

Coastal Maintenance Solutions  
University Place, WA



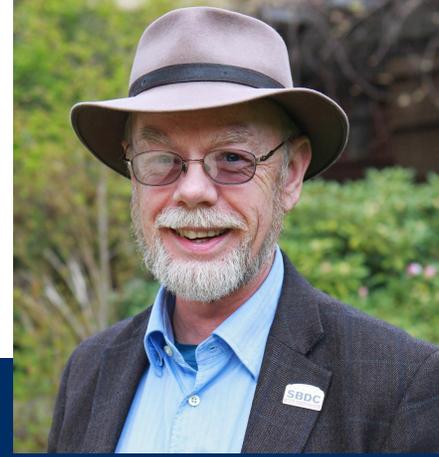
# 2023 ANNUAL REPORT

Washington Small Business Development Center



Helping Washington Businesses  
**Grow & Succeed**

# Letter from the State Director



## WASHINGTON SBDC REFLECTS DIVERSITY OF EVERGREEN STATE

When the SBDC program was first authorized by Congress in 1980, the initial funding level was set at \$8.5 million and there were SBDC programs in 18 states. I only wish the early Congressional champions of this program, people like Sen. Gaylord Nelson, who was then chair of the Senate Small Business Committee, or senators William Hathaway of Maine or Sam Nunn of Georgia, could see us now.

With SBDC programs in every state, the District of Columbia and four U.S. territories, we now offer technical assistance and training to more than one million Americans each year. In a survey of more than 74,000 SBDC clients who received five or more hours of advising in 2020, researchers discovered that long-term clients of the SBDC generated approximately \$10.1 billion in sales and 85,094 new full-time equivalent jobs from the assistance received.

Here in Washington State, our business advisors provided one-on-one advising to more than 3,000 business owners and entrepreneurs in 2022. Those clients reported that the SBDC provided substantial assistance that enabled them to secure more than \$115 million in capital and create or save more than 3,000 jobs.

As someone who has been involved with the SBDC program for more than 30 years, I am incredibly proud of the work that we do in Washington State and across the country.

In 2022, we heard loud and clear that the SBA is putting a high priority on outreach to women, minority communities and rural communities, which validated many of the strategic decisions we had already made and will buttress our commitment to other inclusivity initiatives going forward.

For instance, we now have nine business advisors who are bilingual/bicultural, and seven of them are women. We have significantly improved our ability to work with Spanish-speaking clients and are now working to expand services to other entrepreneurs

or business owners who face barriers because of language fluency or physical disability.

I started this message by referencing how much the SBDC program has grown since the passage of the Small Business Development Center Act in 1980. I would also like to acknowledge how much the Washington SBDC network has changed since I joined the network a dozen years ago.

Our mission remains the same, but our staff is far more reflective of the diversity of Washington State and the business community. In 2010, we had 21 business advisors, three of them were women and one was a person of color. In 2022, we have 43 business advisors, 23 are women and 17 are people of color. We also have staff who identify as part of the LGBTQ community.

For all that has been accomplished, there is still much to do. Improving access to SBDC services for people furthest from opportunity is an ongoing concern, but in Washington State we are committed to improving client success as well. Once a business owner starts working with an SBDC advisor, we want to make sure they have the tools, resources and support they need to achieve their loftiest ambitions.

For more than 40 years, the SBDC has been a trusted resource for small business men and women of every race, creed and color seeking to improve their lives through America's free enterprise system. Thank you for your support in this important endeavor.

Sincerely,

*Duane Fladland*

Duane Fladland  
State Director  
Washington Small Business Development Center

# 2022 by the Numbers

## SBDC ASSISTANCE



**3,038**

Advising Clients



**4,132**

Training Attendees



**165**

Delivered Training Events



**95%**

\*Client Satisfaction Rate



**\$5.07**

\*Return on Investment

## CLIENT IMPACT



**3,094**

Created and Saved Jobs



**177**

New Business Starts



**\$122M**

Increased Sales



**\$115M**

Raised New Capital



**\$1.2M**

Increased Export Sales

Client reported impacts from 2022

\*The "Economic Impact of SBDC Counseling Activities in Washington: 2020-2021," by Dr. James Chrisman of Mississippi State University

## Our Locations

Washington SBDC provides community-based services to entrepreneurs and small business owners from the Canadian border to the Columbia River and every point in between.



# Funding Partners

*Thank you to our stakeholders and partners who have supported the Washington SBDC for over 40 years. We look forward to continued collaboration in the years ahead.*



## **Kerrie Hurd**

*District Director, Seattle District Office, U.S. Small Business Administration*

As District Director for Seattle district of the US Small Business Administration, it's exciting to witness the success of our valued partner, Washington Small Business Development Center (SBDC). Their nationally recognized Certified Business Advisors have a proven track record of helping small businesses make a large impact across the Evergreen state.

With locations in rural areas as well as urban areas, the Washington SBDC offers high quality, confidential business counseling, training, and business research to help our small business owners navigate a variety of business challenges and opportunities. Whether it's assisting small business owners rebuild after COVID-19 business interruptions, exploring global markets, or preparing to apply for a complex business loan, these vital business services are provided at no-cost to the business, allowing prized cash to be retained for salaries and other vital business needs. Readers of this report should know surveys conclude that the majority of individuals receiving SBDC services could not afford to pay the fees of equivalent private consulting, highlighting the importance of the funding partners who financially support the SBDC's pro-bono model to support an equitable business community and expand economic opportunities for low-income people.

On behalf of SBA, I'd like to thank and commend the Washington SBDC for their exceptional accomplishments in 2022 and look forward to our continued partnership in 2023 and beyond.



U.S. Small Business  
Administration



## **Brian Kraft**

*Assistant Vice President, Innovation & Research Engagement Office,  
Washington State University*

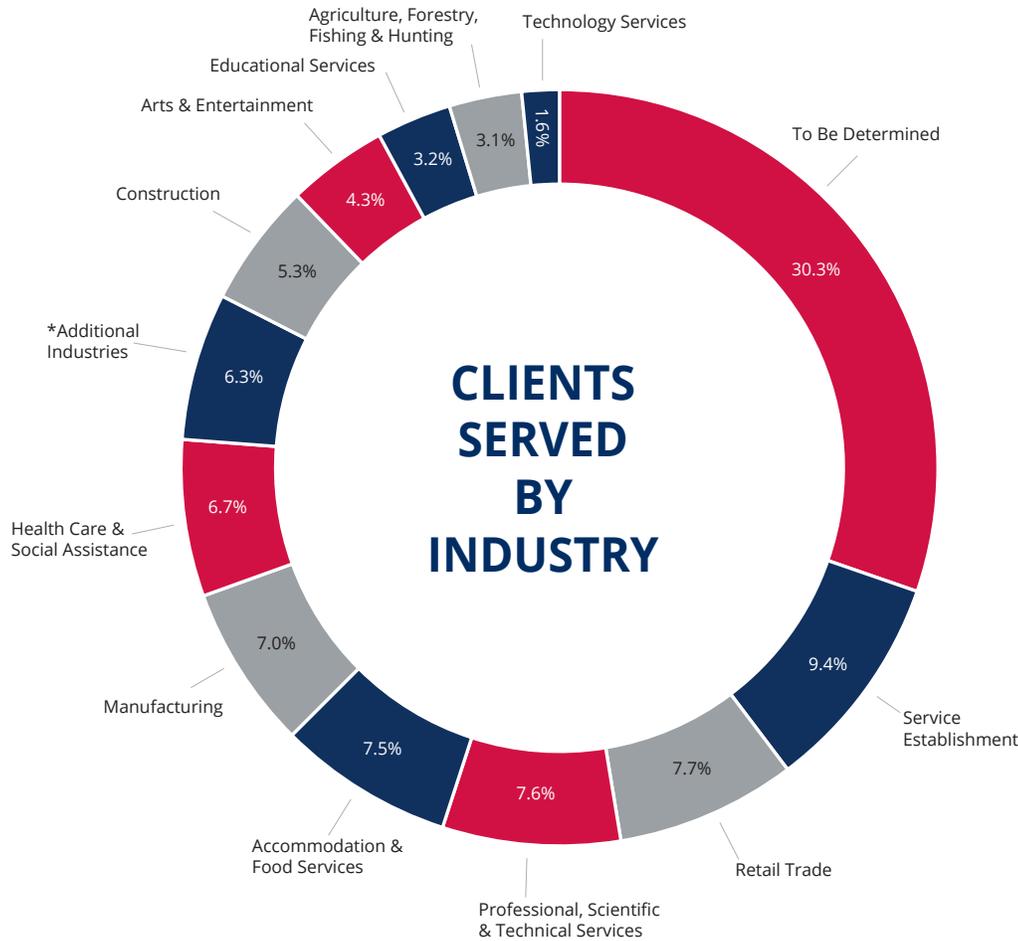
As Washington State's land-grant research institution, the mission of Washington State University (WSU) is to advance knowledge through creative activity, research, and scholarship, extend knowledge through innovative educational programs, and to apply knowledge through local and global engagement. WSU improves the quality of life of citizens in Washington State and enhance the economy of the state, nation, and world. It lives out its public service mission in part through the Small Business Development Center, which has partnered with WSU for over 40 years to serve the small business and entrepreneurial community in Washington State.

The Washington Small Business Development Center (SBDC), a member of the national America's SBDC program, is governed by a cooperative agreement between WSU, which is the statewide host of the program, and the U.S. Small Business Administration. With more than 35 advisors working in communities throughout the state, the WSU - SBDC collaboration yields meaningful local impact for our local stakeholders and community partners.



WASHINGTON STATE  
UNIVERSITY

# 2022 Client Demographics



## ADDITIONAL INDUSTRIES\*

Real Estate, Rental & Leasing - 1.5%  
 Transportation & Warehousing - 1.3%  
 Finance & Insurance - 1.2%

Wholesale Dealer - 1.3%  
 Management of Companies & Enterprises - 0.5%  
 Research & Development - 0.5%



## GENDER



**19.6%**  
Male



**26.9%**  
Female



**12.6%**  
Male/Female Owned

**40.9%**  
Chose not to respond

## RACE

**0.1%**  
Alaska Native

**6.0%**  
Asian

**8.2%**  
Black or African American

**4.5%**  
Hispanic

**7.0%**  
Multiracial

**1.7%**  
Native American

**0.9%**  
Pacific

**12.9%**  
Unspecified

**58.7%**  
White

## VETERAN



**5.2%**

# Featured Programs and Services



## BUSINESS ADVISING

Our team of certified business advisors and international trade business advisors work together to provide no-cost, one-on-one, confidential business advising that is customized to the needs of each client. Advisors work with businesses at every stage of growth and development and in just about any industry. Whether the business is just starting, seeking capital for growth, bringing new products to market, surviving a pandemic, improving operations, or planning a business succession, SBDC advisors help clients achieve their goals.

SBDC service centers are located in more than 30 communities across the state so that the majority of Washington business owners can access services within a short drive from their home or business. Additionally, advisors utilize technology to engage with clients remotely, which has made connecting easier, more efficient, and safer.



## LIVE AND ONDEMAND TRAINING

SBDC training provides practical, real-life solutions for the most common issues faced by entrepreneurs and established business owners. Participants can access on-demand webinars at their convenience or attend a live webinar on topics of interest. All webinars are facilitated by SBDC advisors with first-hand experience and expertise. They take the time to understand the needs of webinar participants so they can provide assistance that is both relevant and actionable.



## GROW AND SUCCEED THROUGH EXPORTING

SBDC international trade business advisors are dedicated to helping small businesses achieve export success. The Washington SBDC was awarded a Portable Assistance Grant from the SBA. This two-year project is helping small, family-owned wineries, craft breweries, distilleries and cideries across the state explore and implement export programs so that they can diversify their revenue streams and build resiliency.

In 2022, we worked with our partners at the Washington State Department of Agriculture and the Western United States Agricultural Trade Association to plan an inbound trade mission for specialty drink buyers from Hong Kong and China. SBDC clients in Seattle and the surrounding region had an opportunity to showcase their products and meet with potential buyers. Two days of tours and tastings were capped with an SBDC-hosted reception at a family-owned winery in Woodinville.



## Small Business Cybersecurity Webinar Series

Learn to:

- Protect your media
- Identify and authenticate users
- Control physical and digital access
- Maintain information integrity

And hear from subject matter experts!

## CYBERSECURITY INITIATIVE

Cyber-attacks happen every day and while they can be extremely costly to large businesses, they can destroy a small business. Few small business owners have the time or interest to become a cybersecurity expert, but every small business owner must learn the basics for how to protect their data from attack.

In 2022, the SBDC launched an updated cybersecurity training series for Washington small businesses. This four-part webinar series is a combination of cybersecurity presentations, panel discussions with subject matter experts and Q&A. This four-part training series was developed to help small businesses be cyber safe. All program offerings are provided at no-cost to Washington's small businesses.



## GROWTH, SUCCESSION PLANNING TOP PRIORITIES

Listen more than you talk. It's good advice for anyone, but it's particularly important for SBDC advisors. We took that principle to a new level in 2022 when we worked with the Washington State Department of Commerce to commission a Small Business Needs Assessment.

The assessment had multiple objectives, but one top-level objective was to discover what assistance business owners think they will need in 2023. The top five needs in ranked order were: finding new customers; increasing sales; planning for retirement; protecting their business from cyberattack; setting goals for growth.

WSU's Social and Economic Sciences Research Center created the survey instrument and sent it out to a sample size of about 7,000 small businesses representing every region of the state and all industry groups. We also made sure that the sample included businesses owned by people in historically underserved communities.

We know timely technical assistance can change the trajectory of business growth or recovery, so we want to make sure we are truly serving the needs of small business owners.



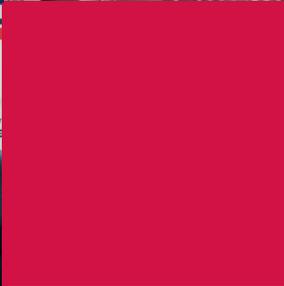
## OUTREACH TO UNDERSERVED COMMUNITIES

For over 40 years, we have been proud to support entrepreneurs and small business owners from every walk of life. SBDC services are available to all, regardless of race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, socio-economic status, age, religious or political beliefs. That said, we know entrepreneurs cannot take advantage of SBDC services if they don't know about SBDC services, and we can do more to build awareness of the SBDC program among those furthest from opportunity.

Thanks to the support of Washington Economic Development Association and other partners, the state legislature's 2022 supplemental operating budget included a first-ever \$1M investment in SBDC core services that enabled us to better address gaps in service. State support enabled us to add advisors in several underserved areas and increase our work with entrepreneurs in BIPOC communities.

# Client Profiles

Owning a small business is challenging, which is only heightened during the stress of a pandemic. The success stories that have emerged from the resulting economic challenges serve as an inspiration to businesses, new and old.



\*Photo Credit Debby Cheng International Examiner



## SBDC CLIENT

Li's Spa

## OWNER

Runli Li

## LOCATION

Kirkland

## LI'S SPA

In June 2021, Runli Li, owner of Li's Spa, got a phone call from someone who told her she had been awarded a grant to help pay business expenses during the pandemic. She thought it was a scam - someone trying to take advantage of an immigrant business owner. Give the money to someone else, she said.

But, Runli needed the money. Several months behind in rent, she had raided her retirement account to help pay operating expenses. Building back after being closed for COVID had been both slow and expensive.

It turns out, the person on the phone was with the Washington State Department of Commerce and she didn't take Runli's suggestion. Instead, she contacted Ellie He, a

business advisor with the Washington SBDC.

Ellie, who speaks Mandarin, called Runli and convinced her that she had indeed been awarded a Working Washington grant from the Department of Commerce. When Ellie told her that the state was offering her \$27,000 to help pay expenses, it was almost beyond belief.

Runli has since become an SBDC client and feels assured that she can always turn to Ellie when she needs advice and support.

*"We couldn't have survived without the help from the SBDC. They saved my business and helped me save nine jobs. My employees are fully aware of that and appreciative too."*

*- Runli Li*

\*Photo Credit Olivia Vanni The Herald



## SBDC CLIENT

James Bay Distillers

## OWNERS

Ernie and Leigh Troth

## LOCATION

Everett

## JAMES BAY DISTILLERS

Ernie and Leigh Troth, owners of James Bay Distillers, relocated from Virginia to British Columbia and finally to Snohomish County in search of a location that would support their dream of producing premium spirits and selling them across the states and around the world.

Securing permits took more than a year, but the Troths were finally able to open their distillery and tasting room at Paine Field in September 2019. It was all systems go, until the pandemic hit, just six months later.

Through the Economic Development Alliance of Skagit County, the Troths learned about the Washington SBDC and reached out to business advisor Janet Toth for help with SBA disaster loans, including the EIDL and the PPP. Janet kept them apprised of deadlines and updates and was a resource for them whenever they had questions.

The Troths successfully applied for disaster relief, but SBDC assistance did not stop there. International trade advisors Ellie He and Allan Peterson began meeting with the Troths as well, and connected them to others in the export ecosystem, including WUSATA and the Washington Department of Agriculture.

James Bays' award-winning whiskeys, gins and vodkas continue to make a splash in international competitions and foreign buyers are taking notice. Ernie is working with buyers in more than seven countries, including Hong Kong, China, Japan, Korea and Taiwan.

*"We are always appreciative of the assistance of SBDC and their capacity for having directed us to very helpful contacts for exports and other requirements."*

*- Ernie Troth*



**SBDC CLIENT**

Keys Plus

**OWNER**

Tabitha Beneke

**LOCATION**

Longview

## KEYS PLUS

When Tabitha Beneke's father passed away in 2012, there was no succession plan for Keys Plus, the locksmith shop he had founded 30 years earlier. Tabitha, whose home is in Illinois, was determined to keep the shop open, if not for herself, then for the employees.

She was fortunate to find a mentor, sounding board and general cheerleader in Jerry Petrick, a business advisor with the SBDC in Longview.

In the early years they would meet once a month and go over profit and loss statements; now they meet about three times a year. His help has been invaluable, Tabitha said.

He helps her think through operational decisions and helps keep her informed about new programs or opportunities. Jerry was the one who first talked with her about becoming a certified women-owned business and he's also the one who told her about the PPP.

Not only has the business survived, the staff has grown from three to five and more growth is on the horizon.

*"Working with the SBDC has been instrumental to our growth. It's just been amazing to work with Jerry."*

- Tabitha Benke



**SBDC CLIENT**

Adventures Underground

**OWNER**

Amanda Divine

**LOCATION**

Richland

## ADVENTURES UNDERGROUND

Adventures Underground, a combination bookstore, game/music/comic/hobby store, podcast, with attached café, is also a popular community gathering spot with a devoted clientele. With 30 employees between the main store and cafe, it is also a challenging business to run.

In 2022, while participating in the SBA THRIVE Emerging Leaders program, Adventures Underground owner Amanda Divine and the other participants were encouraged to reach out to an SBA resource partner.

Divine reached out to the Washington SBDC, and the next day she had an appointment with SBDC business advisor John Morosco. She had two concerns: help pulling together documents to buy a commercial property and help creating better systems to increase profitability in the café.

The market and interest rates have put her property-buying plans on temporary hold,

but when it came to getting help with the café, she couldn't have asked for a better advisor than John, who came to the SBDC after nearly 30 years in the hospitality industry.

Along with other assistance, John provided Amanda and her team new templates for tracking purchases and inventory and took the time to make sure they knew how to use the new tools.

When the time is right to buy property for the store, Amanda said she's glad that John and the SBDC will be there to help.

*"It is very reassuring to be able to have someone on my side who is experienced in areas I am not, and who I don't feel has ulterior motives or just wants to take my money."*

- Amanda Divine



**SBDC CLIENT**

The Lumberyard

**OWNERS**

DJ Goldfinger and Molly Golden

**LOCATION**

Pullman

## THE LUMBERYARD

When COVID forced the closure of Pullman's storied Stubblefield's bar and grill, DJ Goldfinger and Molly Golden were devastated. Not only did they lose their jobs, but the college community lost a gathering spot that WSU students had enjoyed for generations.

Almost immediately, the two began looking for a viable plan B that would allow them to (pretty much) control their own destiny in the hospitality industry.

Eventually they found it at The Lumberyard, another restaurant/bar business that had been struggling and was up for sale. Though they had never owned a business before, the two worked with Aziz Makhani, the SBDC advisor in Pullman, to purchase the venue and rework their business plan to center on renting space to independent food

trucks with a common area for eating and entertainment. The new venue opened in October 2021.

Not only does the business employ three fulltime employees and nearly 40 part-time employees, but it has become an incubator of sorts for food service entrepreneurs.

*"Aziz is an amazing resource and champion for us and our business. He really cares and has many people to network with to help us succeed."*

- Molly Golden



**SBDC CLIENT**

La Cocina

**OWNERS**

Lissette and Cassandra Garay

**LOCATION**

Port Townsend

## LA COCINA

The Napa Valley's loss has been Port Townsend's gain. When the pandemic shut down the hospitality industry in Napa Valley in 2020, Michelin-trained chef Lissette Garay and her partner Cassandra Garay decided to move north to be closer to Cassandra's family and open their own restaurant.

Though they had plenty of experience in hospitality, they had never owned their own business and with their family helping to fund their startup costs, they knew they needed to get it right. In April 2021, while still working through their purchase of an existing sandwich shop that was closing, they enrolled in the Simple Start Business Course offered by the Center for Inclusive Entrepreneurship (CIE).

While working through the course curriculum, the two also met one-on-one with course instructor and SBDC business advisor Rick Dickinson to talk over menu items, pricing strategies, cash flow decisions and more. According to Lissette and Cassandra, the assistance they received

from Rick through the collaboration between the Center for Inclusive Entrepreneurship and the SBDC was invaluable.

La Cocina Port Townsend opened in July 2021 and has a devoted following right from the start. It has been a welcome addition to downtown Port Townsend where Mexican dishes inspired by Lissette's grandmother's recipes draw rave reviews from locals and tourists alike.

*"With one-on-one SBDC advising and CIE group training sessions, we were able to gain tools and receive advice to assist us in opening our first business."*

- Lissette Garay



**SBDC CLIENT**

BBD International

**OWNER**

Richard Brinton

**LOCATION**

Edmonds

## BBD INTERNATIONAL

Richard Brinton, founder and president of BBD International in Edmonds, was the U.S. Small Business Administration Seattle District 2022 Small Business Exporter of the Year.

Founded in 1997, BBD International began exporting construction equipment. Today, Richard's expertise lies in selling military support equipment, providing parts for waterjet cutting machines, and industrial equipment.

Richard began working with SBDC international trade business advisor Ellie He in 2019 after the two met in a lunch line at an international trade compliance workshop in Seattle.

BBD International currently exports to six countries across Asia and the Middle East, including the government of South Korea.

Even though his business was already 20-years old when he started working with Ellie and the SBDC, the benefits have been huge.

In addition to managing his own business, Brinton shares the knowledge he has accumulated during the years. As a domestic consultant, Brinton advises and assists other firms as they navigate export regulations.

*"My advisor has been my first point of contact when I have a question about exporting. She is a great time saver to get to the right information. The SBDC training programs are excellent, and I have participated in many of them."*

- Richard Brinton



**SBDC CLIENT**

True Blue Roofing

**OWNER**

Michael Dechand

**LOCATION**

Maple Valley

## TRUE BLUE ROOFING

When Michael Dechand told his wife Tina that he wanted to leave his job at a roofing company and go out on his own, she was skeptical. Wouldn't he be trading a job with great pay and benefits for a lot of risk and uncertainty? He assured her he had a plan, and with the help of the Washington SBDC, they took the leap.

Within six months of starting the business with Michael managing sales and Tina managing the office, they had revenue of \$500,000. The next year, in 2021, their revenue was \$3.3 million. Midway through 2022, the business employed 14 of its own roofers and seven office staff in sales and marketing and revenue continues to increase.

"But success is not always money," Michael Dechand is quick to assert. "That's part of it; but fulfillment of what you want to do in life, and building a legacy for your family, are part of it too. And so is giving back to my employees and local community. Our company motto is, 'Without you, there is no us.'"

*"People starting a business don't always know all that they will need. More information is always good, and talking with someone like Taryn [SBDC business advisor] helps you know what you need and how to achieve it."*

- Michael Dechand



## VERDE ORGANIC BODY

At Verde Organic Body, a holistic health studio that offers personal training, massage and yoga, client commitment is critical to success, but coaching can be the catalyst that leads to transformation.

And so it is with the Washington SBDC. Verde Organic Body owners Kristina and Michael Orille first became SBDC clients in 2016 while working as sole proprietors. They continued as SBDC clients when they launched Verde Organic Body and opened their own studio in 2019 and they relied on SBDC support when the pandemic hit and they were forced to lay off their entire staff—more than 15 employees at that point.

Rebuilding the business has been a long, hard slog, but in 2023 they are back to 15 employees, their business systems

are more robust than ever and their growth potential is excellent.

In a recent email to Steve Burke, their SBDC advisor, Kristina wrote that the SBDC’s support has been transformational.

### SBDC CLIENT

Verde Organic Body

### OWNERS

Kristina and Michael Orille

### LOCATION

Newcastle

*“Not only have you given me/us guidance, (but) your belief and confidence in the collective ability of our team to reach our goals and succeed amidst the most challenging conditions, has been just as crucial as the hard work we have put in here on the ground.”*

- Kristina Orille



## WEDDERMANN ARCHITECTURE

Over the past dozen years, architect Jennifer Weddermann has grown her team from two part-time assistants working in a 500-square-foot office doing mostly small residential projects, to a team of eight working in 3,000 square feet of office space she owns, with a diverse portfolio of projects including everything from the Hanna Heights multi-unit housing complex in downtown Tacoma to the Kids’ Zone at Point Defiance Zoo and Aquarium.

Building a successful architectural practice is challenging for anyone, but it’s particularly challenging for women. While women graduate from architectural degree programs at roughly the same rate as men, fewer than 20 percent of registered architects are women and only about 10 percent of principal architects or senior partners are women.

Jennifer first contacted SBDC advisor John Rodenberg in 2014 for help getting a loan to buy a building. She got the loan and they continued to work together.

“John became a mentor to me because I didn’t have anyone else,” she said. Over the years, Jennifer talked through numerous challenges and opportunities with her SBDC advisor.

*“To build something from nothing is hard, but whether you’re building a building or a business, having a trusted advisor to talk over decisions with can make all the difference.”*

- Jennifer Weddermann

### SBDC CLIENT

Weddermann Architecture

### OWNER

Jennifer Weddermann

### LOCATION

Tacoma

Single Handed Consulting  
Olympia, WA



# AMERICA'S SBDC WASHINGTON

Contact SBDC today to learn more about our programs and services or to be connected with a certified business advisor.

[www.WSBDC.org](http://www.WSBDC.org)  
[Washington@wsbdc.org](mailto:Washington@wsbdc.org)  
833-492-7232



*The Washington SBDC network, hosted by Washington State University, is an accredited member of America's SBDC. Funded in part through a cooperative agreement with the U.S. Small Business Administration, institutions of higher education, economic development organizations and other public and private funding partners.*

*Washington SBDC services are extended to the public on a non-discriminatory basis. Reasonable accommodations for persons with disabilities will be made if requested at least two weeks in advance. Email or call the Washington SBDC.*