

# 2016 Women's Business Center of the Year

ACE Women's Business Center

Marie Peck, Executive Director

The mission of the ACE Women's Business Center is to empower women, minorities, and low-to-moderate income entrepreneurs through financial education and training. It provides a full range of services for women at all stages of business planning, implementation, and growth, including workshops, seminars and one-on-one counseling in both English and Spanish.



The ACE Women's Business Center and Access to Capital for Entrepreneurs (ACE), the WBC host organization, are both strong SBA resource partners dedicated to providing entrepreneurship education, one-on-one consultations, and access to capital.

The Center collaborates closely with and supports the SBA frequently supporting SBA's education panels, workshops, and other programs by providing staff as trainers or panelist. The ACE's WBC's work with SBA includes many national special initiatives, such as Small Business Saturday, Women's History Month, and InnovateHer.

Accessibility is a priority to the ACE WBC. Its online scheduling portal allows clients to quickly and easily schedule a meeting or telephone consultation. The WBC maintains evening and weekend hours on a regular basis to accommodate clients working full-time or operating their businesses during standard operating hours. This flexibility allows the WBC to serve more entrepreneurs in diverse areas and in various stages of the entrepreneurial process.

The ACE WBC target market includes women and minorities in the Metro Atlanta area with a physical location in Gwinnett County, an area where 60 percent of the population are minorities. In the first year of its SBA grant, the WBC exceeded its original goals by training 589 clients and providing 140 one-on-one consultations. In 2015 it trained 470 women clients, 299 Hispanic clients, and 260 African America clients, indicating that 95 percent of clients were within the target market. The WBC also provided one-on-one consultation to 85 minority business owners and 94 women business owners.