Small business is no small task.
So Progressive offers commercial auto and business insurance that makes protecting yours no big deal.
Local Agent | ProgressiveCommercial.com
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Small Business Experts YOU Can Bank On!
Business Banking Solutions

BankVista

Minnesota SBA Lender of the Year
‘16, ‘17, ‘18, ‘19

bankvista.com

20th Anniversary

BankVista
Independent Community Bank


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Reach an unparalleled audience of small business owners with the U.S. Small Business Administration’s Small Business Resource Guide.

contact info@newsouthmediainc.com

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Printed in the United States of America.

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Welcome to the 2020 edition of the U.S. Small Business Administration Minnesota Small Business Resource Guide. The SBA helps make the American dream of small business ownership a reality. We are the only federal agency dedicated to helping our 30 million small businesses start, grow, expand, or recover after a disaster. The SBA Minnesota District Office works with an extensive network of business advisers and lenders to help our state’s 515,000 small businesses at every stage of development.

To get started, visit an SBA office or one of our SBA Resource Partners. Starting on pg. 9 you will find listings for free or low-cost business advisers, which includes Small Business Development Centers, SCORE mentors, Women’s Business Centers, and the Veterans Business Outreach Center. Interested in small business financing? Find out if SBA-backed financing is right for you by consulting with an SBA specialist at one of our partner lending institutions, listed in the green Funding Programs section. This guide also details SBA disaster assistance loans and SBA-backed loans exclusively for small business exporting. If you’re interested in getting started in government contracting, read about SBA certifications and our business development programs. SBA programs and services help you better compete in the public marketplace.

We’re also helping create economic possibility in low-income communities. The SBA works with the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Affairs to increase investments in Opportunity Zones located in our district, often expanding from Historically Underutilized Business Zones, HUBZones. Stay up to date on SBA events near you and get valuable local business information by following us on Twitter at @SBA_Minnesota. Register for email updates at sba.gov/updates. Use our Small Business Resource Guide to power your dream of starting, growing, or expanding your small business in Minnesota.

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The SBA Minnesota District Office

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LOCAL BUSINESS ASSISTANCE

How We Did It

Made to Last

Joyce and Jerado Reynolds used SBA support to succeed.

Written by Micaela Morrissette
R
eynolds Welding & Fabrication has grown steadily, building a loyal customer base, since Jerado Reynolds founded the company in 2005.

“At first the company was just Jerado,” recalls his wife and co-owner, Joyce Reynolds. “Then it was him and me part time.” During the day she worked as a nurse and spent her evenings doing all the company’s paperwork. The Reynolds sank everything they earned into the business—money, time, and energy. She remembers with pride helping Jerado weld a stair railing at a local school. Her son later attended that same school, and she watched her child and others using the rail, benefiting from the hard work the couple did together. It was then Joyce decided as much as she loved her day job, she wanted to devote herself full time to the family business in Windsor, Connecticut. She wanted to work side-by-side with her husband, fully focused on administration and business growth. As they both hoped, word of mouth spread; clients made referrals. Joyce was soon overwhelmed with paperwork. They brought on two employees—doubling up in the busy seasons. They were able to maintain four full-time employees by 2009. After this, Joyce says, they saw that “things were not moving.” She wanted to scale up.

Challenge
The company wasn’t growing in part because it wasn’t certified with the state department of transportation or prequalified with the Connecticut State Department of Administrative Services, Joyce says. She decided to tackle the certification problem full time, leaving her nursing career. This was the change she’d been wanting to make, but since her background was in health care, Joyce didn’t feel fluent in the languages of construction or business. Joyce wanted to learn, and she had incentive: they needed the certifications to bid on bigger jobs. “Never be afraid to ask questions,” she says. Joyce needed to find people with answers.

Solution
She and Jerado connected with the University of Hartford Entrepreneurial Center & Women’s Business Center, an SBA Resource Partner, where “from day one it was, Eureka! Everyone wanted to see us win.” Women entrepreneurs receive essential business counseling and training from this national network of community–based centers. Most helpful was the detailed personal attention available through free one-on-one business counseling. Joyce also learned about workshops offered by providers like the Metropolitan District, a Connecticut nonprofit municipal corporation offering water and sewer services. At a meet-and-greet, Joyce understood how much the SBA could help her business. An SBA professional walked Joyce through the extensive paperwork and, crucially, helped her register the company in the System for Award Management (sam.gov), positioning the company for new federal contracts.

“Resources like the Entrepreneurial Center and the SBA will train you from bottom to top,” Joyce says. “They have finance classes that open your eyes regarding taxes. You’ll learn how to register your business. They’ll help with a contract or your website or accountability statements. Everything!”

Before the SBA, Reynolds Welding attempted the DOT certification on five separate occasions, always falling short because the process was so complicated. Joyce secured the certification with SBA guidance on the first attempt.

Benefit
Reynolds Welding now employs more than 15 workers, constructing stairs, rails, structural beams, and columns throughout the region. Jerado is working on two bridges—a lifelong dream. Joyce continues to move forward, getting Reynolds qualified for the SBA 8(a) Business Development Program, which provides free business development education to small businesses so they can better compete in the public sector. “When I came on full time, I set a goal for what I would like for the company, and I’ve achieved 80% of that,” Joyce says. When she secures 8(a) certification for Reynolds, she’ll have hit all her objectives. Then, she admits, she’ll probably come up with some new ones.
SBA Resource Partners

No matter your industry, location, or experience, if you have a dream, the SBA is here to help you achieve it. Our SBA Resource Partners offer mentoring, counseling, and training to help you startup and thrive at all stages of the business life cycle. These independent organizations operating across the United States and U.S. territories are funded through SBA cooperative agreements or grants.

### SM Small Business Development Centers

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>950+</td>
<td>Small Business Development Centers</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Achieve your dream of business ownership and remain competitive in an ever-changing global economy with assistance from your local SBDC. Access free counseling and free or low-cost training on topics like regulatory compliance, technology development, and international trade. Find an SBDC adviser at [sba.gov/sbdc](http://sba.gov/sbdc).

### SCORE

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>300+</td>
<td>SCORE chapters</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Join the ranks of other business owners who have experienced higher revenues and increased growth thanks to SCORE, the nation’s largest network of volunteer business mentors. Experienced executives share real-world knowledge to fit your busy schedule. SCORE mentors are available for free as often as you need, in person, via email or over video chat. Find a mentor at [sba.gov/score](http://sba.gov/score).

### Women’s Business Centers

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>100+</td>
<td>Women’s Business Centers</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Women entrepreneurs receive essential business counseling and training from this national network of community-based centers. Each center tailors its services to help you navigate the challenges women often face when starting or growing a business. To learn about SBA resources for women visit [sba.gov/women](http://sba.gov/women).

### Veterans Business Outreach Centers

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>20+</td>
<td>Veterans Business Outreach Centers</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Veteran and military entrepreneurs receive business training, counseling, and referrals to other SBA Resource Partners at a Veterans Business Outreach Center, [sba.gov/vboc](http://sba.gov/vboc). Receive procurement guidance to better compete for government contracts. VBOCs also serve active duty service members, National Guard or Reserve members, veterans of any era, and military spouses.
Our Local SBA Resource Partners

SBA’s Resource Partners are independent organizations funded through SBA cooperative agreements or grants.

Small Business Development Centers

Northwest Region
Northwest Minnesota Foundation
Bemidji
(218) 755-4255
nwsbdc.org

Northeast Region
Northland Foundation
Duluth
(218) 726-7298
nesbdc.org

West Central Region
Concordia College
Moorhead
(218) 299-3037
westcentralmnsbdc.com

North Central Region
Central Lakes College
Brainerd
(218) 855-8140
clcmn.edu/small-business-development-center

Central Region
St. Cloud State University
St. Cloud
(320) 308-4842
stcloudstate.edu/sbdc

Southwest Region
Southwest Minnesota State University
Marshall
(507) 537-7386
sbdcassistance.com

South Central Region
Minnesota State University-Mankato
Mankato
(507) 389-8875
myminnesotabusiness.com

Southeast Region
Rochester Community and Technical College
Rochester
(507) 285-7536
rochestersbdc.com

Twin Cities Metro
University of St. Thomas
Minneapolis
(651) 962-4500
stthomas.edu/sbdc

Lead Center St. Paul
Department of Employment and Economic Development
(877) 653-8333
mn.gov/deed/business/help/sbdc

Women’s Business Centers

Entrepreneur Fund
Women’s Business Alliance
entrepreneurfund.org/womens-business-alliance
Duluth (218) 623-5730
Little Falls (218) 735-6033

WomenVenture
Serving the twin cities metro area
(612) 224-9540
womenventure.org

Adelle Starin is growing Babies on Broadway in Little Falls, MN thanks to guidance from the Women’s Business Alliance, an SBA Resource Partner.

COURTESY OF THE SBA
LOCAL BUSINESS ASSISTANCE

SCORE
Visit sba.gov/score to start working on your business goals. Contact your local office to schedule an appointment.

Central MN-St. Cloud
(320) 240-1332
centralminnesota.score.org

Minneapolis
(952) 938-4570
minneapolis.score.org

Southeast MN–Rochester
(507) 200-0760
seminnesota.score.org

South Central–Owatonna
(507) 455-3215 x124
southcentralminnesota.score.org

South Metro–Burnsville
(952) 890-7020
southmetro.score.org

St. Paul
(651) 632-8937
stpaul.score.org

SBA-backed financing helped Christine Lantinen scale up Maud Borup Inc., a retail candy company in Plymouth, MN. A U.S. Army veteran, Christine focused her business on selling giftable confections wholesale to specialty and mass retailers, including Whole Foods and Target. The SBA Emerging Leaders program helped her create a plan to purchase a manufacturing facility in LeCenter and create sustainable plant-based Easter eggs. She employs over 100.

COURTESY OF MAUD BORUP INC.

Veterans Business Outreach Center
Veteran entrepreneurs or small business owners can receive business training, counseling and mentoring, and referrals to other SBA Resource Partners at a Veterans Business Outreach Center, sba.gov/vboc. This is also the place to receive procurement guidance, which can help your business better compete for government contracts.

Wisconsin Women’s Business Initiative Corp.
(414) 395-4560
wwbic.com/veterans
Your Advocates

The SBA offices of advocacy and ombudsman are independent voices for small business within the federal government.

**Advocacy**
When you need a voice within the federal government for your interests as a small business owner, the SBA’s regional advocates are here to assist. The advocates analyze the effects of proposed regulations and consider alternatives that minimize the economic burden on small businesses, governmental jurisdictions, and nonprofits. Find your regional advocate at [sba.gov/advocacy](http://sba.gov/advocacy).

Your advocate helps with these small business issues:
- if your business could be negatively affected by regulations proposed by the government
- if you have contracting issues with a federal agency
- when you need economic and small business statistics

The SBA’s Office of Advocacy also independently represents small business and advances its concerns before Congress, the White House, federal agencies, federal courts, and state policy makers.

**Ombudsman**
Entrepreneurs who have an issue with an existing federal regulation or policy can receive assistance from the SBA’s national ombudsman.

The ombudsman’s office can help you:
- resolve regulatory disputes with federal agencies
- reduce unfair penalties and fines
- seek remedies when rules are inconsistently applied
- recover payment for services done by government contractors

To report how a proposed federal regulation could unfairly affect you, find your regional SBA advocate at [sba.gov/advocacy](http://sba.gov/advocacy).

To submit a comment about how your business has been hurt by an existing regulation, visit [sba.gov/ombudsman/comments](http://sba.gov/ombudsman/comments).

Make your voice heard by participating in a Regional Regulatory Enforcement Fairness Roundtable or a public hearing hosted by the SBA’s national ombudsman. These events are posted periodically on the ombudsman website, [sba.gov/ombudsman](http://sba.gov/ombudsman).

To submit a comment or complaint through the online form, visit [sba.gov/ombudsman/comments](http://sba.gov/ombudsman/comments). Your concerns will be directed to the appropriate federal agency for review. The SBA will collaborate with you and the agency to help resolve the issue.
How to Start a Business in Minnesota

Thinking of starting a business? Here are the nuts & bolts.

The Startup Logistics
Even if you’re running a home-based business, you will have to comply with many local, state, and federal regulations. Do not ignore regulatory details. You may avoid some red tape in the beginning, but your lack of compliance could become an obstacle as your business grows. Taking the time to research regulations is as important as knowing your market. Carefully investigate the laws affecting your industry. Being out of compliance could leave you unprotected legally, lead to expensive penalties, and jeopardize your business.

Market Research
Need to do research on your clients and location? View consumer and business data for your area using the Census Business Builder: Small Business Edition, https://cbb.census.gov/sbe. Filter your search by business type and location to view data on your potential customers, including consumer spending, and a summary of existing businesses, available as a map and a report.

Business License & Zoning
Licenses are typically administered by a variety of state and local departments. It is important to consider zoning regulations when choosing a site for your business. Contact the local business license office where you plan to locate your business. You may not be permitted to conduct business out of your home or engage in industrial activity in a retail district.

- Minnesota Department of Employment and Economic Development
  mn.gov/deed/business > starting a business > legal and regulatory

- Minnesota Sales and Use Tax Permits
  revenue.state.mn.us/businesses

- Minnesota Department of Commerce-Franchises
  mn.gov/commerce/industries > securities, franchises and subdivided lands

Name Registration
Register your business name with the county clerk where your business is located. If you’re a corporation, also register with the state. sos.state.mn.us

Taxes
As a business owner, you should know your federal tax responsibilities and make some business decisions to comply with certain tax requirements. The IRS Small Business and Self-Employed Tax Center, go.usa.gov/xPxyR, offers information on a
variety of topics including: obtaining an Employer Identification Number, paying and filing income tax, virtual workshops, forms, and publications.

As the IRS continues to implement some of the Tax Cuts and Jobs Act provisions, your tax obligations may change. Visit the Tax Reform Provisions that Affect Businesses page on irs.gov for the latest tax reform updates that affect your bottom line.

IRS Tax Assistance Centers
(844) 545-5640 to schedule an appointment

Bloomington
1550 American Blvd. E., suite 700
(763) 347-7509

Duluth
515 W. First St.
(218) 626-1624

Mankato
1921 Excel Drive
(507) 513-6990

St. Cloud
1010 W. Saint Germain St.
(320) 251-9261

St. Paul
430 N. Wabasha St.
(651) 312-8082

State Taxes
Minnesota Department of Revenue
revenue.state.mn.us

Social Security
If you have any employees, including officers of a corporation but not the sole proprietor or partners, you must make periodic payments, and/or file quarterly reports about payroll taxes and other mandatory deductions. You can contact the IRS or the Social Security Administration for information, assistance, and forms, at (800) 772-1213 or visit socialsecurity.gov/employer. You can file W-2s online or verify job seekers through the Social Security Number Verification Service.

Employment Eligibility Verification
The Federal Immigration Reform and Control Act of 1986 requires employers to verify employment eligibility of new employees. The law obligates an employer to process Employment Eligibility Verification Form I-9. The U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Service offers information and assistance through uscis.gov/i-9-central. For forms call (800) 870-3676. For the employer hotline call (888) 464-4218 or email I-9central@dhs.gov.

E-Verify, operated by the Department of Homeland Security in partnership with the Social Security Administration, electronically verifies the Social Security number and employment eligibility information reported on Form I-9. It’s the quickest way for employers to determine the employment eligibility of new hires. Visit e-verify.gov, call (888) 464-4218 or email e-verify@dhs.gov.

Health & Safety
All businesses with employees are required to comply with state and federal regulations regarding the protection of employees, visit dol.gov for information. The Occupational Safety and Health Administration provides information on the specific health and
LOCAL BUSINESS ASSISTANCE

Minnesota Department of Public Safety
dps.mn.gov/pages/default.aspx

Minnesota Department of Health
health.state.mn.us/index.html

Minnesota Unemployment Insurance
uimn.org

Workers Compensation in Minnesota
dli.mn.gov/business/workers-compensation-businesses

Minnesota OSHA
dli.mn.gov/business/safety-and-health-work

Department of Labor
443 Lafayette Road N., St. Paul
(800) 342-5354

Vocational Rehabilitation
616 America Ave. NW, suite 300, Bemidji
(888) 234-1116

Minnesota OSHA and Workers’ Compensation
525 Lake Ave. S., suite 330, Duluth
(218) 733-7810

Minnesota OSHA and Vocational Rehabilitation
Mankato
12 Civic Center Plaza, suite 1650
(877) 470-6742

Rochester
Atrium Professional Building
401 16th St. SE
(877) 470-6742

St. Cloud
3400 First St. N., suite 405
(877) 470-6742

Employee Insurance
Check with your state laws to see if you are required to provide unemployment or workers’ compensation insurance for your employees. For health insurance options, call the Small Business Health Options Program at (800) 706-7893 or visit healthcare.gov/small-businesses/employers.

Department of Labor Association Health Plans allow small businesses, including self-employed workers, to band together by geography or industry to obtain healthcare coverage as if they were a single large employer. For information, visit dol.gov/general/topic/association-health-plans.

Minnesota Commerce Department
mn.gov/commerce/industries > Insurance > small businesses

Environmental Regulations
State assistance is available for small businesses that must comply with environmental regulations under the Clean Air Act. State Small Business Environmental Assistance programs provide free and confidential assistance to help small business owners understand and comply with complex environmental regulations and permitting requirements. These state programs can help businesses reduce emissions at the source, often reducing regulatory burden and saving you money. To learn more about these free services visit nationalsheap.org/states/list. Free and confidential services from the Minnesota Small Business Environmental Assistance Program help businesses comply with environmental rules, reduce wastes and emissions, and reduce regulatory obligations. Learn more at pca.state.mn.us/smallbizhelp or by calling (800) 657-3938.

Accessibility & ADA Compliance
For assistance with the Americans with Disabilities Act, call the ADA Center at (800) 949-4232 or the Department of Justice at (800) 514-0301. Direct questions about accessible design and the ADA standards to the U.S. Access Board at (800) 872-2253, TTY (800) 993-2822, ta@access-board.gov or visit access-board.gov.

Child Support
Employers are essential to the success of the child support program and are responsible for collecting 75% of support nationwide through payroll deductions. The Office of Child Support Enforcement at Health and Human Services offers employers step-by-step instructions for processing income withholding orders for child support. Download the fact sheet about the Employer’s Role in the Child Support Program at the Office of Child Support Enforcement’s website at acf.hhs.gov/programs/css > employer responsibilities. You can also find information about other employer responsibilities and tools that can make meeting those responsibilities easier, such as electronic income withholding orders and the Child Support Portal. Send questions to employerservices@acf.hhs.gov.

Intellectual Property
Patents, trademarks, and copyrights are types of intellectual property that serve to protect creations and innovations. The United States Patent and Trademark Office is the federal agency that grants U.S. patents and registers trademarks. For information and resources about U.S. patents and federally registered trademarks consult uspto.gov. Call the patent and trademark office help center at (800) 786-9199 or visit your nearest office at Elijah J. McCoy Midwest Regional Office in Detroit, Michigan, uspto.gov/detroit.

A patent for an invention is the grant of a property right to an inventor, issued by the U.S. patent office. The right conferred by the patent grant is the right to exclude others from making, using, offering for sale, or selling the invention in the United States or importing the invention into the country. For information visit uspto.gov/inventors.

There are three types of patents:
• Utility patents may be granted to anyone who invents or discovers any new and useful process, machine, manufacture, or composition of matter, or any new and useful improvement.
• Design patents may be granted to anyone who invents a new, original, and ornamental design for an article of manufacture.
• Plant patents may be granted to anyone who invents or discovers and asexually reproduces any distinct and new variety of plant, other than a tuber propagated plant or a plant found in an uncultivated state.

A trademark or service mark includes any word, name, symbol,
Mohamed Haji, owner of Haji’s Towing Service, received assistance and help purchasing his first tow truck from SBA participating microlender African Development Center.

device, or any combination, used or intended to be used to identify and distinguish the goods/services of one seller or provider from those of others and to indicate the source of the goods/services. Trademarks and service marks may be registered at both the state and federal level. The U.S. Patent and Trademark Office only registers federal trademarks and service marks. Federally registered trademarks may conflict with and supersede those registered only at the state level. Visit uspto.gov/trademarks.

State Trademarks
Registering your trademark or service mark with the Minnesota Secretary of State’s office does not copyright your mark, it only registers it to ensure it is officially recognized with the state of Minnesota.
sos.state.mn.us > how to register trademarks and service marks

Copyrights protect original works of authorship including literary, dramatic, musical and artistic, and certain other intellectual works. Copyrights do not protect facts, ideas, and systems, although they may protect the way they are expressed. For general information contact:

» U.S. Copyright Office
U.S. Library of Congress
James Madison Memorial Building
101 Independence Ave. SE
Washington, DC
(202) 707-3000 or toll free (877) 476-0778
copyright.gov

Chambers of Commerce
For a listing of Minnesota chambers, visit mnchamberexecutives.com
Minnesota Chamber
mnchamber.com
Minnesota Black Chamber
mnblackchamber.org
Minnesota Hmong Chamber
mnhmongchamber.org
Latino Chamber
latinochambermn.com
Minnesota American Indian Chamber
maicc.org
Quorum-Minnesota LGBTQ Chamber
twincitiesquorum.com

Grow Minnesota is a partnership of 80 chambers conducting comprehensive one-on-one site visits with businesses each year, tracking business conditions, collecting data on what it takes for businesses to stay and grow in Minnesota and identifying areas where they can provide solutions to business concerns. Learn more at mnchamber.com.
Economic Development

Better Business Bureau
bbb.org

For state assistance with business expansion, international trade, workforce and community development, visit Minnesota Department of Employment and Economic Development at mn.gov/deed.

Entrepreneurs can receive free, confidential business counseling from the Open for Business programs, available throughout the twin cities metro area. Go to mccdmn.org/open-to-business to learn more.

Low-income small business owners can receive free assistance in non-litigation business law from LegalCORPS. Find clinic locations and information on setting up a 30-minute consultation time at legalcorps.org. Business owners who qualify can receive longer one-on-one representation.

The Minnesota SBIR/STTR Assistance Office is the state’s resource to provide free and confidential assistance to Minnesota firms with R&D needs. It focuses on innovation, technology transfer, investments and commercialization, visit mhta.org/mnsbir.

Exporting Assistance

Minnesota U.S. Export Assistance Centers
Carlos Sosa
(612) 348-1642
carlos.sosa@sba.gov
sba.gov/tools/local-assistance/eac

Minnesota Trade Office
mn.gov/deed/business/exporting

Minnesota Commerce Department
mn.gov/commerce

U.S. Commercial Service
export.gov/minnesota

Export-Import Bank of the United States
Minneapolis Regional Office
(612) 348-1213
exim.gov
Need entrepreneurship training?
In Boots to Business, you explore business ownership and other self-employment opportunities while learning key business concepts. You will walk away with an overview of entrepreneurship and applicable business ownership fundamentals, including how to access startup capital using SBA resources. 

Boots to Business is conducted on all military installations as part of the Department of Defense’s Transition Assistance Program.

Who’s eligible?
Service members transitioning out of active duty and military spouses. Are you a veteran or member of the National Guard or Reserve or a military spouse? Boots to Business: Reboot teaches this entrepreneurship curriculum off base and in local communities. Register for either B2B program at https://sbavets.force.com.

**Opportunities for Veterans**

Members of the military community can start and grow their small businesses with the help of SBA programs.

**Need entrepreneurship training?**
In Boots to Business, you explore business ownership and other self-employment opportunities while learning key business concepts. You will walk away with an overview of entrepreneurship and applicable business ownership fundamentals, including how to access startup capital using SBA resources. Boots to Business is conducted on all military installations as part of the Department of Defense’s Transition Assistance Program.

**Who’s eligible?**
Service members transitioning out of active duty and military spouses. Are you a veteran or member of the National Guard or Reserve or a military spouse? Boots to Business: Reboot teaches this entrepreneurship curriculum off base and in local communities. Register for either B2B program at https://sbavets.force.com.

**For women veterans**
Receive entrepreneurial training geared toward women veterans, service members, and spouses of service members through these SBA-funded programs:
- Veteran Women Igniting the Spirit of Entrepreneurship in Syracuse, New York
- LiftFund in San Antonio, Texas

**For service-disabled veterans**
Learn how to start and grow a small business using these SBA-funded programs:
- Entrepreneurship Bootcamp for Veterans with Disabilities in Syracuse, New York
- Veterans Entrepreneurship Program at the Riata Center for Entrepreneurship, Spears School of Business, Oklahoma State University in Stillwater, Oklahoma
- Veteran Entrepreneurship Jumpstart at St. Joseph’s University in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania
- Dog Tag Inc., affiliated with Georgetown University in Washington, DC

**Need financing?**

**Loan Fee Relief**
To encourage lending to members of the military community who want to start or grow their business, the SBA reduces upfront guarantee fees on select loans. That means the cost savings will be passed down to you, the eligible veteran or qualifying military member. Ask your local SBA district office or SBA Lender about the Veterans Advantage program.

**Have an employee who was called to active duty?**
You may receive funds that enable your business to meet ordinary and necessary operating expenses when an essential employee is called up to active duty in the military reserve. Ask your local SBA district office or SBA Lender about the Military Reservist Economic Injury Disaster Loan.

**Interested in contracting?**
Veteran-owned and service-disabled veteran-owned small businesses interested in federal contracting receive training from the Veteran Institute for Procurement, which offers a platform with three training programs to assist veterans. Visit nationalvip.org.

**VIP Start**
Enter the federal market and become ready for procurement. Nearly 200 veteran-owned businesses from 29 states plus Washington, DC have graduated from the program.

**VIP Grow**
Strategize to expand and operate within the federal marketplace. More than 700 veteran-owned businesses from 42 states plus DC and Guam have graduated from this program.

**VIP International**
Enter or expand your federal and commercial contracting opportunities overseas.

**Get certified**
Learn about the service-disabled veteran-owned small business certification program on page 65.

**For more assistance**
Veteran and military entrepreneurs receive business training, counseling, and referrals to other SBA Resource Partners at a Veterans Business Outreach Center, sba.gov/vboc. For veterans business information visit sba.gov/veterans.

**HOW THE SBA HELPED US SUCCEED**
Margot Adam Langstaff, left, and Elisa Hamill, right, sought assistance from their local Veterans Business Outreach Center, which helped them better compete for government contracts. LifeHealth of Littleton, CO has expanded to more than 30 states with offices in Washington, DC and San Antonio, TX. Their clients include the Department of Defense, the National Guard, and the Indian Health Service. They also expanded their business using an SBA-backed line of credit for $350,000. Margot started her career as an Army medic, eventually running one of the largest outpatient clinics in the Northeast at Ft. Devens, MA.

**COURTESY OF LIFEHEALTH**
Online Resources
Find free short courses and learning tools to start and grow your small business at sba.gov/learning. The free SBA Online Learning Center is a great resource for every entrepreneur, especially rural business owners looking for easy access to vital business training.

Courses include:
- writing your business plan
- buying a business
- financing options
- digital and traditional marketing to win customers
- disaster recovery
- understanding your customer

Regional Innovation Clusters
Create jobs and grow the economy through an SBA Regional Innovation Cluster.

Who should join
Small businesses driving innovation in one of these tech industries:
- advanced composites
- agTech
- bioscience
- food processing
- data sciences
- medical sciences
- power and energy
- unmanned aerial systems
- water tech
- wood products

How it works
Each industry cluster is based in a geographic region. Your small business must be located in or near that region in order to join the cluster. For example, the AgLaunch Initiative cluster, which focuses on agricultural technology, is located in the Tennessee area. A small agTech business in or near Tennessee will connect with other agTech suppliers, service providers, and related institutions through that innovation cluster.

How it benefits you
Network with other industry innovators and connect with resources that will help your small business find funding. You’ll also receive guidance on how to better compete for government contracts and other opportunities so you can grow and expand. Receive free technical and legal assistance to develop your tech and get it to market for government and industry buyers.

Get involved
Find an SBA Regional Innovation Cluster near you by visiting sba.gov/localassistance. Select the regional innovation clusters on the drop-down menu.

Native American Workshops
Tribal enterprises and business organizations can receive training at an SBA Entrepreneurial Empowerment Workshop. These workshops cover business concepts important for starting, growing, or expanding a small business. RedWind instructors identify and help participants avoid common pitfalls. Learn how to prepare a business plan, gain access to capital, and basic book keeping. Request a workshop in your area by visiting nativesmallbusiness.org.
SBA Regional Innovation Clusters

2. The Ozarks Cluster – Startup Junkie (Industry focus: Food processing, supply chain, & logistics)
3. The Water Council Cluster
4. Marine Industry Science & Technology Cluster
5. BioSTL: St. Louis Biosciences Cluster
6. Oklahoma-South Kansas Unmanned Aerial Systems Cluster
7. The Appalachian Ohio Wood Products Cluster
8. Conductor RIC in Healthcare, Education & Data/Decision Sciences – Startup Junkie Consulting
9. Integrative Business Services Inc. (Industry focus: Optics)
10. Great Plains Technology & Manufacturing Cluster
11. Montana Bioscience Cluster – Montana Technology Enterprise Center
12. AgLaunch Initiative
13. Utah Advanced Material Manufacturing Initiative
How Do I Find an EIN?

No doubt, there are probably quite a few regulatory and administrative items on your new business checklist, like getting a permit and registering your business name.

One of the key requirements for most new businesses (or businesses that are restructuring) is obtaining an Employer Identification Number, or EIN, from the IRS.

Here’s what you need to know about EINs and how to go about getting one for your business.

What is an EIN?
An EIN is a unique nine-digit number that identifies your business for tax purposes. Think of it as the business equivalent of a social security number (although it shouldn’t be used in place of it).

As a business owner, you’ll need an EIN to open a business bank account, apply for business licenses, and file your tax returns. It’s a good idea to apply for one as soon as you start planning your business. This will ensure there are no delays in getting the appropriate licenses or financing that you need to operate.

Who needs an EIN?
An EIN is needed by any business that retains employees. However, non-employers are also required to obtain one if they operate as a corporation or partnership.

Answering yes to any of the questions in the list on the right means you need one for your business.

How to apply for an EIN
The easiest way to apply for your EIN is online via the IRS EIN Assistant. As soon as your application is complete and validated, you’ll be issued an EIN. There is no charge for this service (beware of internet scams that will try to sell you their EIN application services).

You can also apply by mail or fax using Form SS-4, available at irs.gov/formss4.

Changing your business structure? Get a new EIN
As your business grows and matures, you may choose to change its legal or ownership structure. For example, a sole proprietor may decide to incorporate, or a partnership may be taken over by one of the owners to then operate as a sole proprietorship. In instances such as these, your business will need a new EIN.

There are other scenarios that require a new EIN, such as bankruptcy, a change in a corporation’s name or location, or reorganization of a corporation. Check out "Do You Need a New EIN" on irs.gov.

Using your EIN to make tax deposits
If you have employees, you will have been automatically enrolled in the Electronic Federal Tax Payment System (eftps.gov) when you applied for your EIN. This allows you to make tax deposits, including federal employment and corporate taxes, online or by phone.

Lost your EIN?
If you lost or misplaced your EIN, you can retrieve it in the following ways:

- Reference the original notice issued by the IRS when you received your EIN, or call the IRS Business & Specialty Tax Line at (800) 829-4933.
- If you used it to open a bank account or get a license, contact these organizations.

Not sure whether you need an EIN?
Check out this guide from the IRS. Answering yes to any of the questions in the list means you need one for your business.

Do you have employees?
☐ YES  ☐ NO

Do you operate your business as a corporation or a partnership?
☐ YES  ☐ NO

Do you file any of these tax returns: employment, excise, or alcohol, tobacco and firearms?
☐ YES  ☐ NO

Do you withhold taxes on income, other than wages, paid to a non-resident alien?
☐ YES  ☐ NO

Do you have a Keogh plan?
☐ YES  ☐ NO

Are you involved with any of the following types of organizations?
- Trusts, except certain grantor-owned revocable trusts, IRAs, Exempt Organization Business Income Tax Returns
- Estates
- Real estate mortgage investment conduits
- Nonprofit organizations
- Farmers’ cooperatives
- Plan administrators
☐ YES  ☐ NO

They should be able to retrieve your number.

Find an old tax return. Your EIN should be on it.

WRITTEN BY Caron Beesley, CONTRIBUTOR
Free Solutions for Small Businesses

We can get through this together.

Small businesses are the heart of our communities. In these uncertain times, we want to help. So we created Salesforce Care to provide free resources, tips, and support.

- Stay connected to every customer with Salesforce Essentials – now free for 90 days.*

- Turn data insights into confident decision-making with analytics tool Tableau – free for 90 days.*

- Get the guidance you need to keep your business going with free workshops, webinars, and more.

Learn more: salesforce.com/careforsmallbusiness

*New customers only. Restrictions apply.
Write your Business Plan

Your business plan is the foundation of your business. Learn how to write a business plan with the help of an SBA Resource Partner.

**TRADITIONAL BUSINESS PLAN FORMAT**

When you write your business plan, you don’t have to stick to the exact business plan template. Instead, use the sections that make the most sense for your business and your needs.

**Executive Summary**

Briefly summarize your company and why it will be successful. Include your mission statement, your product or service, and basic information about your company’s leadership team, employees, and location. You should also include financial information and high-level growth plans if you plan to ask for financing.

**Company Description**

Go into detail about the problems your business solves. Be specific as to audience and location. List out the consumers, organizations, or businesses your company plans to serve.

Explain the competitive advantages you have that will make your business successful. Are there experts on your team? Have you found the perfect location? Your company description is the place to boast about your strengths.

**Market Analysis**

Demonstrate a solid understanding of your industry outlook and target market. This is where it pays to partner with an experienced business counselor from your local Small Business Development Center, SCORE, Women’s Business Center, or Veterans Business Outreach Center—all these SBA Resource Partners provide free or low-cost business assistance. Competitive research will show what other businesses are doing and their strengths. In your market research, look for trends and themes. What do successful competitors do? Why does it work? Can you do it better? Now’s the time to answer these questions.

**Organization and Management**

Explain how your company will be structured and who will run it. Describe the legal structure of your business. State whether you have or intend to incorporate your business as a C or an S corporation, form a general or limited partnership, or if you’re a sole proprietor or limited liability company.

Business plans help you run your business.

A good business plan guides you through managing your business. You’ll use your business plan as a roadmap for how to structure, run, and grow your new business.

Business plans can help you get funding or bring on new business partners. Investors want to see a return on their investment. Your business plan is the tool you’ll use to convince people that working with you—or investing in your company—is a smart investment. Brain storm with a business counselor (visit one of our SBA Resource Partners detailed on page 10) and write a traditional business plan, which uses a standard structure and detailed sections. Once you’ve got it all down, you can then condense it to a lean startup business plan, which typically contains key points on only one page.
Use an organizational chart to show the hierarchy. Explain how each person’s experience will contribute to the success of your venture. Consider including CVs of key members.

Service or Product Line
Describe what you sell or what service you offer. Explain how it benefits your customers and the product lifecycle. Share your plans for intellectual property, like copyright or patent filings. If you’re doing research and development for your service or product, explain it.

Marketing and Sales
Your marketing strategy should evolve and change to fit your needs in each context.
Describe how you’ll attract and retain customers. Show how a sale will actually happen. You’ll refer to this section later when you make financial projections, so be thorough.

Funding Request
If you’re asking for funding, outline your funding requirements. Specify whether you want debt or equity and the terms you’d like. Your goal is to clearly explain how much funding you’ll need over the next five years and how the investment will be used.
Specify if you need funds to buy equipment or materials, pay salaries, or cover specific bills until revenue increases. Explain how you’ll pay off the debt.

Financial Projections
Supplement your funding request with a prospective financial outlook for the next five years. Show how your business will be a financial success.
If your business is already established, include income statements, balance sheets, and cash flow statements for the last three to five years. List collateral you could put against a loan.
Include forecasted income statements, balance sheets, cash flow statements, and capital expenditure budgets. For the first year, be even more specific and use quarterly—or even monthly—projections. Make sure to clearly explain your projections and match them to your funding requests.
Use visual organization tools—graphs and charts—to tell your business’s financial story.

Appendix
Here you’ll attach supporting documents or other requested materials. Common items to include are credit histories, CVs, product pictures, letters of reference, licenses, permits, patents, legal documents, and other contracts.

LEAN STARTUP PLAN FORMAT
Write a lean startup plan if requested from an investor, or if your business is relatively simple or you plan to regularly change and refine as you go.
Lean startup plans use more visual organization tools and only a handful of elements to describe your company’s value proposition, infrastructure, customers, and finances. They’re useful for visualizing your company’s fundamental facts. Your business counselor can help you edit down into the Business Model Canvas, used here—the most well known style, or another lean startup template.

Key Partnerships
Note the other businesses you’ll work with—suppliers, manufacturers, subcontractors, and similar strategic partners.

Key Activities
List the ways your business will gain a competitive advantage. Will you sell direct to consumers or use technology to tap into the sharing economy?

Key Resources
List resources you’ll leverage to create value for your customer. Your most important assets include staff, capital, or intellectual property. Leverage business resources that might be available to women, veterans, Native Americans, and HUBZone–certified businesses.

Value Proposition
Make a clear and compelling statement about the unique value your company brings to the market.

Customer Relationships
Describe how customers will interact with your business. Think through the customer experience from start to finish. Is it automated or personal? In person or online?

Customer Segments
Name your target market. Your business won’t be for everybody; it’s important to have a clear sense of who you serve.

Channels
List the most important ways you’ll talk to your customers.

Cost Structure
Will your company focus on reducing cost or maximizing value? Define your strategy, then list the most significant costs you’ll face.

Revenue Streams
Explain how your company makes money: direct sales, memberships fees, selling advertising space? If your company has multiple revenue streams, list them all.

LEAN STARTUP PLAN CHECKLIST
☐ Key partnerships
☐ Key activities
☐ Key resources
☐ Value proposition
☐ Customer relationships
☐ Customer segments
☐ Channels
☐ Cost structure
☐ Revenue streams
Deneen Pottery started in Peter and Mary Deneen’s garage nearly 50 years ago. Since then it has expanded to a 50,000-square foot production facility employing over 90. With SBA assistance, their son, Niles, is taking over the business, ensuring the same level of quality in their hand-thrown coffee mugs.

- **What challenge did you have?** I started at an entry-level shipping position here 20 years ago. I needed to transition our business from one generation to the next and that comes with challenges. As my parents are stepping away, I need to step up.

- **What was the SBA solution?** In the SBA Emerging Leaders program, I received business training and networking opportunities with peers, local leaders, and lenders that profoundly affected my small businesses. In the class, you create a three-year growth plan, which became our transition plan. I committed to the seven-month program because I wanted to develop date specific initiatives, while also getting a solid training in business management. I also gained confidence to move forward, and my parents gained confidence in me. Deneen Pottery was created by my family, and I’m excited to see it evolve and grow into a new era.

- **What benefit did this have for you?** If you’re an aspiring entrepreneur, there has never been a better time in history to own and operate a small business. Our sales are up 10% from the previous year. Since graduating from the Emerging Leaders program, I’ve added four full-time employees. We have over 64 skilled craftspeople producing about 2,800 mugs every day, which can be found in retail stores at our nation’s monuments and parks and over 400 restaurants and coffee shops. The help from the SBA has been just incredible.
“The help from the SBA has been just incredible.”

Niles Deneen
President, Deneen Pottery
How We Did It

Crafting a Business

SBA-backed financing helped Superstition Meadery expand into a multimillion dollar enterprise.

WRITTEN BY BECKY BOSSHART
Jennifer and Jeff Herbert’s home-based brewing has expanded into a global, multimillion dollar enterprise thanks to SBA assistance. Using Arizona honey and ingredients they’ve sourced from around the world (such as Tahitian vanilla and Moroccan saffron), the Herberts are selling nearly 30,000 gallons annually of their honey-based fermented beverage. They operate a downtown Prescott, Arizona tasting room and state-of-the-art production facility, creating jobs and building a local craft industry. The Herberts, founding members of the American Mead Makers Association, have traveled around the world hosting pairing events and pouring at craft beverage festivals.

Challenge
The Herberts wanted to scale up their meadery while also staying true to their values of quality ingredients and craft process. It is often difficult for new entrepreneurs or unique concepts like a meadery to get traditional financing, even though they knew they had a great idea, the backing wasn’t there to expand. They say that choosing to do something new breaks the mold, which can be uncomfortable for traditional lenders.

Solution
Thanks to guidance from an SBA Resource Partner, the Small Business Development Center at Yavapai Community College, Jennifer and Jeff learned about financing that worked for them. The SBA guarantees loans made by lending institutions to small businesses that would not otherwise be able to obtain financing. Their small business qualified for two SBA-backed loans totaling more than $600,000. The Herberts’ first SBA-backed loan allowed them to acquire commercial property to design and build their mead production facility. Their second SBA-backed loan provided the funding for professional brewing equipment to complete their 7,450-square-foot production space. The Herberts recently purchased a historic building in downtown Phoenix, Arizona to open a mead-pairing restaurant.

Benefit
The Herberts started with two employees and now have over 20 producing 29,000 gallons this year. From a homegrown setup, Jennifer and Jeff are now charting revenue in excess of $2.6 million and distributing to 37 states, across Europe and Southeast Asia. They have plans for another expansion, including a shipping warehouse to manage their online retail and wholesale orders.

5 Tips for Success

Get guidance.
Develop a working relationship with an SBA Resource Partner (see page 10) to help you find the funding that works best for you.

Define your lending needs.
Determine if a loan is right for you. Is this the right time? How much do you need? What are you going to use it for?

Talk to multiple lenders.
See who best matches you and your business. Has the lender successfully worked with other businesses in your industry?

Check all options.
Consult with your lender to see if you’re eligible for SBA financing programs, determined by your industry & experience; collateral; credit score; and the relationship & transparency you develop with the lending agent.

Be ready for the ups and downs.
Your entrepreneurial endeavor will be a roller coaster ride filled with challenges and successes. The path is all consuming so make sure that you love what you do. Passion is the price of admission.
SBA-backed Loans

help small business owners and entrepreneurs who are creditworthy but don’t qualify for conventional financing. If you cannot obtain a business loan with reasonable rates and terms, contact your local SBA Lender to see if you are eligible for SBA programs. The SBA works with participating lenders to reduce their risk, increasing the likelihood your loan will be approved with the terms that work best for you. The guarantee is conditional on the lender following SBA program requirements. Just like with any other loan, you make your loan payments directly to your lender in accordance with your terms.

Lender Match

Find a lender interested in working with you at sba.gov/lendermatch. This matching tool connects entrepreneurs with SBA Lenders in your area.
### SBA Lenders

Our participating SBA Lenders serve all Minnesota unless otherwise noted. To find more bank locations, visit the lender’s website.

**ADA**
- Frandsen Bank & Trust
  - frandsenbank.com

**ADAMS**
- United Farmers State Bank
  - unitedfsb.com

**ADRIAN**
- Adrian State Bank
  - adrianstatebank.com

**AITKIN**
- Members Cooperative Credit Union
  - membersccu.org
- Neighborhood National Bank
  - neighborhood.bank
- Security State Bank
  - ssbmn.com

**AKELEY**
- First National Bank North
  - fnbnorth.com

**ALBANY**
- Central Minnesota Credit Union
  - mycmcu.org

**ALBERT LEA**
- Farmers State Bank
  - fsbmn.bank
- Home Federal
  - justcallhome.com
- Security Bank Minnesota
  - securitybankmn.com

**ALBERTVILLE**
- Financial Security Bank
  - financialsecuritybank.com
- Premier Banks
  - premierbanks.com

**ALDEN**
- Security Bank Minnesota
  - securitybankmn.com

**ALEXANDRIA**
- Affinity Plus Federal Credit Union
  - affinityplus.org
- American National Bank
  - anbmn.com
- Bell Bank
  - bellbanks.com
- Neighborhood National Bank
  - neighborhood.bank
- Viking Bank
  - vikingbankmn.com

**AMBOY**
- Community Bank
  - cbfg.net

**ANDOVER**
- Central Minnesota Development Corp.
  - cmdcbusinessloans.com
- Minnco Credit Union
  - minnco.com
- Premier Banks
  - premierbanks.com
- SharePoint Credit Union
  - sharepointcu.com

**ANNANDALE**
- Star Bank
  - starbank.net

**ANOKA**
- Anoka Hennepin Credit Union
  - ahcu.coop
- First Minnesota Bank
  - firstmnbank.com
- First National Bank of Elk River
  - elkriver.bank

**APPLE VALLEY**
- First Resource Bank
  - myfrbank.com
- MidCountry Bank
  - midcountrybank.com
- Old National Bank
  - oldnational.com
- Royal Credit Union
  - rcu.org
- Sterling State Bank
  - sterlingstatebank.com
- Think Mutual Bank
  - thinkbank.com

**APPLETON**
- Farmers and Merchants State Bank of Appleton
  - farmers-merchants.com

**ARDEN HILLS**
- Old National Bank
  - oldnational.com

**ARROYO**
- United Valley Bank
  - uvbank.net

**ASHBY**
- First State Bank of Ashby
  - fsbashby.com

**ASKOV**
- Northview Bank
  - northviewbank.com

**ATWATER**
- Harvest Bank
  - harvestbankmn.com

**AURORA**
- Northern State Bank
  - nsbashland.com

**AUSTIN**
- Farmers & Merchants State Bank
  - fmbankmn.com
- First Farmers & Merchants State Bank
  - fnmbank.com
- Home Federal
  - justcallhome.com
- Sterling State Bank
  - sterlingstatebank.com

**AVON**
- American Heritage National Bank
  - logbank.com
- Central Minnesota Credit Union
  - mycmcu.org

**BACKUS**
- First National Bank North
  - fnbnorth.com

**BADGER**
- Border State Bank
  - borderstatebank.com

**BAGLEY**
- Bank Forward
  - bankforward.com
- First National Bank
  - fnbezbanking.com
- RiverWood Bank
  - riverwoodbank.com

**BARNUM**
- Northview Bank
  - northviewbank.com

**BARNESVILLE**
- Midwest Bank
  - m.midwestbank.net
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SAVAGE
Central Minnesota Credit Union
mycmcu.org

Old National Bank
oldnational.com

Sterling State Bank
sterlingstatebank.com

SHAKOPEE
Firefly Credit Union
fireflycu.org

HomeTown Bank
htbmn.com

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western-bank.com

SHERBURN
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bankmidwest.com

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BankCherokee
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lakeareabank.com

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nabankco.com

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thelakebank.com

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PrairieLand Economic Development Corp.
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First Security Bank
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heritagebankka.com

United Prairie Bank
unitedprairiebank.com

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firstnationalbanks.bank

First State Bank Minnesota
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First National Bank
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Alliance Bank
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BankCherokee
bankcherokee.com

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cccu.com

Community Reinvestment Fund
crfusa.com

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couleebank.com

Deerwood Bank
deerwoodbank.com

Drake Bank
drake-bank.com

First Farmers & Merchants State Bank
ffmbank.com

Highland Bank
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Hiway Federal Credit Union
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Hmong American Partnership
hmong.org

Meda
meda.net

Neighborhood Development Center
ndc-mn.org

Old National Bank
oldnational.com

Royal Credit Union
rcu.org

Spire Credit Union
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Sunrise Banks
sunrisebanks.com

Think Mutual Bank
thinkbank.com

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western-bank.com

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oldnational.com

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fnbmn.com

HomeTown Bank
htbmn.com

Nicollet County Bank
nicolletcountybank.com

Southpoint Financial Credit Union
southpointfinancial.com

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Sentry Bank
mysentrybank.com

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midcentralbank.com

Unity Bank
unitybanking.com

STILLWATER
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myfrbank.com

First State Bank and Trust
fsbt.com

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lakeareabank.com

Lake Elmo Bank
lakeelmobank.com

Royal Credit Union
rcu.org

WBD Inc.
wbd.org

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SUNBURG
Lake Region Bank
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profinium.com

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uvbank.net

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thelakebank.com

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nwbanks.com

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TCM Certified Development Co.
504lending.com

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eaglebankmn.com

Glenwood State Bank
glenwoodstatebank

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ofVirginia
nsbov.com

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htbmn.com

MidCountry Bank
midcountrybank.com

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oldnational.com

Security Bank & Trust
security-banks.com

WADENA
Central Minnesota Credit Union
mymcu.org

Mid-Central Federal Savings Bank
midcentralsb.com

Wadena State Bank
wadenastatebank.com
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504 Corp.
(507) 288-6442
504corporation.com

Central Minnesota Development Corp.
(763) 784-3337
cmdcbusinessloans.com

Dakota Business Lending
(701) 293-8892
dakotabusinesslending.com

Dakota Business Finance
(605) 367-5353
dakotabusinessfinance.com

Lake Agassiz Development Group
(701) 235-1197
lakeagassiz.com

Minnesota Business Finance Corp.
(800) 593-0123
mbfc.org

Prairieland Economic Development Corp.
(800) 507-9003
prairielandedc.com

SPEDCO
(651) 631-4900
spedco.com

WBD Inc.
(800) 536-6799
wbd.org

Initiative Foundation
(877) 632-9255
ifound.org

Metropolitan Economic Development Association
(612) 332-6332
meda.net

Northland Foundation
(800) 433-4045
northlandfdn.org

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adcminnesota.org

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trepreneurfund.org

First Children’s Finance
Serving child care businesses serving low and moderate income families
(866) 562-6801
firstchildrensfinance.org

Hmong American Partnership
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hmong.org

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Serving Hennepin and Ramsey counties
(651) 291-2480
ndc-mn.org

Northwest Minnesota Foundation
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nwmf.org

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smifoundation.org

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swifoundation.com

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Export Assistance Lenders

21st Century Bank
(612) 378-2178
21stcb.com

American National Bank of Minnesota
(800) 940-8445
anbmn.com

BMO-Harris Bank
(612) 904-8165
commercial.bmoharris.com

Boundary Waters Bank
(877) 365-6181
mybwbank.com

Bremer Bank
(612) 782-2819
bremer.com

Bridgewater Bank
(952) 737-4704
bridgewaterbankmn.com

Byline Bank
(952) 240-7095
bylinebank.com

Choice Financial
(763) 398-5815
bankwithchoice.com

Citizens Bank Minnesota
(952) 469-1919
citizensmn.bank

Citizens State Bank of Waverly & Montrose
(763) 658-4417
bankwaverly.com

City & County Credit Union
(800) 223-2801
cccu.com

Crown Bank
(952) 285-5800
crown-bank.com

Falcon National Bank
(866) 439-4363
falconnational.com

Farmers State Bank of Hoffman
(320) 986-2026
fsbhoffman.net

Fidelity Bank
(952) 831-6600
fidelitybankmn.com

First American Bank
(715) 377-5312
fa-bank.net

First National Bank of Elk River
(763) 241-3637
elkriver.bank

First Resource Bank
(800) 219-6967
myfrbank.com

Freeport State Bank
(320) 836-2126
freeportstatebank.com
If you’re growing your business (or you’re a banker helping a small business expand),

It’s time to think about an SBA 504 loan from SPEDCO.

SBA 504 is long-term, fixed rate financing for land, buildings, or equipment.

Borrowers preserve cash by funding only 10% of the project cost and 10, 20 & 25 year fixed rates keep monthly payments constant.

SPEDCO partners with banks to provide SBA 504 financing to small businesses in Minnesota and Wisconsin.

Small Business Investment Companies

Call Andy, Chris or Scott today!

651-631-4900 • 866-9SPEDCO • SPEDCO.com
Financing 101

1. What do you need funding for?
   - Start or purchase a business
   - Purchase, renovate or expand facilities
   - Purchase inventory, equipment or machinery
   - Revolving credit/working capital for day-to-day expenses
   - Export a product or service

   I need investors.
   Look into SBICs.

   I need to research and develop a business idea for commercialization.
   Research the SBIR or STTR programs.

   I’m bidding on a contract that requires me to be bonded.
   Ask for information on SBA surety bonds.

2. Do you need help with your business plan or loan package?
   If so, SBA Resource Partners can help. Find a list at your local SBA district office.

3. Now that you have your business plan and loan package ready, contact an SBA Lender to see if you qualify. There are two options...
   A. Check out Lender Match (sba.gov/lendermatch) to find an SBA Lenders who may specialize in your industry or type of project.
   B. Visit your local SBA district office for a list of local SBA Lenders.

Be prepared to discuss:
- size and purpose of your loan
- how long your business has operated
- your credit history
- collateral
- financial projections
- technical assistance/mentoring needs
Need Financing?

Visit your local SBA office or lender to learn about these funding options.

**The 7(a) Loan, the SBA’s Largest Financing Program**
If you cannot get conventional financing and you meet the eligibility requirements, you can use a 7(a) loan to buy real estate, equipment, or inventory for your small business. It may also be used for working capital, to refinance business debt or purchase a small business.

**MAX LOAN AMOUNT:** $5 million

**INTEREST RATE:** generally prime + a reasonable rate capped at 2.75%

**TERMS:** loan term varies according to the purpose of the loan, generally up to 25 years for real estate, 10 years for other fixed assets and working capital

**GUARANTEE:** 50 to 90%

**CAPLines**
Meet your revolving capital needs with lines of credit. CAPLines can be used for contract financing, seasonal lines of credit, builders line of credit, or for general working capital lines.

**SBA Express Loan**
Featuring a simplified process, these loans are delivered by experienced lenders who are authorized to make the credit decision for the SBA. These can be term loans or revolving lines of credit.

**MAX LOAN AMOUNT:** $350,000

**INTEREST RATE:** for loans less than $50,000, prime + 6.5%; for loans of $50,000 and greater, prime + 4.75%

**TERMS:** loan term varies according to the purpose of the loan, generally up to 25 years for real estate and 10 years for other fixed assets and working capital

**GUARANTEE:** 50%

**Community Advantage**
A financing program for women, veterans, low-income borrowers, and minority entrepreneurs just starting up or in business for a few years. Receive free business counseling as you work with a community-based financial institution.

**INTEREST RATE:** prime + 6%

**TERMS:** up to 25 years for real estate, 10 years for equipment and working capital

**GUARANTEE:** 75 to 90%

**Microloans**
Eligible businesses can startup and grow with working capital or funds for supplies, equipment, furniture and fixtures. Borrow from $500 to $50,000 and access free business counseling from microlenders.

**INTEREST RATE:** loans less than $10,000, lender cost + 8.5%; loans $10,000 and greater, lender cost + 7.75%

**TERMS:** lender negotiated, no early payoff penalty

**504 Certified Development Company Loan**
If you do not qualify for traditional financing, but would like to purchase or renovate real estate or buy heavy equipment for your business, ask about the 504 loan. It provides competitive fixed-rate mortgage financing through a lender and a Certified Development Company.

**MAX LOAN AMOUNT (UP TO 40% OF THE TOTAL PROJECT):**
up to $5 million; $5.5 million for manufacturing or energy public policy projects

**INTEREST RATE:** below market fixed rates for 10, 20 or 25 year terms

**TERMS:** 20 or 25 years for real estate or long-term equipment, 10 years for general machinery and equipment

**GUARANTEE:** the lender provides a senior loan for 50% of the project cost (with no SBA guarantee); the CDC finances up to 40% in a junior lien position (supported by the SBA guarantee)

**SPECIAL CONDITION:** a minimum borrower contribution, or down payment, is required, amounts vary by project but are usually 10%
Go Global with International Trade

Businesses that export are more resilient—they are less dependent on any one market. Exporting also stabilizes sales for those who make seasonal products.

Expand your Market
Small businesses can enter and excel in the international marketplace using State Trade Expansion Program grants and training. Visit sba.gov/internationaltrade to find out if your state is participating. You can:

- learn how to export
- participate in foreign trade missions and trade shows
- obtain services to support foreign market entry
- translate websites to attract foreign buyers
- design international marketing products or campaigns

Financing for International Growth
Having trouble securing capital to meet your small business exporting needs? Use SBA international trade programs to cover short or long-term costs necessary to sell goods or services abroad. Loan proceeds can be used for working capital to finance foreign sales or for fixed assets, helping you better compete globally. You can apply for lines of credit prior to finalizing an export sale or contract, so adequate financing is in place by the time you win your contract. If you’ve been in business for at least a year, ask your area SBA regional finance manager about the Export Working Capital program. The International Trade Loan program also helps exporters who have been adversely affected by foreign importing competition, helping you better compete globally.

Max loan amount: $5 million
Interest rate: for Export Working Capital, the rate is negotiated between borrower and lender. For the International Trade Loan, it also cannot exceed prime + 2.75% for loan amounts over $50,000 and maturity of seven years or more
Terms: For Export Working Capital, typically one year, cannot exceed three years. For International Trade Loans, up to 25 years for real estate, up to 10 years for equipment
Guarantee: up to 90%
Approval time: 36 hours or less

Expert Advice on Exporting
Find an SBA professional in one of the 21 U.S. Export Assistance Centers, sba.gov/tools/local-assistance/eac, located in most major metro areas. The centers are also staffed by the U.S. Department of Commerce and, in some locations, the Export-Import Bank of the United States and other public and private organizations. Visit your local Small Business Development Center (see page 10) for exporting assistance from professional business counselors.
HOW THE SBA HELPED US SUCCEED

Small businesses that qualify for the SBA State Trade Expansion Program use grant proceeds to bolster their international market presence, which EarthQuaker Devices has done in a seismic way. A manufacturer of guitar special effects pedals in Akron, OH, EarthQuaker has built an international social media fanbase delivering content in seven languages, generating millions of website page views.

EarthQuaker owners Julie Robbins & Jamie Stillman developed their global marketing strategy and multilingual promo materials with the SBA State Trade Expansion Program. The couple also received global marketing counseling and research assistance from the Ohio Small Business Development Center Export Assistance Network.

Help with Trade Barriers

If you need assistance with international trade regulations, the SBA can be your advocate in foreign markets. Call toll free (855) 722-4877 or email your contact information and trade issue to international@sba.gov.
FUNDING PROGRAMS

R&D Opportunities for High Growth Startups

Engaged in high-risk research and development? Compete for funding to develop your cutting-edge technology.

Do you work in one of these areas?
» advanced materials
» agTech
» artificial intelligence
» biomedical
» cybersecurity
» energy
» first response
» national security
» space exploration

The Small Business Innovation Research and the Small Business Technology Transfer programs, also called America’s Seed Fund, provide more than $3.5 billion in early stage capital through a competitive awards process.

How it works
Every year, participating federal agencies announce topical areas that address their R&D needs. Eligible businesses submit proposals to win either grants or contracts.

There are three phases:
» The proof-of-concept stage typically lasts from 6-12 months, and ranges from $100,000-$225,000.
» The full R&D period lasts about 24 months and typically provides $600,000-$1.5 million.
» The commercialization stage is when you seek public or private funds for your venture.

How your startup benefits
The funding agency does not take an equity position or ownership of your business. The federal government also protects data rights and the ability to win sole-source phase III contracts.

Participating agencies:
» Department of Agriculture
» Department of Commerce

▶ HOW THE SBA HELPED US SUCCEED
Killer Snails brings science out of the laboratory and into classrooms and living rooms with award-winning educational games, such as BioDive, Assassins of the Sea, and Biome Builder. The Brooklyn, NY-based business gained access to startup funding thanks to the Small Business Innovation Research program. Dr. Mandé Holford, left, Jessica Ochoa Hendrix, right, and Dr. Lindsay Portnoy envisioned how venomous marine snail research could be used in extended reality and digital learning to engage students and meet educators’ needs. The business has raised more than $1.2 million to support a team of full-time employees. Killer Snails’s tabletop, digital, augmented and virtual reality games have won national and international awards.
Investment Capital

Looking for investors? For mature, profitable businesses with sufficient cash flow to pay interest, a Small Business Investment Company can help scale up your small business.

How an SBIC works
Investment companies with financing expertise in certain industry sectors receive SBA-guaranteed loans, which means the federal government is responsible in case of default. These investment companies then use the SBA-guaranteed capital and private funds to invest in qualifying small businesses. Each SBIC has its own investment profile in terms of targeted industry, geography, company maturity, the types and size of financing they provide.

To be eligible
The majority of your employees and assets must be within the United States. Some ineligible small businesses and activities include relenders, real estate, project financing, and foreign investment.

Visit sba.gov and click on Funding Program and then Investment Capital.

SBIR Road Tour
Visit sbirroadtour.com to learn about national events connecting entrepreneurs working on advanced tech to the country’s largest source of early stage funding. Each SBIR Road Tour stop introduces participating federal agency program managers, who oversee over 5,000 new awards annually.
I f you ask Stephanie Vitori, the person who coined the term “bittersweet” must have run a business. In the 15 years Stephanie has owned Cheeseburger Baby, the Florida burger joint has endured recessions, multiple hurricanes, and competition from corporate franchises. She has grown along with Cheeseburger Baby, changing with each stage of the business lifecycle.

Vitori worked as a delivery driver before purchasing the business in 2004. Since then, she’s expanded by purchasing two food trucks. She runs an open kitchen, which means customers can watch their 100% Angus beef cheeseburgers sizzle on the flat-top grill. Burgers are kept classic, no extra frills. “People feel at home,” Stephanie says. “You’re not just another table somebody has to serve.” Here, everybody feels like somebody, she says. So many people love a good cheeseburger, which is why all kinds of people are attracted to her restaurant. Cheeseburger Baby’s handcrafted patties have been featured on the Food Network and consumed by celebrities such as

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How I Did It

Smiling After the Storm

With SBA assistance, Stephanie Vitori rebuilt her Miami Beach, FL restaurant after Hurricane Irma.

written by Jess Walker
Jay-Z and Kanye West. Stephanie has met famous chefs “all through a cheeseburger.” But just as special to her is the Vietnamese couple who came in one day, speaking little English. They were eager to meet Stephanie and show her a napkin with “Cheeseburger Baby” scrawled on it. On the other side of the world, a friend had told them to come, so they did. It all just goes to show you, Stephanie says, people come together for a great cheeseburger.

Challenge
Despite these sweet moments, there have also been bitter ones. Hurricane Irma struck in 2017, and Cheeseburger Baby lost equipment and food supplies. Thirty percent of sales blew away with the wind. “It was a zombie zone in South Beach. People were scared to come since they thought everything was destroyed,” Stephanie says. “It was the roughest road I’ve ever traveled.”

Solution
An SBA disaster assistance loan aided Cheeseburger Baby’s recovery. The SBA provides direct low-interest loans to businesses of all sizes, nonprofits, homeowners, and renters to repair damage or replace property not covered by insurance or other forms of assistance. SBA disaster assistance loans can also be used to rebuild stronger, protecting your home or business against future damage caused by a disaster. The SBA also introduced Stephanie to her local Small

What to do after a Disaster Declaration

After a disaster is declared by the President
Register with FEMA at disasterassistance.gov, or call (800) 621-3362, TTY 800-462-7585, or visit a Disaster Recovery Center. Locations can be found at fema.gov/drc. Businesses are automatically referred to the SBA. Most homeowners and renters will be referred by FEMA to the SBA to apply for disaster loan assistance. You must complete the SBA application to be considered for assistance. If the SBA cannot help you with a loan for all your needs, the SBA will in most cases refer you back to FEMA. If you do not complete an SBA application, you may not be considered for assistance from other agencies.

Express Bridge Loan Pilot Program
Businesses affected by a Presidential disaster declaration are eligible to receive expedited financing through an SBA Express lender. These funds may be used for disaster-related purposes while the business waits for long-term financing through the SBA’s direct disaster loan program.

Loan Amount: $25,000
Terms: up to seven years
Guarantee: 50%

After a disaster is declared by the SBA
Businesses of all sizes, nonprofits, homeowners, and renters are eligible to apply for an SBA disaster assistance loan. Visit a Business Recovery Center or Disaster Loan Outreach Center in your area or visit disasterloan.sba.gov/ela to apply for a loan. You can also call the SBA customer service center at (800) 659-2955, TTY (800) 877-8339, and ask for an application package. FEMA grant assistance for homeowners or renters is not available under an SBA declaration.

Information you need to get started:
• address of damaged residence or business and contact information
• insurance information, including type of insurance, policy numbers, and amount received
• household and/or business income
• description of disaster-caused damage and losses
Business Development Center, which provided assistance with financing options and marketing. She continues to meet with SBDC advisers every month to remain competitive in an ever-changing economy.

During disasters, the responsibility falls on the owner’s shoulders. But one lesson Stephanie has learned is the value in reaching out to others for assistance and counsel. While her brick-and-mortar restaurant was being rebuilt, she sold from a food truck. When the restaurant was operational again, she advertised that with spray paint on the plywood covering the broken windows. Stephanie and her wife, Gabrie Vitori, rebuilt Cheeseburger Baby by depending on each other and SBA assistance. See their story on YouTube by searching for the 2019 Phoenix Award for Small Business Disaster Recovery. “You’ve got to have resiliency. You’ve got to swallow your pride sometimes,” Stephanie says. “But you also have to believe in your product.”

Benefit
For Cheeseburger Baby, that product will continue satisfying the burger hankerings of locals, celebrities, and tourists alike. Vitori sees expansion in her future—she’d like to have a brick-and-mortar restaurant and food truck in each growing town in South Florida. “My whole life is this. I’ve always felt a love for business ownership,” Vitori says. “That drive keeps you going.”

The SBA provides direct low-interest loans to businesses of all sizes, nonprofits, homeowners, and renters to repair or replace damaged property not covered by insurance or other forms of assistance. SBA disaster assistance loans can also be used to rebuild stronger, protecting your home or business against future damage caused by a disaster. For information visit sba.gov/disaster.

Keep in mind
Since an SBA disaster assistance loan is a direct loan from the government, other organizations may reduce or not award you a grant if you have received an SBA loan or other assistance for your disaster loss. Be sure to check with the organization offering assistance to see how an SBA loan might affect your eligibility for their program. In general, recovery expenses covered by insurance, FEMA or other forms of assistance may reduce the amount provided by your SBA disaster assistance loan.

Get Ready
The Ready Business program, ready.gov/business, gives step-by-step guidance on how to prepare your business for a disaster. The series includes preparedness toolkits for earthquakes, hurricanes, inland flooding, power outages, and severe winds/tornadoes. Spanish materials are available.
Getting Back to Business:  
*Six essential preparedness steps for creating a continuity plan*

The financial and emotional cost of rebuilding a business after a disaster can be overwhelming. With a business continuity plan in place, you can recover more quickly. Your plan also puts you in a better position to contribute to the economic recovery of your community.

**Establish a communications plan**
- Test your calling tree or communications list to reach employees to ensure they and their families are safe.

**Protect your documents**
- Keep copies of vital business documents in a digital format or in an accessible, protected off-site location.

**Review insurance coverage**
- Contact your insurance agent to find out if your coverage is right for your business; make sure you understand the policy limits and deductibles.
- Ask about business interruption insurance, which compensates you for lost income and covers operating expenses if your company has to temporarily shut down because of a disaster.

**Establish a solid supply chain**
- If your vendors and suppliers are local and the disaster is widespread, you will all be in the same situation—struggling to recover. Put a disaster response plan in place to get key supplies from companies outside your area. Create a contact list of contractors and vendors you plan to use.

**Plan for an alternative location**
- Identify several places to relocate your operations in case you must close your primary location for an extended time.
- Consider creative options for available office space, including sharing space and resources with other businesses.
- Allow employees to telecommute until your location reopens.

**Practice your plan with your staff**
*Based on your location, assess your risk for every type of emergency.*
- Discuss as a group how your plan would be affected by different types of disasters, such as an earthquake, tornado, flood, mudslide, or hurricane.
Surety Bonds

SBA-backed surety bonds help small businesses succeed.

Eligible small businesses in the construction, supply, and service sectors better compete for contracting and subcontracting jobs using SBA-backed surety bonds.

How you benefit
Surety bonds help small businesses receive the bonding assistance they need to win contracts by providing the customer with a guarantee the work will be completed.

How surety bonds work
Many contracts require surety bonds, which are offered by surety companies. The SBA guarantee provides an incentive for surety companies to work with small businesses that would normally not be able to obtain the bond.

Is the program right for you?
Small businesses that often come to the SBA for surety bonds:
» startups and firms in business less than three years
» businesses with credit issues or internally prepared financial statements
» those who cannot secure bonding through regular commercial channels
» subcontractors with a desire to establish their own bonding as a prime contractor
» those wishing to increase their current bonding limits

How the SBA Helped Me Succeed
With SBA-backed surety bonds, Frank Spencer III has been able to better compete for commercial and government contracts. Aztec Contractors of El Paso, TX received the bonding support it needed to compete for construction contracts with the General Services Administration, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, and the Mission and Installation Contracting Command. Frank acquired Aztec in 2006 with no capital and only two employees. Now he employs 25 full time and provides internship opportunities. Sales have grown to about $30 million annually. Aztec now qualifies for bonding in the standard surety market without SBA support.
For all contracts and subcontracts up to $6.5 million, the SBA guarantees bid, payment, performance, and ancillary bonds issued by surety companies. For federal contracts up to $10 million, the SBA makes a guarantee if it’s in the best interest of the government. The SBA reimburses surety companies in case of default 90% of losses sustained for veteran & service-disabled veteran, minority, 8(a), and HUBZone-certified small businesses; all projects up to $100,000 and 80% for all other small businesses.

Need a surety bond guarantee fast?

For contracts under $400,000, the process is streamlined using the SBA’s QuickApp program.

» easy application
» no need to submit financials to the SBA
» online applications submitted to SBA authorized agents approved within hours

Ready to start?
The SBA partners with 36 surety companies and hundreds of bonding agents. Find authorized agents at sba.gov/osg.

Do you want to discuss the advantages of the SBA’s Surety Bond Guarantee program?
Contact a bonding specialist:

Tamara E. Murray
Denver, CO
(303) 927-3479

Kevin Valdes
Seattle, WA
(206) 553-7277

Jennifer C. Bledsoe
Washington, DC
(202) 205-6153
Taking the Helm

Jennifer Rahn steers Admiral Engineering and Manufacturing to success as a government subcontractor.

WRITTEN BY MICAELA MORRISSETTE
Jennifer Rahn was first hired as an office assistant at Phoenix, Arizona-based Admiral Engineering and Manufacturing Co. Rising to the top in a sector dominated by men, Rahn’s career sounds a lot like the classic American success story. She got there with the help of a mentor and business growth earned as a federal government subcontractor.

For 16 years, Rahn worked side-by-side with then-owner David Schlosser, who became her mentor. Rahn says she learned “everything it takes to run a machine shop. I naturally just picked it up and wanted it.”

The learning curve was steep—Admiral specializes in complex machined parts for industries including aerospace and communications—and Schlosser expected as much as he gave. “When I did something wrong, he told me, and I didn’t do that again,” Rahn said, laughing.

One of their largest clients, aerospace and defense company L3 Technologies, nominated Admiral for the SBA Subcontractor of the Year award. As a subcontractor for L3 Technologies, Rahn said she gets great satisfaction from knowing soldiers are able to communicate with their leaders because of parts her company has made.

When Schlosser decided to retire, he asked Rahn to purchase Admiral. “He did not want to sell to a corporation that would bring in their own people or end up foreclosing,” Rahn says. “Then all your hard work is gone. I agreed because it was everything I had spent my life working on, too.”

In September 2017, she took over as owner and president. Ownership transition poses a unique set of challenges. Rahn wanted to maintain relationships with her existing clients, which include major government contractors. She’s grateful prime contractors have incentive to subcontract with small business, and that helps businesses like Admiral.

Rahn has plans to grow, but not in the typical ways. She’s investing in replacing equipment, enhancing efficiency and productivity while leading Admiral into new arenas like 3D printing. Because of the stability provided by being a government subcontractor, she’s able to do all of this.

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**5 Tips for Success**

**Find a mentor.**
I had a great mentor in my company, and I reached for opportunity when it was in front of me.

**Always move forward.**
The SBA has educational resources to improve your business know-how. To learn more about government contracting and SBA certification programs, call your local SBA district office or procurement center representative.

**Compete smart.**

**Know your industry.**
I see everything; I have my hands in everything. I don’t want to expand to where I can’t do that anymore.

**Build a team.**
Everybody feels like this is our work family. My employees are as big a part of my company as I am, so I make sure they know that.
How to do business with the government

1. Consult your local Small Business Development Center (see page 8) or Procurement Technical Assistance Program adviser. Find your closest center at aptac-us.org.

2. Search https://beta.sam.gov to see if any federal agencies are looking for your product or service. Search the SBA SubNet database for subcontracting opportunities.

3. Attend an SBA district office contracting workshop. Visit sba.gov/localassistance to find your local office.

4. Identify your product or service number at naics.com.

5. Obtain a free DUNS number at fedgov.dnb.com/webform. A Unique Entity ID managed by Ernst & Young will replace DUNS in late 2020.

6. Register with the System for Award Management (sam.gov).

7. Research SBA certification programs like the 8(a), woman-owned small business, and HUBZone programs. If eligible, upload all required documents to certify.sba.gov before you submit an offer on a contract.
Government Contracting

Is it right for you? Government contracting can be a valuable tool to grow your small business, but it isn't for everyone. Complete the following readiness assessment to help you decide whether your company can successfully compete for government contracts.

1. Does the government buy the product or service that you sell?
   - Yes: Continue to question 2.
   - No: Contracting may not be for you at this time.
   - Question: Start with your local SBA district office. If you can't identify at least three federal agencies that might buy what you sell, contracting might not be right for you.

2. Are you capable of fulfilling a government contract (e.g., time, staffing, and materials)?
   - Yes: Continue to question 3.
   - No: Your local SBA district office can help you gauge ramp-up time and other factors that contribute to government contracting success.

3. Confirm your answer to all of the following:
   - Is the majority owner(s) a U.S. citizen?
   - Does your company have a place of business in the U.S.?
   - Is your business organized for profit?
   - Does your business generate revenue?
   - Yes: Continue to question 4.
   - No: These are requirements for participation in government contracting programs.

4. Are you credit worthy?
   - Yes: Continue to question 5.
   - No: Visit an SBA Resource Partner for tips on repairing your credit.
   - Question: Talk to an SBA Lender about how to build credit.

5. Do you have an accounting system that produces financial statements, such as profit and loss statements, balance sheets, and cash flow projections?
   - Yes: Continue to question 6.
   - No: Before you get into government contracting, make sure your accounting system is compatible with the government's requirements.
   - Question: This is a requirement for participation in some government contracting programs.

6. Do you have cash on hand to purchase working inventory, if needed?
   - Yes: Continue to question 7.
   - No: Talk to an SBA Lender about getting a line of credit or a loan to do business with the government.

7. Do you already have federal/state/local government contracting experience?
   - Yes: Continue to question 8.
   - No: If you don't yet have contracting experience, you won't reap the full benefit of opportunities like the 8(a) Business Development Program. You can participate in the 8(a) program once, so make sure it's the right time for you.

8. Do you know where to find contracting opportunities?
   - Yes: Continue to question 9.
   - No: Ask an SBA business opportunity specialist for help.

9. Make sure you have:
   - a DUNS number
   - the NAICS codes and size standards for your industry
   - SAM registration
   - Yes: Continue below.
   - No: This is a requirement for participation in some government contracting programs.

It sounds like you may be a good fit for government contracting! Visit your local SBA district office or sba.gov/contracting for more information.
SBA Certification Programs

Your business could earn profit and gain valuable work experience by providing goods or services to the government.

**HOW THE SBA HELPED ME SUCCEED**

September Myres knew that becoming a government contractor would empower herself and other native peoples, while also growing her small business to the next level. She sought business development assistance from the SBA, qualifying for the SBA 8(a) Business Development Program, which helps small disadvantaged businesses compete in the federal marketplace. This program helped September strategically grow her company to become a competitive force in the environmental services industry. Sundance Consulting of Pocatello, ID has won contracts from the Army Corps of Engineers and the U.S. Forest Service. She has continually secured Department of Defense contracts to improve Native American lands adversely affected by past department activities. September often assists Native American tribes and Alaska Native villages with developing projects and community plans.

American Indians, Alaska Natives, and native Hawaiians seeking entrepreneurial development training can start, grow, and expand their business with the help of the SBA, sba.gov/naa. The Office of Native American Affairs also consults with tribal governments prior to finalizing SBA policies affecting tribes.

Socially disadvantaged: those subjected to racial or ethnic prejudice or cultural bias without regard to their individual qualities because of their identity as members of certain groups. The following groups often fit this status: Black Americans, Native Americans, Alaska Natives, Native Hawaiians, Hispanic Americans, Asian Pacific Americans, and Subcontinent Asian Americans. A person who is not a member of one of these groups must establish that it is more likely than not that he or she has suffered social disadvantage.

Economically disadvantaged: those whose ability to compete in the marketplace has been impaired because they have not had as much capital and credit opportunities compared to others in the same or similar line of business.

The benefits of the 8(a) program:

» You are assigned an SBA professional to help coordinate business development assistance.

» You could be awarded an 8(a) sole-source contract up to $4 million for goods and services, $7 million for manufacturing, exceptions apply.

8(a) small business that can provide the needed services. This is an accelerated process saving time for both you and the government agency or office.

**All Small Mentor-Protege Program**

Looking for an opportunity to partner with a more experienced firm for mentorship? That effort can be rewarded in the All Small Mentor-Protege Program, sba.gov/allsmallmpp. At the same time you’re gaining invaluable direction and experience, you and your mentor can compete for government contracts, further growing your business. To qualify for this program:

» Proteges must have a mentor prior to applying for the program. Visit your local SBA office for guidance. Ask about the SBA’s Resource Partners and the Procurement Technical Assistance Program for help in connecting you with a mentor business.
Women-Owned Small Business Certification

If you’re a woman proprietor looking to sell to the federal government, you may be eligible for the Women-Owned Small Business certification, sba.gov/wosb.
Here’s how to get certified:

1. Make sure you’re eligible
   • Your business must be at least 51 percent owned and controlled by one or more women who are U.S. citizens. The ownership must be direct and unconditional.
   • A woman must hold the highest officer position and have managerial experience required to run the business.
   • One or more women must manage the daily business operations on a full-time basis and conduct long-term decision making and planning.

To qualify as an economically disadvantaged woman-owned small business, your company must meet these criteria and the business owner and/or manager must meet certain income and asset requirements.

2. Register
   • Register with the System for Award Management (sam.gov) to start doing business with the government.

3. Certify
   Self-certify as a woman-owned small business or an economically disadvantaged woman-owned small business for free, or obtain certification from one of the SBA’s approved third-party certifiers (which costs a fee):
   • El Paso Hispanic Chamber of Commerce
   • National Women Business Owners Corporation
   • U.S. Women’s Chamber of Commerce
   • Women’s Business Enterprise National Council

All required documents must be uploaded to certify.sba.gov prior to submitting an offer on a contract set aside for the program.

4. Update your status
   • Update your status as a woman-owned small business in sam.gov.

5. Search the database
   • Search the FedBizOpps database (fbo.gov) for your new business opportunity.
Get Expert Contracting & Certification Help

Federal contracting can be complex, but you don’t have to do it alone. A Procurement Technical Assistance Center adviser can help you determine if your business is ready for government contracting. An adviser can also help you register in the System for Award Management (sam.gov), and see if you’re eligible for any small business certifications and/or programs. One-on-one counseling is free or low cost. Visit sba.gov/localassistance to find your local SBA office or an SBA Resource Partner near you (see page 8).

Procurement Technical Assistance Centers

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Regional/State Contracting Programs

**Central Certification Programs**
For Hennepin and Ramsey counties, cities of Minneapolis and St. Paul
cert.smwbe.com

**MN Unified Certification Program**
For the city of Minneapolis, Metropolitan Airports Commission, Metropolitan Council, Minnesota Department of Transportation
mnucp.org

**North Central Minority Supplier Development Council**
northcentralmsdc.net

**Office of State Procurement**
sbcp.mn.gov
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