

## 2008 Innovations Awards Program APPLICATION

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ID # (assigned by CSG): 08-M-01IN

**Please provide the following information, adding space as necessary:**

State: Indiana

Assign Program Category (applicant): Human Resources/Education (Use list at end of application)

1. Program Name: Advancing Women in Business
2. Administering Agency: Indiana Office of Community and Rural Affairs
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9. Please provide a two-sentence description of the program.

Advancing Women in Business is a series of one-day seminars aimed at promoting and supporting women entrepreneurs in the state of Indiana, a key priority of the Daniels-Skillman Administration. The seminars provide a forum for women entrepreneurs to network, share successes and challenges, and learn about available resources.

10. How long has this program been operational (month and year)? Note: the program must be between 9 months and 5 years old on March 1, 2008 to be considered.

The program has been operational since February 2007.

11. Why was the program created? What problem[s] or issue[s] was it designed to address?

Governor Daniels and Lt. Governor Skillman have made fostering an entrepreneurial culture in Indiana a key priority. This series, in partnership with the Small Business Development Center (SBDC), is one way that entrepreneurship is being encouraged in rural parts of the state. Specifically, the events provided networking opportunities for successful and aspiring women entrepreneurs in rural areas, while informing participants about available resources.

12. Describe the specific activities and operations of the program in chronological order.

In February and March, the Office of Community and Rural Affairs (OCRA) and SBDC organized and developed the workshops. During March and April, OCRA and SBDC recruited local SBDCs and chambers of commerce to partner in the events. Marketing and promotion of the events took place from April to June. The one-day seminars were held in June.

13. Why is the program a new and creative approach or method?

Unlike other programs, Advancing Women in Business specifically focuses on supporting and connecting women entrepreneurs in rural areas. State agencies and local organizations worked together to bring programming directly to rural constituencies. The seminars featured successful women entrepreneurs from local areas. These experts provided information on the allies and resources that were available to women entrepreneurs in their specific areas. The seminars also featured panels about business resources that combined both state and local representatives. These partnerships increased women entrepreneurs' knowledge of the resources available to them on both the state and local levels.

14. What were the program's start-up costs? (Provide details about specific purchases for this program, staffing needs and other financial expenditures, as well as existing materials, technology and staff already in place.)

Total cost for the agency, less registration fees received, was \$2,174.53 including facility rental, lunch, and marketing materials. The overall cost, not including registration fees, was \$4,154.53. Agendas and other program materials were printed in-house. Two OCRA employees primarily organized and staffed the event.

15. What are the program's annual operational costs?

In 2008, OCRA estimates that the operational costs will double last year's expenditures due to an increase in the number of venues.

16. How is the program funded?

The program is funded through OCRA's general operational/programming fund.

17. Did this program require the passage of legislation, executive order or regulations? If YES, please indicate the citation number.

No.

18. What equipment, technology and software are used to operate and administer this program?

None.

19. To the best of your knowledge, did this program originate in your state? If YES, please indicate the innovator's name, present address, telephone number and e-mail address.

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20. Are you aware of similar programs in other states? If YES, which ones and how does this program differ?

Currently, we are unaware of other programs that support women entrepreneurs in rural areas.

21. Has the program been fully implemented? If NO, what actions remain to be taken?

Yes.

22. Briefly evaluate (pro and con) the program's effectiveness in addressing the defined problem[s] or issue[s]. Provide tangible examples.

The response from the inaugural series was overwhelmingly positive, with substantial attendance at each location. The partnerships developed with local SBDCs and chambers of commerce were

invaluable in making the events successful. Local organizations have asked to partner with OCRA in hosting the four seminars that will be held in 2008. Women in these rural areas now have more partners and business contacts to work with as they plan or grow their businesses. Because the program is young, OCRA is still gathering feedback on the direct impacts the seminars had on participants.

23. How has the program grown and/or changed since its inception?

In 2008, the program will be held in new areas to access more women entrepreneurs. OCRA will also recruit new partners in order to highlight more resources at the event.

24. What limitations or obstacles might other states expect to encounter if they attempt to adopt this program?

The success of these programs is contingent on developing strong partnerships with local and regional organizations. Other states should expect to locate and recruit organizations that are willing to provide assistance and resources to local women entrepreneurs.