



WEDA



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**Women's Economic Development Agency and U.S. Small Business Administration Launch the
Metropolitan Atlanta Women's Business Center**

Atlanta, GA November 22, 2004 – Women's Economic Development Agency, Inc. ("WEDA") today announced that it has been awarded a grant from the U.S. Small Business Administration's Office of Women's Business Ownership to establish the WEDA / Metropolitan Atlanta Women's Business Center (MAWBC). One of 105 Women's Business Centers nationwide, MAWBC will provide management and technical assistance to nascent, start-up and established women entrepreneurs living or doing business within the twenty-eight counties that comprise the metro Atlanta area.

Among MAWBC's programs and services will be the Atlanta Microenterprise Initiative, WEDA's popular 14-week training program that helps entrepreneurs acquire the skills necessary to successfully establish and manage profitable, viable businesses. Topics covered during the fourteen weeks include business licensing, logistics and legal structure; strategic planning; marketing, business development and sales; operations and bookkeeping; tax responsibilities and incentives; and business plan writing. Workshops and seminars that provide information on the basics of business financing, principles of non-profit business, do-it-yourself website design and others also are being offered, as is a business resource library. As an SBA Technical Assistance Provider, WEDA originates and packages Community Express loans, a service that also will be available to MAWBC clients.

"We're thrilled to have been awarded this outstanding opportunity by SBA to build upon our organization's ten-plus year history of helping Atlanta-area women entrepreneurs," said Deardra Green-Campbell, WEDA's Executive Director. "This grant will enable us to not only serve start-ups and other new businesses, but also will greatly enhance our capacity to provide assistance with the more complex needs of intermediate- and advanced-stage businesses, like alternative business financing strategies, mergers and acquisitions, and succession planning."

MAWBC will hold a kick-off celebration on Wednesday, December 15, 2004 from 5:30pm until 8:00 pm at WEDA's office in City Hall East. Among the invited guests are Governor Sonny Perdue, Mayor Shirley Franklin and SBA Administrator Hector Barreto. To learn more about the event or MAWBC services, please contact WEDA or visit their website at www.weda-atlanta.org.

About Women's Economic Development Agency, Inc.

Since its founding twelve years ago, WEDA has provided business development and management training and technical assistance to more than 10,000 Atlanta-area entrepreneurs. In the last three years alone, the organization's programs and services have helped to facilitate the formation of more than 500 small businesses that range from home-based endeavors like jewelry-making, virtual assisting and home accessories design, to retail and personal services ventures like clothing stores and hair salons, to companies engaged in cutting edge activities like information technology and automotive waste oil recycling. Also included among our client base are franchisees for Bruster's Ice Cream, Smoothie King and others, as well as social entrepreneurs who have chosen to pursue non-profit ventures that provide critically needed services like transitional housing, after school programs and eldercare in response to the needs of disadvantaged families and communities. Combined, these businesses have had a significant impact on the area's economy, including the creation of more than 135 new jobs (not including the business owners). WEDA is a bi-lingual organization that provides services in both English and Spanish to meet the diverse language and cultural needs of its clientele.

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