

Igniting Entrepreneurship Using Women's Business Centers

Corinne Hodges, CEO, Association of Women's Business Centers



#StrongEconomies



ASSOCIATION OF
W O M E N ' S
B U S I N E S S
C E N T E R S

November 2022



AWBC Vision

Our vision is to be the leading advocate for igniting the entrepreneurial spirit of female entrepreneurs by supporting and sustaining the national network of 146 Women's Business Centers



What are Women's Business Centers?

WBC's are a network of 146 entrepreneurial development centers for women, funded since 1988 by the Small Business Administration.

There are WBCS located in all 50 states and Puerto Rico offering **no-cost** business coaching, connections to capital, and small business development resources.



Who Women's Business Centers Serve:

WBC's support women and other underserved individuals seeking to start or grow their business.

Primary focus is women, however, no one is excluded

Economically and socially disadvantaged entrepreneurs make up the majority of the clientbase



Women's Business Centers provided technical assistance to 88,000 entrepreneurs in 2021

- **70%** Women
- **56%** Minorities
- **3,300** new businesses launched
- **\$396** million in capital accessed by WBC clients

*Photo Credit: Marty Pearl, Freelance for AWBC
Small Business / WBC Listening Session
December 7, 2021 | Louisville, KY*

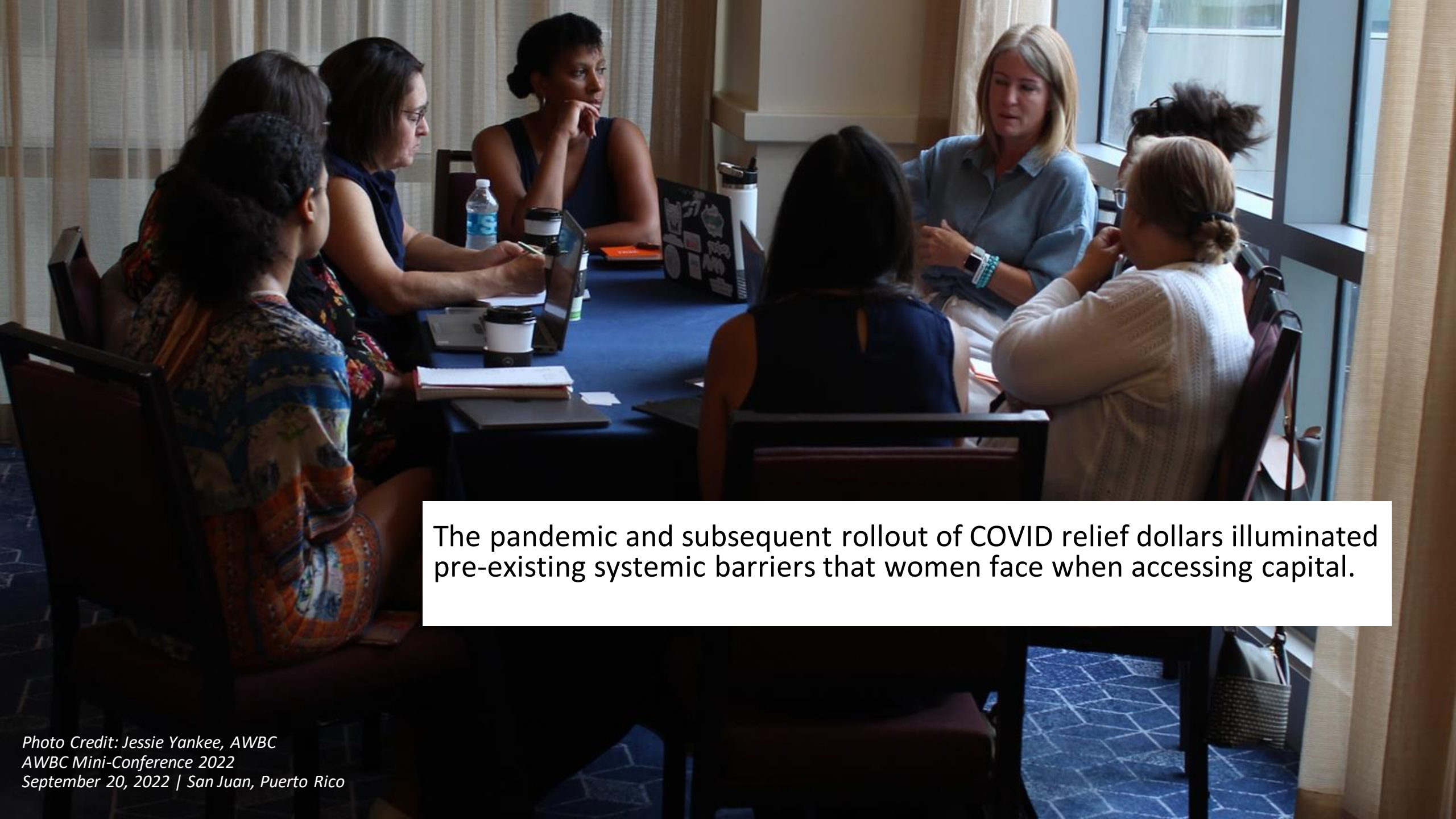




Access to capital remains the largest barrier to women entrepreneurs.

- Capital and financial literacy are the lifeblood of any business, and women entrepreneurs are often forced to operate with a disproportionate amount of financial resources compared to male entrepreneurs.
- Despite the recent historic shift of more women turning to entrepreneurship, capital flow and capital access remain the most significant barriers facing women-owned small businesses.

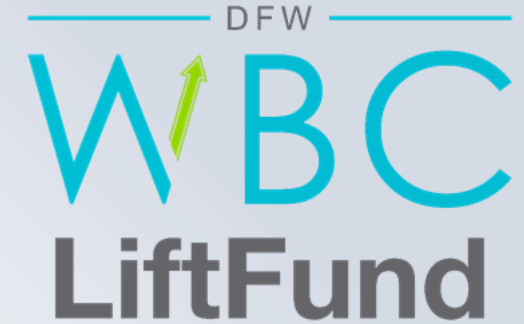
*Photo Credit: Marty Pearl, Freelance for AWBC
Small Business / WBC Listening Session
December 7, 2021 | Louisville, KY*



The pandemic and subsequent rollout of COVID relief dollars illuminated pre-existing systemic barriers that women face when accessing capital.

Host Organizations

- WBENC Regional Partner Organizations
- Lenders
- Economic Development Organizations
- Community Development Organizations
- Other Local and National Organizations



How Women's Business Centers Help

- Tailor services to the needs of each community and community member
- Provide training in finance, management, marketing, and operations, as well as offering access to all of the SBA's financial and procurement assistance programs
- Offer small business development services to aspiring and existing entrepreneurs including trainings, technical assistance, counseling, networking opportunities, and other support services



WBC Program Offerings

Entrepreneurial Training Programs

- Start Up and Growth Stage Programming
- Entrepreneurial Leadership
- Accounting
- Becoming Bankable
- Marketing for Growth
- Social Media Management
- Human Resources
- Public Relations
- Operations and Processes
- Disaster Preparedness
- Disaster Management and Recovery

One-on-One Counseling

- Business Plan Development
- Finance and Accounting Support
- Marketing and Business Development
- Operational Streamlining
- Human Resources Management
- Certification Assistance
- Access to Funding Opportunities
- Government Contracting Support
- Emergency Funding Support

Connections to Resources

- Lenders
- WBENC Regional Partner Organizations
- Economic Development Organizations
- Chambers of Commerce
- Professional Services
- Local, State, and Federal Government Agencies
- Procurements Organizations
- Other Small Business Resource Providers



Policy & Advocacy

Advocate, Connect, Engage (A.C.E.)

Alignment of AWBC + Amazon's national priorities to uplift women business owners in partnership with Kauffman Foundation

Why A.C.E.?

- Research indicates that women's entrepreneurship thrives when government policy supports it
- A.C.E. empowers women to advocate for programs and policies within the political, economic, and social structures that support their issues.

Legislative Visits

Inclusion in March 2023 A.C.E advocacy visit in Washington D. C. to champion aligned policy priorities



How can YOU help?

Get involved with the WBCs in your state!

- Host small business roundtables with WBC/AWBC
- Invite WBC leadership to listening sessions and advisory councils
- Champion policy to accelerate women's entrepreneurship

Find a location near you:

www.AWBC.org/wbc-locator

New small business landing page to connect more women to WBCs:

www.Hope2Women.org



Thank You



Corinne Goble
CEO

Phone
202-430-4756

Web
AWBC.org

Email
corinne@awbc.org

Address
10 G St. NE, STE 600
Washington D.C. 20002

ASSOCIATION OF
W O M E N ' S
B U S I N E S S
C E N T E R S