Since I hired with the Association of Women’s Business Centers in January I have been so inspired by the work of the Women’s Business Centers and the partners in our communities that support all of us. The universe of stakeholders that rely on the success of the Women’s Business Center Program is ever-growing and driving us, at AWBC, to broaden our thinking and find new ways to expand the capacity of each center and your association.

The first quarter of the calendar year was a whirlwind of activity preparing for my first witness testimony and moving AWBC into our new office location in downtown Washington, D.C. We are in a beautiful building with ample conference and meeting space while taking advantage of reasonable and flexible lease pricing. Setting up the new office also meant establishing operating infrastructure, standard operating procedures and reviewing the organization’s vulnerabilities and addressing them with risk mitigation strategies.

For the first time in AWBC’s history, we took on a second staff member - a hired employee, vs. contract support. Kelly Briscoe, AWBC’s engagement coordinator, hit the ground running learning and building out the conference content in the app. And, speaking of the app, AWBC has achieved efficiencies in operations by leveraging new technology. The webinar platform was onboarded in August and the next application will make an even bigger impact on efficiency - an association management system. Gone will be the days of managing member profile information in excel spreadsheets. We look forward to a member-centered association management solution that propels our community forward.

Lastly, I want to express heartfelt gratitude to AWBC’s funding partners - all of whom are named later in this report. What I have most enjoyed about working with our most significant contributors is that they have stretched the association and me to go beyond the limits we were imposing on ourselves. We are a better organization when we open ourselves to the ideas and the influence of our partners - as long as we stay true to our mission and remain focused on the women we seek to empower through entrepreneurship. And, with this commitment in mind, I look forward to serving you and your clients, through you, again in 2020.

Corinne Hodges
JANUARY

- Hired new CEO, Corinne Hodges
- Established Washington, D.C. office
- Panelist for 2019 Small Business Policy Expo
- Met Senate and House Committee Staff of the 116th Congress

FEBRUARY

- AWBC Strategic Planning Session (2019)
- 4 Corners Meeting: House and Senate Staff
- Renewed Women Rule partnership (Politico)
- Testified in the Supporting America’s Startups: Review of SBA Entrepreneurial Development Programs Hearing of the U.S. House of Representatives Small Business Committee

MARCH

- Participated in Georgetown’s New Strategies Program (funded by JP Morgan Chase)
- Panelist for NCRC Women’s History Month
- Launched Working Groups:
  - Conference Sponsorships/Content Planning
  - Onboarding Training Program
• Hired Engagement Coordinator, Kelly Briscoe
• Secured Pro Bono Legal Services Contract
• Launched Rural Task Force of WBCs
• Met with 14 California WBCs, the California Women's Business Center Network

• Welcomed Sara Crawford-Jones to AWBC Board of Directors
• Introduction of Women's Business Centers to USDA Administrator Bette Brand
• Testified in the Reauthorization of SBA’s Entrepreneurial Development Programs Hearing of the U.S. Senate Committee on Small Business and Entrepreneurship
• Celebrated 2019 U.S. SBA Excellence Award to Montana Women’s Business Center

• Introduction of Women's Business Centers to Prince Michael of Kent (1st Cousin to Queen Elizabeth II)
• MOU signed with D.C.-based Asian/Pacific Islander American Chamber of Commerce and Entrepreneurship
• AWBC engaged AARP Foundation to promote Self Saver and underwrite the inaugural deployment of the conference app

• AWBC launched ON24 webinar platform, funded by ADP
• First Webinar hosted SBA and WESST: WBC Funding Opportunity Announcement Best Practices

• 2019 Annual Leadership Conference: Expanding Mindsets
  ○ 287 unique users for the new Conference App
  ○ Inaugural Marsha Bailey Leadership Award
  ○ Installed 4 new AWBC Board Members
  ○ Unanimous passage of amended bylaws
  ○ 100+ Hill Day visits with Members of Congress
• Presented the Marsha Bailey Leadership Award to Wendy Baumann
• Testified in the Hearing of the U.S. House of Representatives Small Business Committee on Entrepreneurship Education for Citizens Returning from Incarceration
• Applied for S&P Global Foundation grant for HBCU training, subsequently awarded!

• Procured an association management system: YourMembership
• Completed RFP process to contract with D.C.-based CPA firm, GRF
• First-ever strategic collaboration meeting of the 3 Resource Partners: SCORE, ASBDCs and AWBC
• Exhibited at CGI's non-profit expo event

• Selected Strategic Planning Facilitator: Association HQ
• Onboarded new CPA Firm
• Interviewed and selected HBCU Intern from Howard University
• Served as Ambassador at the Women-Rule Summit
• Witnessed the confirmation hearing for SBA Administrator-Nominee, Jovita Carranza, US Treasurer
A D V O C A C Y

AWBC’s new CEO, with support from WBCs across the country and AWBC board members, successfully built upon the relationships in the U.S. House and Senate resulting in record-level appropriations for the Women’s Business Center program. Bills are moving though both chambers (at the time of publication) to re-authorize the Women’s Business Center Program. Also, relationships with SBA’s Office of Entrepreneurial Development and Office of Women’s Business Ownership have moved in collaborative and productive direction throughout 2019 with plans for increased collaboration in training areas in 2020 under the leadership of an anticipated new Administrator at the agency.

Witness Testimony in 3 Hearings (U.S. House-2, U.S. Senate-1)
2 Bills Drafted with Support on Re-authorization
1 Bill Passed the U.S. House on Re-authorization
1 Bill on Entrepreneurship Education for Returning Citizens
Record $22.5 Million Appropriations for WBC Program
W E B I N A R S

WEBINARS
WBC Funding Opportunity Announcement: Best Practices
AWBC Conference Roundtable Discussion Leader Training
AWBC Board Training
Opportunity Zones 101: How They Work
HBCU Training COMING SOON (support by S&P Global Foundation)

Thanks to a partnership with ADP, AWBC launched the On24 platform in August 2019. 179 unique attendees for just our first 3 webcasts demonstrate the demand for WBC-specific training around best practices. There is opportunity to partner with SBA’s Office of Entrepreneurial Development and corporations to deliver subject matter training that can continue to live on-demand long after the live event in an easy to access library. HR specific training is delivered by ADP-selected experts, like the DOL’s Overtime Rules (effective Jan. 1, 2020) that garnered more than 60 attendees. AWBC is grateful for ADP’s small business focus and support.

S U R V E Y S

SURVEYS
One-Minute 2018 Conference Survey
Effect of Government Shutdown on WBCs
Does Your WBC Do Work Outside the U.S.?
WBC [Match] Funding Survey
eLearning Platforms in the WBCs
WBC Accelerator Survey
2019 Conference Survey Attendees/Speakers/Sponsors

Surveys are an effective means of data collection from the WBC network. Completion rates vary between 40%-60% on average. Survey outcomes, where applicable, appear in the monthly newsletter communications.
The 2019 AWBC Annual Conference was a tremendous success—we had nearly every Women’s Business Center represented with 276 total attendees, including sponsors, exhibitors and speakers! The education sessions were divided into four tracks (Director, Finance/Grant Manager, Business Advisor, and Universal) making it easy for participants to organize their schedules. This year’s conference was held at the Westin-Alexandria in Virginia, supported by regional WBC hosts from Maryland, Virginia and Delaware.

Pre-Conference WBC Staff Training - Monday
The United States Small Business Administration (SBA) took the lead on Monday’s New Director Training and covered important topics such as Introduction to WBC Grants Management, Measuring WBC Performance, and EDMIS System Walk-Through. Additionally, Ruth Garcia-Corrales led participants through Building Your Support Network and CPA firm BDO presented, The Cost of Non-Compliance.

Leadership Conference - Tuesday
SBA’s Acting Administrator, Chris Pilkerton, officially opened the conference by commending the impact Women’s Business Centers make on women’s entrepreneurship. Associate Administrator of the Office of Entrepreneurial Development, Allen Gutierrez, shared the State of OED and opened up the microphones for an in-depth and candid Q&A session with attendees. Sponsor spotlights from JP Morgan Chase (Lisa Foradori) and S&P Global (Andrea Stranglen) celebrated women’s leadership within the WBC program and their companies while inspiring the attendees to continue this work, #ChangePays. Then, following the Small Business Credit Since the Great Recession, keynote by the Federal Reserve Economist Traci Mach, attendees broke out into sessions by track.
Tuesday Evening - Sequins and Stars Gala
WBC volunteers and regional WBC hosts planned the evening's Sequins & Stars Gala, sponsored by ADP with a goal of co-branding ADP with AWBC and introducing a webcast series for WBC clients. Regional WBCs selected successful local vendors that were provided tables to sell their products and were celebrated during the reception with testimonial videos serving as the event's introduction.

Day 2 and Annual Membership Meeting - Wednesday
Wednesday's format of plenary, followed by breakout sessions was patterned after the previous day's schedule structure. The highlights of the day included Adam Toporek's customer service insights keynote and Ruth Klein's mind bender Round Table block. Round table topics such as Rural Service and Feeling Overwhelmed were the most highly attended, whereas Opportunity Zones and HBCU's led to further exploration and AWBC-hosted webcast training sessions.

The 2019 Annual Meeting facilitated the report of anonymous ballots to install 4 new AWBC Board Members: Nicole Liatos, Gwen Pokalo, Roberta McCullough and Anne Flynn Schlicht as well as the adoption of the updated and amended Association bylaws.

Hill Day - Thursday
Like previous conferences held in the Washington, D.C. area, AWBC facilitated an opportunity for 100+ members to tell their stories on Capitol Hill. Prism Group prescheduled group meetings with Members of Congress and briefed participants on public policy talking points. Hill visits were especially timely given the House's Small Business Committee's Women's Business Centers Improvement Act of 2019 which was passed out of committee the previous day, and many attendees indicated that this advocacy activity was the highlight of their conference.
The partners listed above made an economic contribution to AWBC equal to or greater than $25,000 in the 2019 calendar year. AWBC’s work would not be possible without the support of the entire partnership ecosystem. We thank you for making 2019 an outstanding year!