

## Small Business Development Centers

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## How would I gain access to your services?

- Go to the Small Business Development Center (SBDC)
  - [www.sbdnet.org](http://www.sbdnet.org)
- Services are free and confidential
- Call and determine how they access individuals

## What kind of services might I expect to be able to find at a SBDC?

- Without business experience, the SBDC will ask you to attend a seminar
  - 2-3 hours
  - Overview of helpful information
- One-on-one consultation
  - licensing, business plan, financial projections, and regulations for government
- Helps you to determine anything that you need to have ahead of time before you start down the path of setting up a small business



## How much assistance would a person expect to receive?



- Seminar & information packet including:
  - business planning templates, planning guides, licensing requirements, access to the information online, & money management software
- One-on-one consultation
- Needs assessment
- Business planning assistance

## Starting a Small Business with a Disability: How did your collaboration with VR start and how does that work?

- VR in Ohio identified a need
- Contracted with a consulting group
  - Hired the SBDC program in our region to provide that basic counseling service
- VR directly refers interested clients to the SBDC program
- SBDC program provides the one-on-one consultation

## Continued

- Different entry point into the program
- Disability is not the issue
- Focus is on the business concept and planning
- This SBDC program offers comparable services to clients with disabilities as provided to all other individuals
  - Yet, accommodations are customized when applicable

### What occurs after a referral?

- Determine business status
- For new business owners
  - Questionnaires
  - Seminars
  - Analysis of business idea feasibility

### Is there any standard that I would have to meet to say that my business could generate income?

- VR's benchmark
  - More than minimum wage
- Bill Wersell's benchmark
  - \$15+/hour
  - To make the income worth the stress, anxiety, etc. of owning your own business

### How would I begin starting my business?

- Determine:
  - business background
  - who the customer is going to be
  - how you are going to provide them with your product or service
  - cost of running the business
  - cost of marketing
  - funding necessary
  - monthly costs

### Could you elaborate on that the courses you offer to your clients?

- Small business management classes
  - Typically 10-week sessions (3 hrs/week)
- Topics covered
  - Marketing (print, media, or online)
  - State regulations
  - Worker's compensation issues
  - Hiring practices
  - How to buy and sell products
  - How to make a business transaction
  - How to market yourself
- Each week should be another step towards your completion of your business plan
- SBDC also helps with financial projections

### Is there funding available through SBDCs?

- SBDC does not have any funding
  - Helps to identify funding sources
- Depending on the state, VR could help with funding if there is outside investment
- SBA does not loan money
  - SBA guaranteed loan means that SBA is a cosigner with the client on a traditional loan
- Community development funding

### Funding: Do I need collateral to secure a loan?

- Depends upon the business
- Depends upon the assets that need to be pledged
- Grant opportunities are available but are targeted and difficult to get
- Don't borrow money you know you can't repay

### What about using a credit card to start a business?



- Damages credit
- Causes people to be less eligible for alternate funding
- Using a credit card for start-up expenses is not recommended
- You can quickly dig yourself into a financial hole

### Do you have any case study examples?

- Gentleman
  - Computer literate prior to disability
- Son
  - Owns business but not computer literate
- Now, father markets son's products online
- Successful in expanding the business beyond the local area

#### Supports Received

- Had the computer knowledge
- Needed adaptives to make computer accessible for use
- VR provided:
  - Highly technical equipment
  - Training on how to use his new equipment

### Did that person go through your business classes?

- No
- He had been quite a successful business owner previous to his disability

#### However-

- Some clients are well trained in their business practice but need small business management classes because they have never *owned* a business before
- Classes help to clarify personal and market needs as well as business planning

### What advice would you give to other SBDCs to increase their services to people with disabilities?

- Call your state vocational rehabilitation office
- Call any agency that may be working with people with disabilities
- You have to network yourself
- SBDC counselors need to be knowledgeable about the potential effects on disability benefits with starting a small business
- It's important that there be a benefits analysis done on every case so that all parties involved are cognizant of the thresholds

### Is there any parting information that you feel is important to include?

- Come early
- Don't wait until you are a business in the eyes of the state
- The SBDC has seminars that people can take advantage of in order to create more informed interactions
- Contact your local SBDC
  - [www.sbdnet.org](http://www.sbdnet.org)