

OACAA Briefing

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Agency Happenings

MYCAP Opens Minority Business Assistance Center



Pictured from left to right at the MBAC's grand opening: Yvonne Mathis from the Mathis Group; Allen McConnell, loan/bond officer from ODSA's Office of Business Assistance; R. Renee Walton, CEO of MYCAP; Sharon Smith, assistant deputy chief, ODSA's Office of Business; and Chauncey Hilson, director, MBAC.

On January 15, the Mahoning Youngstown Community Action Agency (MYCAP) and Ohio Development Services Agency (formerly the Ohio Department of Development) hosted the grand opening of a new Minority Business Assistance Center (MBAC) at MYCAP's offices in Youngstown. While there are nine other MBAC's across the state, MYCAP is the first Community Action Agency to manage one.

After MYCAP approached the Ohio Development Services Agency (ODSA) and began conversations with them about the need for such a center in Mahoning County, ODSA provided MYCAP with a \$75,000 grant to open the center, which will provide local minority and disadvantaged businesses in Mahoning and surrounding counties the opportunity to generate wealth and expand global economic opportunities.

The new center at MYCAP will provide counselors that will offer information and guidance to business owners, including workshops and trainings to help develop a business plan step-by-step, access to government resources and networks, and opportunities to enter a pool of potential subcontractors to work with major contractors. The state requires that 15 percent of their contracts utilize minority or disadvantaged businesses, and the MBAC will help local businesses gain access to these jobs.

"We look forward to assisting area businesses in a number of ways, including helping them to become certified and then

able to bid on state and federal government contracts," said Chauncey Hilson, director of the MBAC and the MYCAP financial stability coordinator. "This center will also provide the necessary resources, trainings and leadership, so businesses are able to grow and stay competitive with other businesses in the market."

During the grand opening event, Sharon Smith, assistant deputy chief of the ODSA's Office of Business Assistance (now the assistant deputy chief of ODSA's Office of Community Assistance) mentioned how the center will also help minority businesses break into the growing oil & gas industry in the area as well.

"We anticipate that this center will be a catalyst to help many area businesses grow and prosper," said Al Stabilito, MYCAP director of outreach and communications. "When that happens, it benefits all of us."



Pictured from left to right in front of the MBAC sign: Al Stabilito, director of outreach and communications for MYCAP; Chauncey Hilson, director of the MBAC; Sharon Smith, assistant deputy chief, ODSA's Office of Business; and Allen McConnell, loan/bond officer from ODSA's Office of Business Assistance.