program, such as the addition of guest speakers, inclusion of interactive functions, or other programming elements are negotiable. The costs associated with such additional programming elements will ultimately be borne by Progress OKC.

Through this partnership, ACOG intends to disburse these resources as directly into the minority-owned business ecosystem as circumstance allows. As such, the desired audience will be minority business owners first and peripheral organizations (chambers, coalitions, other CED entities) second. While the exact audience(s) of the webinar series will be contingent upon the final decision of webinar topics, ACOG hopes to keep minority business owners at the center of consideration.

TECHNOLOGY

The webinars will be recorded and made available on the ACOG Dashboard and social media channels and will be shared with Progress OKC to utilize as they see fit. Given the primary audience identified above, we propose that the recordings will be hosted using a service with the capacity to auto-generate subtitles in both Spanish and Vietnamese (such as YouTube), for accessibility purposes.

Following conclusion of this webinar series, ACOG will employ a hybrid marketing campaign (mail, email, and social media) to increase traffic to the webinar recordings.

IMPACT

Generally, the Capital Area Economic Development District of Oklahoma and the ACOG Community & Economic Development Department measure their impacts through setting and fulfilling goals presented through the CEDS Implementation Matrix. In initiatives specific to the Community & Economic Development Department, impact is most often measured through monitoring the satisfaction of our member cities’ representatives and stakeholders as we offer them relationships, grant funding, and other, less-tangible opportunities. Due to the nature of our initiatives and ACOG’s position in relation to the general public, measurement of impact has historically been assessed by proxy.

When presented with the opportunity to provide resources directly to minority business owners, ACOG is excited to engage with the minority-owned business ecosystem; albeit understanding that this form of engagement is not particularly organic. The following are potential ways ACOG could measure the impact of this partnership with Progress OKC:

* Interactive components within webinars, such as Poll Everywhere, Doodle Poll, or some other software, to gather voluntary data from participants
* Click-through rate analysis through Google Analytics, social media site analytics, and other website host statistics
* Internet-linking elements incorporated into physical copy related to the webinar series, Minority Enterprise Development week, or the ACOG Economic Resiliency Toolkit, such as QR codes or SnapCodes

COMPENSATION

ACOG will offer a stipend of $1500 per webinar to ProgressOKC, for a total of no more than $6,000. This sum aims to cover costs affiliated with the content design, production, and marketing of the webinar.

MINORITY ENTERPRISE DEVELOPMENT WEEK

We highly encourage ProgressOKC to utilize these webinars as a way of leading up to the Minority Enterprise Development Week. Topics that will be covered during MED Week 2021:

* Policy advocacy
* Contracting
* Commercial Real Estate
* Supply Chain
* Youth Entrepreneurship
* Financial Empowerment
* Online Presence

AN ADDENDUM TO OUR COLLABORATION: THE ECONOMIC RESILIENCY TOOLKIT

ACOG has prepared a tool kit for small businesses called The Economic Resiliency Toolkit. The scope of this toolkit is to educate small businesses on how to become economically resilient in face of crises, such as the one caused by the pandemic. This toolkit contains the following documents: 1. A test that allows businesses to determine if they are prepared for economic resiliency. 2. A visualization of what small businesses struggle with and of the struggles that are typically visible from the outside. This visualization takes the metaphor of an iceberg. The small portion of the iceberg floating above water has written on it terms that are “visible” about any business: space, employees, services, products, location, etc. The large part of the iceberg hidden under water contains a host of aspects we do not typically see when we interact with small businesses. 3. A document with 6 tips for small business economic resiliency in Central Oklahoma. 4. A document that teaches small business owners how to prepare a successful grant application.

What we want to propose is that you take a look at this toolkit and add your voice in it: this can be in terms of editorial content suggestions, corrections, or the addition of another document you want to prepare. We will then use both our organizations’ logos to create a hard copy and a soft copy of this toolkit. We would be happy for you to use this toolkit in any way you see fit. We would like to distribute it through our website/live dashboard and at the Leadership Symposium that we will be organizing in collaboration with Leadership OKC on Nov 5, 2021.

We hope this is minimal work on your part as we are unable to offer you compensation other than the ability to utilize this toolkit as you see fit and to expose your brand.

TIMELINE\*

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| DATE | TITLE | ACTION |
| 12 July | Intergovernmental Agreement with Progress OKC | An agreement is made with Progress OKC to compensate their service as webinar content organizers. |
| 1 August | Webinar 1 Premieres | A presentation delivered by Progress OKC on what KIVA, SOAR, etc. lending is. |
| 20 August | Webinar 2 Premieres | A presentation delivered by Progress OKC on strategies and best practices for minority- and women-owned businesses to build resilience. |
| 30 August | Webinar 3 Premieres | A presentation delivered by Progress OKC on issues that minority-owned businesses faced during the pandemic year and strategies for offering equitable resources. |
| 10 September | Webinar 4 Premieres | A presentation delivered by Progress OKC on a topic of their choice. |
| 12 September | Email Campaign Commences | Links to the webinar series are distributed to business advocacy and economic development organizations in the ACOG region, to be distributed directly to minority business owners. |
| 12 September | Social Media Campaign Commences | Links to the webinar series are distributed through a targeted Facebook ad campaign. |
| 4-8 October | Minority Enterprise Development Week |  |
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\*We are able to negotiate this timeline and the number of webinars you can deliver, with the caveat that we expect at least 2 webinars and a maximum of 4, and that all webinars must be live by September 30, 2021.