



ATHENA PowerLink®

Program Sponsors

PN/C Financial Services Group, Inc.

The Erie Regional Chamber and Growth Partnership

Resource Partner

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Small Business Development Center**

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Maryann Yochim
National Fuel

ATHENA PowerLink®

A business mentoring program designed to increase the growth and profitability of women-owned businesses

Are you a woman-owned business looking to grow?

What is Athena PowerLink®

Athena PowerLink® is a non-profit, volunteer-run organization that provides professional advisory panels to woman-owned businesses.

What are the Criteria for Selecting a Company?

All selections are made by a committee appointed by National City and the Erie Regional Chamber and Growth Partnership from applications received. Companies are chosen based on their potential to effectively utilize an advisory panel and Athena PowerLink®'s ability to assist the company's growth.

To be considered for help through the Athena PowerLink® program, companies must:

- Be owned by at least 51 percent by a woman
- Have been in operation for at least two years
- Have a minimum of two employees
- Generate annual revenues of at least \$250,000 if in manufacturing or retail, or \$100,000 if in a service business and
- Have clearly defined company objectives/goals with explicit reasons for seeking Athena PowerLink®'s assistance.

What does Athena PowerLink® provide?

Athena PowerLink® determines the specific areas of expertise in which the business requires assistance and recruits professionals to provide the needed guidance. These professionals serve a one-year term in an advisory panel position., Advisory panel meetings are held quarterly. At the business owner's request, advisors are encouraged to occasionally meet with the owner outside the regular quarterly sessions.

Athena PowerLink® also provides an advisory Panel Coordinator. This individual is responsible for ensuring the scheduling of the quarterly panel meetings, the timely dissemination of all pertinent information including the agenda and notes/minutes of all panel meetings, as well as overall project coordination.

What are the Business Owner's Responsibilities?

The Business Owner is responsible for providing a suitable meeting place for the advisory panel. In addition, the Business Owner provides the meeting agenda, any appropriate materials for the panel members and the panel coordinator including, but not limited to, financial statements, an executive summary and company literature. The owner must delineate specific company problems requiring the advice of panel members so that solutions can be suggested. Ultimately, the owner has the ability to accept or reject the suggestions made by panel members.

For more information please contact Linda Stevenson at 814-871-1225.



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September 2010

Dear WBO:

On behalf of PNC Financial Services Group, Inc., the Erie Regional Chamber and Growth Partnership, Gannon University Small Business Development Center and DeMarco Wachter, CPA, we are excited to announce that we are now accepting applications for the 2011 ATHENA PowerLink® program.

The ATHENA PowerLink® program is a national mentoring program that connects selected business owners with a skilled advisory panel, free of charge for one year. Erie women business owners have benefited from this outstanding entrepreneurial program for the past ten years. The previous women business owners that have excelled from this program are from a diverse industry base including: commercial/residential interior decorating and window care, employment agency, residential financial and settlement services, home healthcare, retail sign business and designer glass. All of these entrepreneurs have achieved substantial financial growth in sales, income and employees as a result of their commitment and participation in this program.

We would like to strongly encourage you to consider applying if you are interested in receiving expert advice and invaluable insight on growing your business enterprise.

Attached you will also find a copy of the ATHENA PowerLink® application..

To find out more information please contact me at 814-871-1225. You may also visit the ATHENA PowerLink® website to download a 2011 program application at <http://www.eriepa.com/athena>. Applications will be accepted until **January 15, 2011**.

Sincerely yours,

Linda L. Stevenson
Governing Body Chairperson
ATHENA PowerLink®



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application form

Date _____

NOTE: Final acceptance date for application: _____

Woman Business Owner(s) _____

Business Name _____

Business Address _____

City, State, Zip _____

Phone _____

Fax _____

Cell/Pager _____

E-mail Address _____

Web Address _____

QUALIFICATION QUESTIONS:

Month/Year business began _____

Percent of business owned by one or more women _____

Does the Applicant actively manage the business? (circle one) Yes No

Number of employees (include applicant if applicable):

Full Time _____ Part Time _____

Date fiscal year ends _____

Sales or revenue history (use annual fiscal year numbers; do not include cents):

Last fiscal year \$ _____

Previous fiscal year \$ _____

2 years previous \$ _____

Projected for this fiscal year _____

Budget for next fiscal year _____

Is there anything the ATHENA PowerLink® program should know about you or your business; i.e., do you have any litigation pending? Are there significant personal or business financial difficulties of which we need to be aware?

1

Have you applied for an ATHENA PowerLink® Advisory Panel before? (circle one) Yes No

If yes, when, and please describe why you did not receive one.

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application form

BUSINESS QUESTIONNAIRE:

Do you have a business plan? (circle one) Yes No
(If yes, please send business plan with application, if possible.)

Briefly describe your goals for the business.

Over the next one year:

Over the next five years:

Do you have financial projections for the next one to two years?
(circle one) Yes No

(If yes, please send financial projections with application, if possible.)

Does your business currently have a board of directors?
(circle one) Yes No

(If yes, how many directors, and describe their areas of expertise.)

Do you expect any significant change in business ownership or operation during the next 18 months? (circle one) Yes No

(If yes, please describe.)

2

Briefly describe your business' products.
(Include any business literature with application.)

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Who are your three largest customers? Approximately what percentage of last year's sales do they represent? Approximately what is your average size sale overall?

Briefly describe your business' major strengths and major weaknesses.

Briefly describe your major competition and its/their strengths and weaknesses.

What are your primary tasks as president/owner?
Which do you enjoy more:
(a) running the business or (b) being in the industry?

What frustrates you most about running your business?

What is your highest business priority and how do you see an Advisory Panel being able to help you reach that priority?

Have you participated in a Small Business Administration Program such as SCORE or an SBDC? If so, please state when and describe how your business benefited.

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What successful adviser/advisee relationships have you had while running this business?

What good advice have they given you? How has this affected your business? Has it resulted in any lasting or permanent change?

What kinds of people would you like to see on your Panel?
What characteristics do you think a good adviser should have?

The information contained in this application is provided for the purpose of obtaining an unpaid Advisory Panel through the Athena PowerLink® program. I understand that you are relying on the information provided herein in deciding to grant an Advisory Panel, and therefore, I represent that the information provided is true and complete. You are authorized to make whatever inquiries you deem necessary, and you have permission to obtain a credit report on me or on my company from any credit reporting agency.

Please mail all applications with a postmark dated no later than **January 15, 2011**

Signature

Social Security Number

Date

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Please return completed application and attachments to:

Linda L. Stevenson
Athena PowerLink®
Governing Body Chair
PNC Financial Services Group, Inc.
901 State Street
Erie, PA 16501
814-871-1225