

The National Women’s Business Council is a nonpartisan federal advisory council created to serve as an independent source of advice and counsel to the U.S. Small Business Administration, the U.S. Congress, and the White House on issues of impact and importance to women business owners, leaders, and entrepreneurs. As the government’s only independent voice for women entrepreneurs, the Council’s mission is two-fold: to support and conduct groundbreaking research that provides insight into women’s business enterprises from startup to success, and to share the findings to ultimately incite constructive action and policies.

In order to achieve this mission, the National Women’s Business Council is committed to conducting high-quality research that:

- (1) Poses, and responds to, well-defined questions or problem statements;
- (2) Fills gaps in existing knowledge about female business owners, leaders and entrepreneurs;
- (3) Extends or supplements previous research, and informs future research; and
- (4) Results in actionable and policy-oriented recommendations.

A research *methodology* will be considered appropriate for investment if it:

- (1) Identifies sufficiently targeted goals that will result in specific insights and recommendations;
- (2) Describes the value the proposed research will add to the current research landscape, particularly in bringing new or advanced understanding to economic or social issues relevant to women’s business ownership, leadership, and entrepreneurship;
- (3) Is investigative in nature, not driven by desired outcomes or results;
- (4) Proposes to incorporate both quantitative and qualitative components, such as survey analysis coupled with in-depth interviews or demographic statistics alongside a focus group analysis.

A research *product* will be considered high-quality if it:

- (1) Thoroughly describes previous research—including that conducted by the Council—and offers a compelling improvement or extension thereof;
- (2) Responsibly makes meaning of anecdotal evidence or narrative responses that may not be otherwise suited to qualitative analysis;
- (3) Offers predictive value when appropriate, but may be exclusively descriptive;
- (4) Makes comparisons between gender, or other groups, only when comparison adds explicit and desired value; and
- (5) Culminates in at least one strong, rigorously-supported recommendation for future action.

The Council shows a preference for innovative research that sheds new light on economic and social issues of importance and impact to women business owners. The Council understands that research is an iterative process, and that meaning and knowledge result from thorough investigation. As such, value is placed on far-sighted research investment, such as through related projects that deepen or extend understanding over the course of multiple research cycles.

The Council Research Committee plays a crucial role in representing and communicating the research needs of the Council both internally and externally, and in confirming that the research agenda meets the outlined criteria for quality.