

American Abatement & Demo
Auburn, WA

2024 ANNUAL REPORT

Washington Small Business Development Center



Helping Washington Businesses
Grow & Succeed

Letter from the State Director



KEEPING OUR FOCUS ON WHAT MATTERS

Welcome to the 2024 Washington SBDC annual report. This April will mark my first year as the state director of this incredible network, and just over five years with the organization. I continue to be inspired and grateful of the work we have done and the difference SBDC advisors have made in the lives of their clients and communities.

A sampling of excerpts from our end-of-year client impact survey includes comments such as these:

- Always helpful, enthusiastic, and knowledgeable; SBDC is a key support and resource for my business.
- There has been a wealth of information to help me navigate obstacles of starting a business. My advisor has been there to answer all my questions promptly and effectively.
- I'm grateful for the coaching, encouragement and assistance with developing clear goals and a path to reach them. It was so helpful to have someone to talk with through various challenges. My SBDC advisor helped a daunting series of events become doable.
- Ursula has been a huge part of saving our business. Her guidance, insight, and access to tools have been beyond helpful.
- I would not have gotten started without SBDC. Their workshops and advisors gave me the information and the confidence I needed to get going.
- Jerry was phenomenal. He made me feel at ease—no question was not worth asking. He provided amazing feedback and suggestions. Starting a business can be overwhelming and stressful but he talked me off the ledge.
- Excellent service, excellent knowledge, and professional.
- Having a resource with experience that helps guide important business decisions is invaluable. Our business has grown each year as a result of this valuable resource.

- I would be lost without SBDC advising.
- Ann Zimmerman has been invaluable to me and my business. I would not be in business for a 2nd straight year without her guidance and support!
- Rich Shockley was tremendously helpful in helping me develop my business strategy and plan its execution. Rich is an exceptional business coach!

That was meant to be a short list, but it was hard to stop. Comments like these illustrate why we serve small businesses. SBDC advising makes positive, important and lasting changes.

As you'll see in the following pages, in 2023, SBDC advisors met one-on-one with more than 3,300 business owners. Those business owners credited SBDC advisors with helping them access more than \$103 million in capital and save or create more than 3,900 jobs. SBDC advisors also helped their clients start more than 260 new businesses.

The world is changing at an unusually rapid pace, but the Washington SBDC is as relevant and necessary today as it was when it first began assisting small business owners more than 40 years ago.

On behalf of the entire Washington SBDC network and our clients, I thank you for your ongoing support. As a champion for small businesses, you have made and are continuing to make a difference for business owners, employees, their families and communities across the state.

Kindest regards,

Sheryl McGrath
State Director
Washington Small Business Development Center

Partners in Prosperity

Partners play a significant role in making the work of the Washington SBDC possible. Thanks to our network of partners including institutions of higher education, federal, state and local governments, private organizations, and the SBA, the Washington SBDC provides its services at no-cost to the business owner.

FEDERAL PARTNER



STATEWIDE HOST



CONTRACT PARTNERS:



LOCAL PARTNERS:



2023 by the Numbers

SBDC ASSISTANCE



3,399

Advising Clients



4,861

Training
Attendees



205

Delivered
Training
Events



97%

*Client
Satisfaction
Rate



\$5.62

*Return
on Investment

CLIENT IMPACT



3,917

Created and
Saved Jobs



260

New Business
Starts



\$103M

Raised
New Capital



\$165M

Increased
Sales



\$12.7M

Increased
Export Sales

Client reported impacts and outcomes from 2023

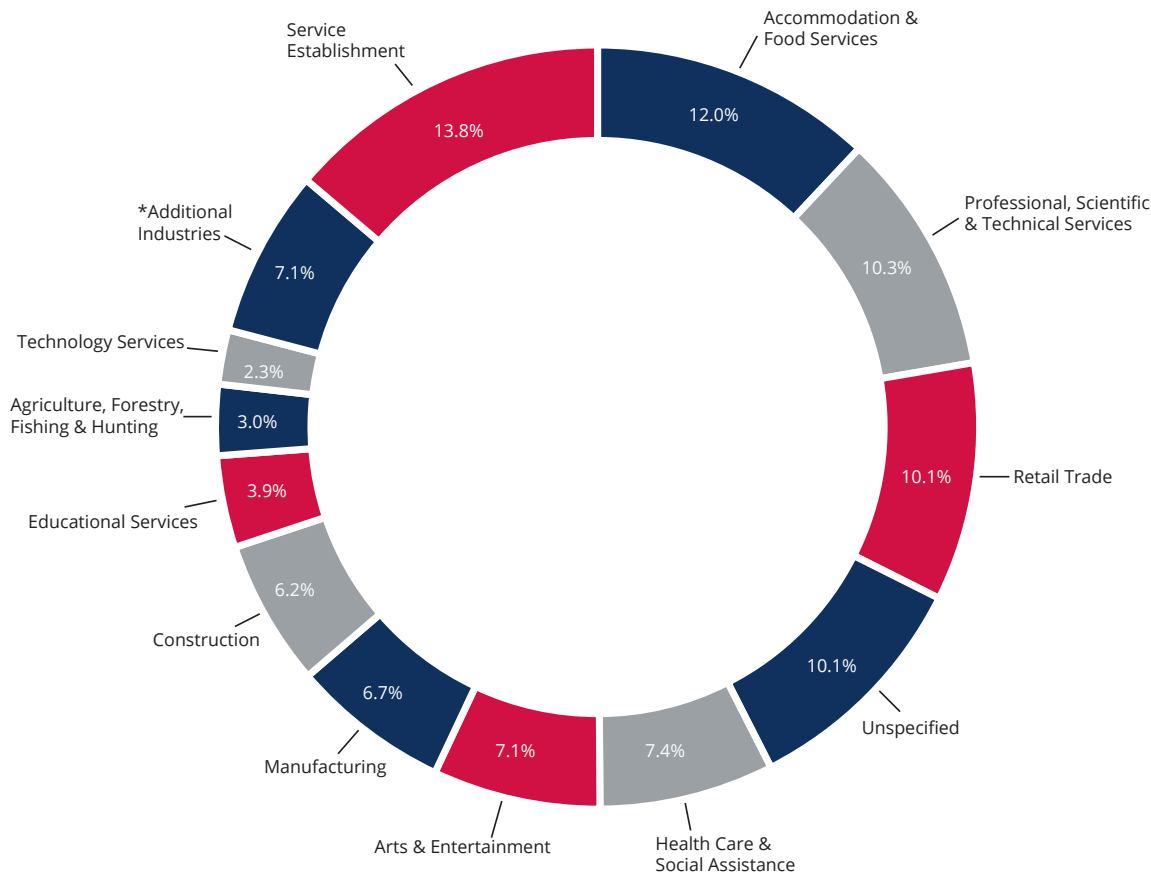
*The "Economic Impact of SBDC Counseling Activities in Washington: 2021-2022," by Dr. James Chrisman of Mississippi State University

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.



2023 Client Demographics



ADDITIONAL INDUSTRIES*

Real Estate, Rental & Leasing – 2.0%
Transportation & Warehousing – 1.9%
Finance & Insurance – 1.1%
Wholesale Dealer – 1.4%
Management of Companies & Enterprises – 0.4%
Research & Development – 0.3%



GENDER



28%

Male



40%

Female



12%

Male/Female Owned

20%

Did not respond

RACE

0.3%

Alaska Native

6.5%

Asian

9.0%

Black or African American

10.4%

Hispanic

0.05%

Middle Eastern

6.1%

Multiracial

1.4%

Native American

0.05%

North African

1.0%

Pacific

9.8%

Unspecified

55.4%

White

VETERAN



7%

Featured Programs and Services



BUSINESS ADVISING

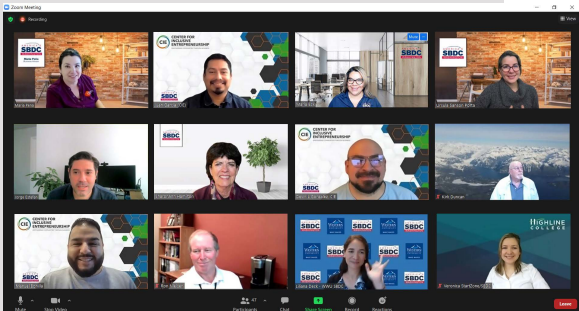
Our team of certified business advisors and international trade business advisors work together to provide no-cost, one-on-one, confidential business advising that is customized to the needs of each client. Advisors work with businesses at every stage of growth and development and in just about any industry. 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 ON-DEMAND 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.



OUTREACH TO UNDERSERVED COMMUNITIES

Over the past several years, the Washington SBDC has been working to expand our ability to serve clients whose primary language is Spanish. Early on, we were fortunate to have several advisors who spoke Spanish, but we now have nearly a dozen advisors who are fully bilingual and bicultural.

Recognizing that conversational Spanish is not the same as business advising, Maria Eck, our coordinator of Hispanic Outreach, decided to set up a weekly meeting for bilingual advisors—and anyone working towards Spanish fluency—to talk in Spanish about their challenges and opportunities and expand their business vocabulary at the same time.

This group has now become the Alliance of Bilingual Business Advisors for the State of Washington, and it brings together bilingual business advisors and community representatives from across the state for a weekly Zoom call.

The purpose of these meetings is to support Latino entrepreneurs and small business owners by sharing essential business information, tools, and resources in both English and Spanish with partners across the state. The Alliance of Bilingual Business Advisors has become an important platform for collaboration among business advisors from different agencies and community stakeholders, enhancing support for the Latino business community.



SUPPORTING BIPOC BUSINESS GROWTH

In late 2022, the Washington SBDC entered into an agreement with Pierce College in Puyallup to support a one-to-one mentoring program for BIPOC business owners in Pierce County and the surrounding region. In April 2023, 25 small business owners graduated from the program and 75 percent of them have since become SBDC clients and are continuing to grow their business.

The mentoring program, known as The Business Collaborative, was created and presented by NEXT Consulting, a South Sound-based consulting firm that works with organizations committed to serving, supporting and empowering people in BIPOC communities. Each program participant was able to access up to 15 hours of one-to-one mentoring to work on their own business growth and attend four in-person events focused on networking and skills development.

All of the program participants identified as a BIPOC (Black, Indigenous and People of Color), nearly 60 percent were women-owned businesses, and 16 percent were owned by Spanish-speaking business owners. At the conclusion of the program, more than half the participants reported increased revenues, four businesses reported doubling their revenue while working with their Business Collaborative mentor, and eight new jobs were created. In addition, two participants opened new businesses and two participants moved into new locations for their business.

The Washington SBDC is continuing to work with Next Consulting and Pierce College to offer another Business Collaborative program in 2024.



GROW AND SUCCEED THROUGH EXPORTING

The Washington SBDC 2023 Specialty Beverage Trade Mission was the lead story in the April 13-27 edition of the Hong Kong Won Ton, a newsletter produced by the U.S. Agricultural Trade Organization (ATO) in Hong Kong. It was the first in-person trade mission in Hong Kong since the start of the pandemic, a fact that was celebrated during a reception at U.S. Consul General Greg May's residence.

Owners of seven artisanal Washington-based wineries, distilleries, cideries or breweries had the opportunity to share their products with buyers in both Hong Kong and Taipei, Taiwan, during the 10-day mission in April.

"It was well worth our time," said Charles Finkel, owner of Pike Brewing in Seattle. "We increased awareness and sales of U.S. products and made friends at the same time."

Ernest Troth, who owns James Bay Distillers with his wife, Leigh, said outbound missions are critical for meeting prospective buyers in person. "We also had the chance to see retail pricing locally and to gauge buyer interest in gin and vodka products," he said.

SBDC international trade advisors Christy Mastin, Ellie He and Allan Peterson led the mission, along with Stacey Dacar from the Washington SBDC Lead Office. Elisa Daun from Washington State Department of Agriculture was a co-leader of the mission. In addition to the ATO and the Washington State Department of Agriculture, the mission also benefited from the support of multiple agencies or organizations, including the Export Finance Assistance Center of Washington, the Washington State Department of Commerce and the U.S. Commercial Service.

A hallmark of SBDC trade missions is that the small business owners spend weeks if not months working with an SBDC trade advisor in advance of the trip, making sure that they are export ready and prepared to engage in productive discussions with local buyers.

"The trade mission is just one piece of a comprehensive effort to develop a productive and profitable export plan," said Peterson, the SBDC international trade advisor in Moses Lake. "A lot of work goes into planning the trip and a lot more work will go into follow up meetings that, we hope, will lead to ongoing relationships."



Client Profiles

Owning a small business is challenging. Growing it can be complex.

SBDC has helped thousands of businesses – here are a few inspirational stories from 2023



SBDC CLIENT

Northshore Automotive

OWNER

Ryan Hoover

LOCATION

Federal Way

NORTHSHORE AUTOMOTIVE

In 2020, business owner Ryan Hoover was having a somewhat frustrating conversation with a potential lender over his plan to buy a second business for about \$300,000, when the lender suggested he meet with SBDC business advisor Rich Shockley. The suggestion ranks with the best advice Hoover ever got.

Together, Shockley and Hoover dug into the data, and then got more data from the Washington SBDC Market Intelligence Research Team. In the end, Hoover lost interest in the first property and, with Shockley's assistance and to Hoover's amazement, he was able to secure an SBA loan to purchase Northshore Automotive in Federal Way for \$1.7 million.

The first shop would have been a money pit

that could have dragged down his existing business, Hoover said, but Northshore Automotive was in good shape with great employees. The cost was higher than he thought he could afford, but the spreadsheets he created with Shockley said otherwise, and it turns out they were right. Today both shops are thriving and Hoover is looking to expand operations yet again.

"This wouldn't have happened for me without Rich and the Washington SBDC."

- Ryan Hoover



SBDC CLIENT

American Abatement & Demo

OWNERS

Mari and Aaron Borrero

LOCATION

Auburn

AMERICAN ABATEMENT & DEMO

Over the past several years, Hispanic entrepreneurs have been starting businesses at a faster rate than entrepreneurs in other demographic categories, but typically, those businesses start small and stay small.

American Abatement and Demo, started in 2017 by Mari and Aaron Borrero, is a woman-owned, veteran-owned business that has defied the odds. Today American Abatement and Demo has more than a dozen employees and annual revenue over \$2 million.

Mari, a former teacher, has been tireless in seeking out information, resources and training to help scale the business, but she credits working with SBDC advisor Kevin Grossman with keeping her on track and moving forward.

"I feel like I have the support (of the entire SBDC) network to help me," she said. "The resources are there, but you've got to do the work."

"Sometimes you don't need someone to hold your hand. Sometimes you need someone to challenge you."

- Mari Borrero



SBDC CLIENT

Sensory Tool House

OWNER

Katie McMurray

LOCATION

Lacey

SENSORY TOOL HOUSE

Sensory Tool House was the 2023 Washington SBDC Star Client of the Year. Owner Katie McMurray started Sensory Tool House in 2021 to provide those who are neurodivergent with sensory support needs and their caregivers a physical space where they can explore sensory support tools and equipment before they purchase them.

State Director Sheryl McGrath lauded McMurray for finding a way to do well by doing good. "Not only is Katie providing products and services that address an incredible need," she said, "but she is using her platform to advocate for creating inclusive space for neurodiversity at school, at work and in the community."

In addition to running the store with a team of more than a dozen employees, nearly all of whom identify as neurodivergent, McMurray also consults on sensory room design and

offers training and consultations to support a neurodivergent workforce.

McMurray credits SBDC business advisor Jennifer Dye with providing assistance in multiple areas, from market research to HR decisions and cashflow analysis.

"Having an advisor available to answer your toughest questions, give guidance, and listen to your challenges and successes without an ulterior motive, is incredibly valuable. I always recommend those exploring or running a business contact an SBDC because having a place to go when things are tough or challenging is priceless."

- Katie McMurray



SBDC CLIENT

Acts Pharmacy and Healthcare Services

OWNERS

Jazel and Wilbur Bautista

LOCATION

Tacoma

ACTS PHARMACY AND HEALTHCARE SERVICES

Jazel and Wilbur Bautista were working long hours—she as a pharmacist and he as a medical technologist—and also juggling the demands of family life, when an impossible dream took hold. What if they opened their own, independent pharmacy, which would give them more control over their schedules, more freedom to provide personalized services to their community and the ability to invest more in their economic livelihood?

Their dream became a reality when they opened ACTS Pharmacy in Tacoma in 2018. They kept their dream alive—with resourcefulness, adaptability and sacrifice—during the pandemic. (They were one of the first pharmacies in Tacoma to offer the COVID vaccine.) But, they knew the business was surviving, not thriving.

In 2020 they enrolled in the SBA T.H.R.I.V.E. program where they met SBDC business advisor Steve Burke, who has worked with them on cashflow management and financial discipline. Recently, Burke introduced the Bautistas to SBDC business advisor Scott Glennie, who has extensive experience

in healthcare finance. Glennie has been working with them on pricing strategies to ensure they have a true understanding of the cost of doing business.

With SBDC assistance, the Bautistas are building a stronger, more resilient business that will allow them to expand services to their customers and their community.

"The SBDC has great business coaches. All business owners should avail themselves of SBDC services. It's the only way to learn so much that you need to know."

- Wilbur Bautista



SBDC CLIENT

SASH Painting and Color Consultation

OWNER

Susan Basher

LOCATION

Burien

SASH PAINTING AND COLOR CONSULTATION

When the recession hit in 2007, Susan Basher, a single mother of two, needed job flexibility and future growth potential. Her brother, a general contractor, suggested that with her background in sales and interior design, along with her painting skills, she could open her own business. He sent her some clients and as it turned out, she was good at it. Word-of-mouth referrals gave her steady work as a sole proprietor for years.

Then, in late 2014, she reached out to Rich Shockley, the SBDC advisor at Highline College, for help growing her business. Together they worked through the transition to an employer firm, including how much each employee would cost, and how much she would have to increase sales to pay for the additional staff. They also worked on her marketing plan and how to manage her client list.

By 2016 she was able to step back from the actual painting and spend more time developing her business, and Shockley remained a trusted advisor. When the pandemic hit in 2020, he helped her secure COVID relief funding. After more than 15 years in business, Basher says 2023 was her best year yet. She has four full-time employees who do wonderful work and she's looking forward to a happy and prosperous 2024.

"It is like having a personal trainer for your business. Rich's assistance is invaluable."

- Susan Basher



SBDC CLIENT

Bellingham BJJ

OWNER

Jeff Shaw

LOCATION

Bellingham

BELLINGHAM BJJ

When Jeff Shaw first started thinking about opening a school for Brazilian Jui-Jitsu, he thought it would be a side-hustle—a break-even proposition that would allow him to continue training at the same level he enjoyed while living in North Carolina. His SBDC business advisor Sherri Daymon supported his "start small" approach, but encouraged him to think bigger. Turns out she was right.

Five years after opening Bellingham BJJ, Shaw has two full-time employees, ten part-time instructors and more than 200 students. He was able to quit his day job—as deputy communications director for an environmental non-profit—in 2022.

Shaw said he was confident of his marketing and communication skills, but his SBDC advisor was his go-to resource for questions about how to grow and sustain his business, including everything from when to hire a CPA to how to manage employee benefits.

"The SBDC has been instrumental to the survival, success and growth of our business."

- Jeff Shaw



SBDC CLIENT

Bhumi Garden Designs

OWNER

Anju Neilju

LOCATION

Redmond

BHUMI GARDEN DESIGNS

In 2011, Anju Neilju, a dedicated homemaker for 15 years and the daughter of a lively Southern Indian spice planter, found herself in a lively chat about the health benefits of dining on a banana leaf—a cherished tradition close to her heart. Struggling to recall specifics, she stumbled upon a horticulture degree catalog from Lake Washington Institute of Technology that very day. Seeing it as a "sign from the universe," she enrolled immediately.

Neilju excelled in the course, and discovered a talent for transforming landscapes into vibrant gardens. In 2013, she became a certified professional horticulturalist with a dream of owning her own business. The challenge? Shaping this green passion into a thriving business. Enter Giselle Saguid, an SBDC business advisor in Everett, who became Neilju's trusted advisor for the

creation of Bhumi Garden Designs. Saguid assisted Neilju with her evolution from sole proprietor to an LLC, and provided information and resources to help with marketing, pricing strategies, and website design.

With heartfelt gratitude, Anju applauds the SBDC and Giselle Saguid for helping her transform her dreams into a reality that blossoms. She wholeheartedly recommends SBDC to friends for their business needs.

"SBDC is the powerhouse that fueled my journey from passion to triumphant business success—a force to be reckoned with!"

- Anju Neilju



SBDC CLIENT

Maren-Go Solutions

CEO

Christopher Thobaben

LOCATION

Vancouver

MAREN-GO SOLUTIONS

Arguably the most dangerous place to be in any battle is on the supply line, getting food and equipment from a secure location (typically an airstrip or airport) to the troops in the field. Christopher Thobaben was a logistics expert with the U.S. Marine Corps, including two tours in Iraq during Operation Iraqi Freedom, and the experience—as you might imagine—was a defining one.

Today Thobaben continues to serve in the USMC Reserve and is CEO of Maren-go, a company committed to creating safer, more secure logistics support using autonomous vehicles and other advanced technology.

Thobaben first reached out to the SBDC in 2017 for startup assistance, and has returned to the SBDC for assistance working

through new challenges and opportunities. Maren-go continues to focus on domestic airfield applications, including deliveries to maintenance crews, perimeter protection, foreign object detection and collection, and mowing and plowing. With SBDC assistance their export potential is also gaining traction.

"Now I don't feel intimidated when people talk about ITAR. [My SBDC advisor] gave me the confidence that we could engage with these foreign markets and be a disruptive force."

- Christopher Thobaben



SBDC CLIENT

D'Avanzo's Family Kitchen

OWNERS

Shannon and Phil D'Avanzo

LOCATION

Goldendale

D'AVANZO'S FAMILY KITCHEN

When Shannon D'Avanzo and her husband, Phil, moved to Goldendale in 2021, Shannon's plan was to leave corporate retail and open a restaurant. She had a business license and a location by mid 2022, but then progress stalled. She needed a loan for startup costs, but she couldn't get a loan without detailed financial projections.

That's when she started meeting with Lorena Lowell, the SBDC advisor who serves Klickitat and Skamania counties. Breaking down the cost of running a restaurant with Lowell was overwhelming, D'Avanzo said, but it was also exactly the information she needed.

In the end, the D'Avanzos self-financed their business—but with a clear understanding of what was at stake—and were able to start

serving meals in December 2022. Almost immediately they expanded their hours and added employees, which now total ten. With SBDC assistance, the D'Avanzos are working on yet another business startup, which bring their total to three, and counting.

"I didn't realize how many people would be so thankful to have a new restaurant in a small town. People thank me all the time and I didn't expect that."

- Shannon D'Avanzo



SBDC CLIENT

Ponderosa Lawn & Plow

OWNERS

Christina Sodemann-Perkins and Dale Perkins

LOCATION

Spokane Valley

PONDEROSA LAWN & PLOW

Christina Sodemann-Perkins, an office manager, and her husband Dale Perkins, a commercial truck driver, had long wanted to stop working for others and open their own business, but the time never seemed quite right.

Then, in 2019, with their young adult children out of the house, Dale started doing lawn care and plowing on the side, with an eye toward finally opening a family business. When the pandemic hit in 2020, they decided not to make any big changes.

But, in early 2022, the couple ran the numbers and decided it was time for them both to focus full-time on Ponderosa Lawn and Plow. Sodemann-Perkins reached out to SBDC business advisor Lorena

Lowell for assistance with working capital and purchasing equipment. Talking with Lowell helped her strengthen her financial reporting and put together more reliable projections, Sodemann-Perkins said.

Opening their own business in their 40s was a dream come true, Sodemann-Perkins said, but it was also stressful. Having Lowell in their corner, for business advice and for support, has made a huge difference.

"This is the happiest we have ever been."

- Christina Sodemann-Perkins

Sensory Tool House
Lacey, 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
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.

