

Supporting the Success of its Members – America’s SBDCs

OUR SHARED MISSION: Deliver high quality, professional business advice, education, and information that generates meaningful results.

OUR SHARED VISION: America’s SBDCs are highly valued for driving economic prosperity.

ASBDC’S PURPOSE: To support the success of its members.

Today’s Date: April 22, 2025

CALL TO ORDER: The Acting Chairman called the ASBDC Board of Directors meeting to order at 3:30 p.m. EST and welcomed all in attendance.

ROLL CALL: Liz Gray called roll; quorum present.

PRESENT	BOARD MEMBER	COMMENTS
P	Danny Fitzgerald (San Diego & Imperial, CA)	
P	Liz Gray – Secretary (New Hampshire)	
P	Mark Gregory (Oregon)	
A	Ted Gutierrez (Missouri)	Approved absence
P	Byron Hicks –Vice-Chair (North Carolina)	
P	Michele Hockersmith (Oklahoma)	
P	Steve Lawrence (Houston, TX)	
P	Marnie Schuschke (North Dakota)	
P	Sonya Smith (New York)	
P	Tee Rowe, America’s SBDC	

Link to the April Board Meeting Recording: <https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1ZMMv-mZ2HQrlrs9fEcxneW4nNSRbsUbl>

Attachments:

- Treasurer’s Report
- Tee Rowe’s President’s Report
- North Star Program slides

- April Youngblut's update
- Kelly Flint's update
- Diana Fonseca's update
- Board Meeting Transcript

BOARD MEETING AGENDA

Tuesday, April 22nd, 2025
3:30 PM – 5:00 PM (EST)

- 3:30 – 3:40 PM **Call to Order**
Officer Reports
Secretary – Liz Gray
Chair – Byron Hicks (Acting)
- 3:40 – 3:50 PM **Treasurer's Report** - Danny Fitzgerald
- 3:50 – 4:10 PM **President's Report** – Tee Rowe
- Legislative update
 - Advocacy updates
 - SBA Updates
 - HHS payments
 - Nexus validation
 - IG updates
 - Association updates
 - JCN partnership
 - Interest group/Committee roles
 - MEP status
 - Manufacturing effort, Nat'l Ctr?
- 4:10 – 4:20 PM **Staff Update** – *Brett, Kelly*
- 4:20 – 4:35 PM **AI Project Update** – *Diana*
- 4:35 – 4:55 PM **Board liaisons** - Regions, Committees and Interest Section Groups
- 4:55 – 5:00 PM **Old Business/New Business**
- 5:00 PM **Adjourn**

Secretary Report – Liz Gray

- Liz Gray called roll.
- Liz noted the March minutes were emailed. No edits were made.
- Marnie Schuschke made a motion to approve the minutes; Michele Hockersmith seconded. Motion carried.

Acting Chairman's Report – Byron Hicks

- Byron thanked everyone for being accommodating as we changed the date of the Board meeting to today.
- He reminded folks that we all need to remain calm. There's a lot of talk and a lot of noise. We need to focus on our work and what is impacting the SBDC network. There are a lot of great things happening in the field and with our clients.
- Bruce Purdy let us know that some of the SBA DC staff, Nancyellen, Alanna Falcone and a few others took the buyout. There will be some changes.
- Byron encouraged SD's to join the SBA call on Thursday to hear all the updates from Bruce. This is the quarterly meeting where Bruce opens it up to SBA District Directors as well.
- The good news is that Bruce is still there and fighting for us every day.
- There is \$18MM approved from SBA going out in payments. It's great to hear a dollar amount that's ready to go out. Paul has already signed off on the payments.
- We are still waiting for modifications on our funding agreements. There is one more step under review. Byron is strongly encouraging networks to read through the agreements carefully and bring questions to Tee and Byron.
- Many of us are concerned about the national MEP program. NIST made the decision to go a different direction with their funding. They gave the first 10 programs that were scheduled to lose their funding another 6 months but it's unlikely that they will maintain their funding in the long run. It is important to remember that NIST made the decision to reallocate the funding. Just because this is happening to MEP, the SBDC networks do not need to worry that it will happen to us. We are watching and waiting to hear how SBA will be picking up some of the manufacturing work that MEP was doing.
- The Board received the updated Board Handbook. Thank you to Mark, Ted, and Marnie for working with April. It's a living document and will be kept up to date.
- Kristina Joyce asked if there were any updates relative to the disaster arm of SBA? KY is hearing information from a lot of sources and not coordinated. Byron said in many cases the SBA district offices are down to very few staff members and they're doing what they can, but communication is challenged.

Treasurer's Report –Danny Fitzgerald

- Danny shared the attached Treasurer's report.
- We are maintaining a positive cash balance
- Reserve remains positive including AIU balance.
- Dues collection is at 48%, including some partial payments. If you can get your full dues in, please do so. If there are questions about dues or your ability to pay the full amount, please email Joy.
- AIU Payments totaling \$1.433 MM were sent out. This has been a major lift, but Diana and Joy have done a phenomenal job.
- Personnel costs varied with vacancies.

President's Report –Tee Rowe

- Tee has spent a significant amount of time on the Hill and is in constant communication with Omar and Anthony.
- The House and Senate Appropriations committees have released their request guidelines and deadlines (May 16th and 21st).
- 2026 Community Development Projects (earmarks) are still on the table despite their elimination from FY2025. Those approved for FY25 will probably have a “leg up” over any new requests but all of this is dependent upon the subcommittee allocations. The subcommittees will begin their markups in late May and early June.
- The Administration is working on a “skinny budget” which would contain requested topline numbers for the 12 appropriations bills. It would also contain numbers for agencies. Agency budgets are in “passback” mode, going back and forth to OMB. The Administration is also set to release a \$9.3 billion rescission package this week. Those rescissions are aimed at NPR, CPB, USAID and State Department programs.
- The Senate has released a budget resolution that allows only \$4 billion in gross deficit reduction. The House version requires \$2 trillion in gross deficit reductions. They are working to develop legislation to implement and conference the two reconciliation packages, most of which is based on tax legislation.
- The House and Senate held a joint hearing on tax policy. There will be a full committee House markup next week on the Prove It Act, Returning SBA to Main Street act, and a Small Business Regulatory Reduction bill.
- Nothing on reauthorization.
- **Cybersecurity** – Kudos to the team at Delaware SBDC. The online training for cybersecurity is up and running. SBA folks are pleased.
 - Mike Bowman noted the progress with the North Star program. Please see the attached North Star slides.
- **Manufacturing:** Paul Fitzpatrick and I have had some discussions about the Administration’s interest in increasing manufacturing outreach. They’d like to create an SBDC Center for Manufacturing. Tee suggested aligning it with SBDCNet.
 - Mark Gregory have you heard if there’s a national effort being coordinated?
 - Allan Adams wants to get a handle on whether we will be asked to do more on manufacturing with no additional funding.
 - Kristina Joyce mentioned in the Zoom chat that KY’s DD has asked for a team that includes SBDC and other resource partners. When I pressed for what that meant, he did not know.
 - Byron said that if we can find a sweet spot for where we can add value while staying in our lane it could be a win win for the SBDC networks.
 - Cliff Paredes noted in the Zoom chat, “Large foreign direct investment requires multiple tiers of suppliers that are small and medium-sized businesses. If you are moving manufacturing to the USA, you need a concerted effort to move their entire supply chain”
- Tee noted that Paul Fitzpatrick said the Administration would like to see more collaboration/joint efforts between the resource partners (SCORE, VBOCs, WBCs, RICs).
- **Press Release Information** – Tee is working with Bruce to get clarification on the requirement to include information in all press releases regarding the percentage/amount of federal and non-federal funds involved in a project. This is part of the new terms and conditions for 2025. It is a Congressional mandate, not an administration thing. Tee will send around some boiler plate language we can use and clarify when the language is needed.
 - Kristina Joyce asked who’s going to police this? Tee doesn’t know.
 - Linda Rossi noted in the Zoom chat: “We have an SBA Lead Center Review tomorrow--and this is

what was in the template - which was the first we saw of it: Does the Network include in **all** press releases a statement acknowledging the percentage and dollar amount of the total costs of the program/project that was financed with federal money and the percentage and dollar amount of the total costs of the program/project that will be financed by non-governmental sources required in Standard Term 20 in the SBA Standard Grant Terms and Conditions?”

- Byron asked how many networks have a Lead Center review coming up and how should networks respond? Should they say Bruce and Tee are working on the language. Tee said yes, we were just informed of this, and the Association and Bruce are working on language and a good way to respond.
- Jody Keenan asked in the Zoom chat, “Can local centers use the network total or does each center need to use specific language reflecting their funding level?” Tee said I don’t think it goes down to that level.
- **OIG** – NJ review is complete. Kelly will be able to comment soon. SBA is reviewing it now. They seem to be focused on indirect rates, office space, posting of office hours, and some other items. The “review” of the Kentucky SBDC should be winding down this month. Kristina noted that it’s been 6+ months that her team has been going through the review.
- A new NEXUS validation process will be explained on the next SD call. There is an extra step being added to validate the upload.
- **MOU with Job Creators Network**– Tee sent around the draft MOU to the board. While non-binding this is an important potential relationship with an influential organization. Tee doesn’t think it’s a heavy lift. He’s aiming for a partnership that will give us some advocacy. The Network is connected to some larger private businesses like Home Depot that might lead to more sponsorship opportunities.
 - Byron asked if there is any concern with ASBDC aligning us with a more political/ideological group? Tee says we need to remind folks that our focus is small business.
 - Tee is going to their meeting and will ask more questions to better understand how they want to structure this partnership.
 - Mark asked if this is an agreement that we need to renew every year. Mark is concerned about the risk vs benefit of this partnership. Tee said that an annual agreement would be ideal vs. a 4-year agreement because we can walk away more easily.
- **Staffing** – We are continuing our efforts to find a new marketing employee.

Staff Reports – April/Brett/Melissa/Diana

April Youngblut’s Update

- April couldn’t present at the meeting, but shared slides.

Brett Thibodeau’s Updates

- The Professional Development Committee has completed reviews of 386 submissions. 105 of those submissions were accepted (29% acceptance rate)
- The conference registration platform for attendees will open May 19th. It will open up for sponsor and exhibitors May 1st or once we have an approved floor plan.
- 60 out of 63 State Star nominations have been submitted.

- There have been issues accessing America's SBDC website. We are working with GoDaddy to see if the issue is on their end. Please confirm with your IT personnel that our website is whitelisted and accessible via their network.
- Brett is continuing the process of updating center locations for the network. He will send out an updated spreadsheet by June 1st.

Kelly Flint's Updates

Annual Survey Update

- Working directly with Outreach Systems (Neoserra) and Center Dynamics (Center IC)
- Thank you to Marnie Schuschke and Danny Fitzgerald for making those introductions.
- Our goal is to have all scorecard information collected by July.

Rising Leadership Certification

- Submissions are open. So far, six have been received.
- Rising Leadership Certification Toolkit:
 - The Program Guide (PDF)
 - A brief overview presentation
 - A recorded webinar overview
- Deadline to submit is May 15

Peer Exchange 2025

- October 7-8th in Boise
- Invitations will be going out in May to State Directors with 1–3 years of experience in their role. The goal is to have 11 attendees.
- Tiffany Ford, Doug Covey, Mark Gregory, and Jon Bittner are confirmed facilitators. Kelly Flint will also be attending to help facilitate logistics and learn.

Leadership Resources

- Coming soon:
 - Re-launch Monthly Webinar Series in June
 - Webpage updates for New State Directors
 - New webpage dedicated to Rising Leadership Certification
- Launched - New Leadership Initiatives Webpage <https://americassbdc.org/members/association-information/leadership-initiatives/>

AI - U Project Update– Diana Fonseca

- Please see Diana's slides.
- AI – U website: <https://www.americassbdc-ai-u.org/>

User Growth

- Increased from 650 to over 900 users in our LMS in one month.

- At least 30% of users are consistently completing all modules on the LMS site. This demonstrates strong engagement and program value. All states and territories are participating.

Live Session Performance

- Over 100 registrations per session
- More than 75 active listeners during live broadcasts
- All recordings available on LMS site for universal access

Curriculum Committee Formation

- Received 35 applications from 24 states
- Applications under review by external panel with AI expertise. The independent review process ensures transparency and fairness.

Student Engagement Initiative

- Successfully launched and communicated to all state/associate directors.
- Introductory video distributed explaining the initiative.
- All forms available on AI U member's page.
- Submission process restricted to state directors using their credentials.
- Student engagements can last up to 6 months, but can be as short as a month.

Financial Updates

- First round of eligible payments issued totaling \$1.433 MM.
- Payment schedule proceeding as planned.
- Reach out by May 1st if you haven't received it yet.

Expanded Certification Capacity

- Increased capacity compared to previous year
- No restrictions on allocated staff participation
- Option to pay for additional attendees (waitlisted)
- Priority given to allocated personnel
- Additional information forthcoming next month with conference application

The following are America's SBDC committee and interest section liaison assignments updated January 2025

Committees:

Accreditation Committee: Ted Gutierrez
 Conference Committee: Byron Hicks
 Leadership Committee: Michele Hockersmith
 Legislative Committee: Liz Gray
 Marketing Committee: Danny Fitzgerald
 Operations Committee: Steve Lawrence
 Research and Data Committee: Sonya Smith
 Sponsorship Committee: Marnie Schuschke
 Finance Committee: Mark Gregory
 Human Resources Committee: Michele Hockersmith

Chair/Co-Chair

Jody Keenan
 Kyle Hensel
 Tiffany Ford
 Sonya Smith/ J.D. Collins
 Sherry Noller
 Michael Singleton
 Austin Strawhacker
 Mike Daniel/Michele Abraham
 Danny Fitzgerald
Board Members Only

Interest Sections:

Chair/Co-Chair

Ag/Rural: Marnie Schuschke	Jim Johnson/SC, Josh Walton/GA
AI: Byron Hicks	Greg Chanese/NY
Cap Access: Byron Hicks	Bill Cummins/AL
Cyber: Tee Rowe/Byron Hicks	Scott Taber/MI
Disaster: Steve Lawrence	Greg Price/OR
Employee Ownership/Bus. Transition: Mark Gregory	Diane Tourney/OR, Isa Fernandez SW TX
SB Resources in Spanish: Liz Gray	Maria Eck/WA, Sandra Rentas/NV
International Trade: Danny Fitzgerald	Jim Foley/IL, Aaron Scott Miller/VA
Marketing: Ted Gutierrez	Francene Dudzic/PA
Millennial/Youth: Sonya Smith	Vijay Viswani (PA)
Native American: Michele Hockersmith	Jon Bittner/AK, Mary Shepard/CO
Government Contracting: Marnie Schuschke	Jane Dowgwillo/FL
SBDC Financial Management: Marnie Schuschke	Alicia Smith (IA), Melissa Stoker (GA) and Juliet Njoroge (PA)
SSBCI: Byron Hicks	Bill Cummins/AL
Technology and Innovation: Liz Gray	Josh Green/VA
Training: Ted Gutierrez	Debbie Toste/NorCal
Veterans and Military Spouses: Tee Rowe	Todd Anduze/GA
Women's Entrepreneurship: Sonya Smith	TBD

America's SBDC Board Liaisons

Danny Fitzgerald	California, Hawaii, Northern Mariana Islands
Liz Gray	Connecticut, Maine, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, Puerto Rico, Rhode Island, Vermont
Mark Gregory	Alaska, Arizona, Colorado, Montana, Nevada, New Mexico, Oregon, Utah, Washington
Ted Gutierrez	Illinois, Indiana, Michigan, Missouri, Ohio, Wisconsin, West Virginia
Byron Hicks	Alabama, Arkansas, Florida, Georgia, Kentucky, Louisiana, Mississippi, North Carolina, South Carolina, Tennessee, Virgin Islands
Michele Hockersmith	Guam, Idaho, Iowa, Kansas, Minnesota, Nebraska, North Dakota, Oklahoma, South Dakota, Wyoming
Steve Lawrence	American Samoa, Texas
Marnie Schuschke	Associate State Directors
Sonya Smith	Delaware, District of Columbia, Maryland, New Jersey, New York, Pennsylvania, Virginia
Tee Rowe	All

Board liaisons - Regions, Committees and Interest Section Groups

- Sonya:
 - **The Mid-Atlantic Liaison** group met and discussed the Jim King tribute, NJ OIG report, Administrator Loeffler's Made in America tour, and open SD positions.
 - **Legislative Committee** hosted a webinar on Muster. Muster is a cloud-based grassroots advocacy and analytics platform designed to help organizations—such as nonprofits, associations, chambers of

commerce, and corporations—engage their supporters and influence public policy. The platform offers a suite of tools to manage stakeholders, launch advocacy campaigns, and measure their impact. Muster's platform is designed to be intuitive, making it accessible for both seasoned professionals and those new to advocacy. By providing real-time analytics and reporting, organizations can effectively measure the success of their campaigns and adjust strategies accordingly. For more information, visit [Muster's official website](#).

- **Research & Data Committee:** The committee continues to meet monthly (first Friday of each month) and discuss relevant matters. At this point, we do not have any projects or initiatives from the board. Recent topics covered by the committee are: Database compliance with recent Eos, Reestablishment of NeoSerra/CenterIC working groups, and Nexus
- **Millennial Mindset Interest Group Focuses & Members are** advising on what the new Rising Leaders Certification can look like and how we as MMG can support. Key focus areas are leadership development, professional experience, and job opportunities and networking. The Co-chairs are: Vijay Vaswani, Matthew Jackson, Juliet Njoroge, and Ian Carlstrom.
- **Women's Leadership & Entrepreneurship Interest Group** facilitated a discussion to identify top focus areas for the group. Suggested topics include: access to capital and funding, visibility and representation of women leaders, mentorship and peer support, navigating procurement or certification (e.g., WBE), childcare or flexible work supports for women business owners, leadership development and board service pipelines, advocacy and policy input
- Michele:
 - **Leadership Committee** is working on topics for the September State Director roundtables. Potential topics/speakers include Bruce Purdy Session, Info/FAQ's, Interpersonal/culture Facilitated Discussion, Leading Through Change Discussion. Additional SD sessions at Conference: State Partnership Strategies and State Advisory Boards: Building and Leveraging
 - **Liaison meeting** met March 26th. Talked about state budgets and challenges, SBDC Day activities, and AI U.
- Liz:
 - **New England + PR liaison** meeting met April 1st. We discussed various non-SBA funding issues we're facing or concerned about: state, SSBCI, NBRC, CDS, and other various federal grants. We're also trying to support Paula in her interim SD role. A question about where ASBDC Board meeting minutes and upcoming meeting schedule was on the Association website. For those wondering, you need to log into the Member's section, scroll down to the Association section and click on "Board and Member Meetings". You'll find board and member meeting schedules, minutes, Association financials, and board liaison meeting info.
 - Josh Green from **the TC13 working group** secured the CEO of [SSTI](#) for their April call on Wednesday the 30th to discuss what they are seeing with federal funding issues across the country. He plans to send State Director's an invitation with some additional context to make sure they understand the topic. SSTI is a non-profit that works to share lessons learned from a nationwide network of practitioners and policymakers dedicated to creating a better future through science, technology, innovation and entrepreneurship.

Old Business / New Business

- Tee noted Dr. Vardamen sent out the annual survey today.

Motion to adjourn:

- A motion to adjourn was made by Danny with a second from Michele Hockersmith. Motion carried.
- The meeting concluded at 5:00 PM.