Contents

Local Business Assistance

8 National Success Story
Hometown Trolley has found success through determination, creativity, and a little help from friends at the U.S. Small Business Administration.

11 Local SBA Resource Partners

15 Your Advocates

16 How to Start a Business

18 Local Success Story
This woman-owned company, Intermountain Record Center, Inc., is a huge advocate for employing disabled individuals.

20 Write your Business Plan

23 Programs for Veterans

24 Programs for Entrepreneurs

25 Programs for Native Americans

Funding Programs

26 National Success Story
An SBA loan guarantee helps Hawaii entrepreneurs hop up their brewing operation.

29 Local Funding Programs

32 Need Financing?

33 Federal Research & Development

34 Why Export?

35 Investment Capital

36 National Success Story
Ember Industries receives SBA’s 2017 Phoenix Award For Outstanding Disaster Recovery Efforts.

38 SBA Disaster Loans

39 How to Prepare Your Business for an Emergency

40 Surety Bonds

Contracting

42 National Success Story
This small business has made it their business to provide quality staffing in the federal arena.

45 SBA Contracting Programs

47 Woman-Owned Small Business certification

48 Local Contracting Resources

50 8 Tips for Finding Government Contracting Opportunities

On the Cover: Clockwise from top: Omaha, Nebraska Tourism; Hunter Cattle, Brooklet, Georgia, courtesy of the SBA; North West of Ponca, Nebraska Tourism; Cody and Chrystal Brooks of White river feed; photo by crystal bach photography; Hometown Trolley, Wisconsin, courtesy of Hometown Trolley; 21 Short Stop, Georgia, courtesy of the SBA
This year the U.S. Small Business Administration marks its 65th year helping small businesses start, grow and succeed. The Agency remains committed to its core missions: advocating for entrepreneurs and helping them access capital, government contracts, counseling and disaster assistance. As Administrator of the SBA, I am honored to serve as a member of President Trump’s cabinet and represent the interests of America’s 30 million small businesses.

Small businesses truly are the engines of our economy—and our communities. Over half of the U.S. workforce either owns or works for a small business, and small businesses create two out of every three net new jobs in the private sector. Small businesses may not put their names on stadiums and skyscrapers, but they likely put them on the uniforms of their local Little League and bowling teams. They are the delis and salons and retailers and manufacturers that make each community special. Across our great country, neighborhoods and families depend on the success of small business.

Since taking leadership of the SBA in February 2017, I have had the privilege of meeting with entrepreneurs all over the country. My goal is to visit small businesses in every one of the SBA’s 68 districts. So many of them tell me they simply would not exist without the help of the SBA—from the guaranteed loans that provided the capital they needed to realize their dreams of owning a small business, to the advice they got from our district offices and resource partners, to the disaster aid they received when it seemed all hope had been lost.

Throughout this issue of our resource guide, you will read stories of successful entrepreneurs who received assistance from the SBA. These successes are the motivation for the work we do.

As SBA Administrator, I am proud to lead a team of professionals dedicated to helping entrepreneurs turn their visions into viable businesses. All of us share the joy of watching an entrepreneur go from having a simple idea and a business plan to living the American Dream—and often becoming an employer that empowers the dreams of others.

It’s clear that the strength of America’s communities is often determined by the economic opportunities available to its citizens. Small businesses invigorate neighborhoods and cities, making them vibrant places to live, work and raise a family. And we at the SBA are working to ensure small businesses have the tools and resources they need to make that happen at every stage, whether they are launching, expanding or getting through a tough time.

Of course, we can’t do it alone. We are honored to have the expertise of our resource partners, including Small Business Development Centers, Women’s Business Centers, Veterans Business Outreach Centers and SCORE chapters in communities nationwide.

As the President noted at an event he hosted at the White House with more than a hundred entrepreneurs from all over the country, “America is on the verge of a golden age for small business.” The SBA is working to continue to revitalize a spirit of entrepreneurship in America and help America’s small businesses compete in a global economy. Entrepreneurs find that owning a business is one of the most effective ways to secure a financial future for themselves, provide for their families, exercise their commitments to their communities, and drive our country’s economic growth. I encourage all entrepreneurs to leverage the opportunities detailed in this resource guide to propel their businesses forward.

Regards,
Linda McMahon
SBA Administrator
Advertise your company here.

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

Contact info@newsouthmediainc.com

DO YOU NEED SMALL BUSINESS SUPPORT?

The Rural Enterprise Assistance Project (REAP) at the Center for Rural Affairs offers:

- Bilingual small business training
- One-on-one technical assistance
- Small business loans

LOANS FROM $1,000 – $150,000

- Inventory
- Working capital
- Equipment
- Real estate

Learn more: cfra.org/REAP
In 2008, after working in the magazine business in Chicago, Washington, D.C., and Mississippi for 10 years, I moved back to my home state of West Virginia to create my own media company, New South Media, Inc. It was the scariest thing I’ve ever done. I didn’t know the first thing about starting a business, and I funded it myself by ransacking my retirement funds. When I started, I had one unpaid employee—me.

I had never heard of the U.S. Small Business Administration. I had no role model or support system to walk me through the process. All I had was a stack of dog-eared how-to books and a bucketload of grit and determination.

As an entrepreneur and a small business owner, I know firsthand the challenges small companies face. I live it everyday. I know what it is like to work 100–hour weeks, to pay your employees before yourself, and to need funding to grow your business, all while trying to raise educated and thoughtful children and still put dinner on the table. I know what it is like to be completely overwhelmed and to have doors slammed in your face, only to get up the next day and try, try again. I know what it feels like to fail. And I know what it feels like to succeed.

My goal when founding my company was to create publications that would be community builders, nurturing a culture that better encourages and supports small businesses by telling their stories. After all, small businesses outnumber corporations 1,162-to-one and are the lifeblood of our economy and culture.

As I look back on the past 10 years of business ownership, the thing I most wish I had known is what a valuable resource the SBA is to small businesses like my own. I can think of hundreds of mistakes I wouldn’t have made and tons of tools I could have used in those early, difficult days. And I’m pretty sure I’d also have a few less grays in my hair.

When I first saw a copy of the SBA Resource Guide, I flipped through the pages eagerly. But as you can imagine, as an editor and publisher, I always read magazines with a critical eye, and I caught myself thinking what my company would do differently with the publication.

It was four years ago when I decided to find out how to go about competing for the contract to become the publisher of the Small Business Resource Guide. I was introduced to the world of government contracting and the opportunities available for small businesses. And to be honest, it was a bit intimidating. As I navigated the process, there were many times when I almost stopped. Sometimes I thought there was no way a woman-owned small business in the rural state of West Virginia could compete and win a federal contract. But every time I had a question, someone from my SBA West Virginia district office was quick to answer it, and I kept persevering. That’s what we do as small business owners, right?

That’s why my team at New South Media and I are really excited to be the new publisher of the SBA’s Small Business Resource Guides. I’m inspired by the success stories we feature in each issue of this magazine, and it has been a pleasure to work with the SBA on redesigning and refocusing the content of these guides to better serve small businesses in all corners of the country. So, let’s use this magazine to educate everyone so all small businesses can know about the resources available to them.

Wishing you much success,
Becoming the Next Success Story

Our economy is built on the foundation of the success of our entrepreneurs, and for more than 60 years the U.S. Small Business Administration has promoted the interest of American entrepreneurs across the county. The Nebraska District office is proud to support the men and women who see opportunities and decide to start and grow a business. Working in partnership with lenders and business development organization, the Nebraska District Office team is helping entrepreneurs reach their goal. This resource guide is a valuable tool if business ownership is your dream.

We’ve seen that small businesses have done a great job obtaining the critical financing they need, while possessing the ability to respond and adapt quickly to the ever-changing economic climate. As I have said in the past, there is reason to continue to be optimistic and confident in the year ahead, especially for startups and existing small businesses. Overall, the pace of SBA loan-making in Nebraska District remains a healthy sign for the economy. In the Nebraska District market, businesses and entrepreneurs continued to discover new markets and opportunities. We are proud to report in Fiscal 2017, the Nebraska District Office realized another strong year with a $14.5 million in loan dollars, demonstrating continued strong demand in the number of loan approvals for our small businesses. The SBA’s microlending program in Nebraska realized a 22 percent increase in the size of loans, reaching those businesses that were not able to obtain financing elsewhere.

The SBA continues to enhance programs and services to meet today’s business environment. For example, the SBA continued to eliminate upfront fees paid by the borrower for all 7(a) loans in the amount of $50,000 or less, and provide special financing for veterans for loans up to $500,000. By utilizing today’s technology, the SBA is able to better serve lenders and small business owners by developing customer friendly online programs that enable lenders to process our guaranteed loans in an easier and expeditious manner, making it easier for small businesses to obtain needed financing.

Access to capital isn’t all that applies to sustaining and growing a small business. Management and technical knowledge on how a business operates is a factor in the success of a business. Businesses require a solid understanding of finance, accounting, marketing, operations, and close attention to detail. Business owners constantly must monitor key indicators: sales, receivables, cash flow, and inventory. More importantly, they should keep an open relationship with their lending partners. Following these practices will benefit a small business in these challenging economic times as well as more certain ones.

Our continuing efforts to improve the quality of service and information provided to our small business community includes local training programs and outreach to various groups, such as women, veterans, seniors and aspiring entrepreneurs in rural parts of the state. With the assistance of our valued resource partners (SCORE, Women’s Business Center, the Nebraska Business Development Center), we work hard to help our neighbors start and stay in business with critical access to capital, management and technical assistance training, counseling assistance and direction to secure government contracts. As the only federal agency whose sole mission is to assist our nation’s small businesses, I am proud of our office’s work as an advocate on your behalf.

Please keep this resource guide handy as an introduction to many of our services. I believe you will turn to it repeatedly whether you need help developing a business plan, registering your business, finding a lender, locating a business counselor, or discovering the world of exporting. As you continually seek sound counseling assistance and direction to secure government contracts, we strongly encourage you to take advantage of SBA programs and services, ensuring your continued success.

Our team is here to help and we look forward to working with you in 2018.

Sincerely,

Leon J. Milobar
Director of SBA Nebraska District Office

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Kristina Pence-Dunow did not intend to become a businesswoman, a cornerstone of her small town’s economy, and the nation’s only female owner of a transit vehicle manufacturer. In the beginning, she just wanted to keep the family business going.

Pence-Dunow was a dental assistant for the first several years of her adult life. Then, after giving birth to her son in 1988, she joined her husband’s family business. The company built fancy horse trailers as well as the occasional trackless trolley—a public transit vehicle designed to look like an old-timey streetcar but set on a bus chassis. She started out doing bookkeeping and upholstery work. It was a small shop, so everyone wore several hats.

Then, in the early 1990s, Pence-Dunow and her husband moved to Crandon, Wisconsin, so he could pursue a career in off-road racing. They took the trolley business with them. A few years later, her husband decided to devote his full attention to racing.

The couple eventually divorced and Pence-Dunow became sole owner of the business.

“I kept the trolleys going and raised my two children,” she says. The company made a few dozen vehicles each year, selling them through a distributor in Florida. Things were going well. At the time, all the nation’s trolley manufacturers were small, family-owned businesses. “We all just had our same customers and everybody stayed small.”

But then competition arrived. A large bus manufacturer began making trolleys, too. “They flooded the market. They had the capital behind them,” Pence-Dunow says. “I was being starved for sales.”

Other trolley companies shut their doors, but Pence-Dunow didn’t have a backup plan. She still had two kids to raise. So she did the only thing she could—she kept going.
Still rolling
Since she knew her company could not compete with the bus manufacturer on volume, Pence-Dunow knew she would have to out-innovate them. She rebuilt the business from the ground up. She cut ties with her Florida distributor and created her own network of dealerships. She rebranded the company as Hometown Trolley.

These changes came at a cost. Pence-Dunow had to lay off all her employees. She racked up debt. “I went six months with no work,” she says. But she was able to weather the storm, thanks to assistance from the U.S. Small Business Administration.

About the time she was rebuilding and rebranding her company, Pence-Dunow met Chuck Brys of the Small Business Development Center at the University of Wisconsin–Green Bay. Brys connected her to a local bank with an in-house SBA specialist, who guided her through getting an SBA-guaranteed loan to help cover her debt.

Brys also helped Pence-Dunow develop a business plan and put together three-year projections for Hometown Trolley’s growth. He encouraged her to be aggressive with those projections. To Pence-Dunow’s surprise, her company did not just meet those projections—they exceeded them.

Slowly, Hometown Trolley’s emphasis on innovation began to take hold. The company developed a handicap-accessible, low-floor trolley. The city of Virginia Beach, Virginia, ordered 15. The big bus manufacturer didn’t have a comparable model.

Pence-Dunow began landing similar contracts around the country, slowly taking a lead in the trolley market. Then, in 2016, she was able to purchase the bus company’s trolley division.

“I just kept sending the CEO an email,” Pence-Dunow says. It took a year and a half but, finally, the company agreed to sell. As luck would have it, the company wanted out of the trolley business so it could focus on its commercial truck line.

It was a big expenditure for a small company, but Pence-Dunow knew from experience how to make it work. She took out another SBA-guaranteed loan.

Picking up speed
Hometown Trolleys can now be found everywhere from Roanoke, Virginia, to Miami, Florida, and Laguna Beach, California. The vehicles are also found on the campuses of universities, theme parks, and retirement villages.
SBA Resource Partners

To help your business flourish, the SBA’s Resource Partners are here to help guide you through every phase of the business cycle. They provide counseling and training, for free or low cost, nationwide. These independent organizations, funded through SBA cooperative agreements or grants, extend our reach.

There are more than

300 SCORE chapters
980 Small Business Development Centers
100 Women’s Business Centers
20 Veterans Business Outreach Centers

SCORE

Join the ranks of other business owners who have experienced higher revenues and increased growth thanks to mentoring they received from SCORE. The nation’s largest network of volunteer business mentors harnesses the passion and knowledge of real-world business executives to provide invaluable mentorship. SCORE mentors are available as often as you need, in person, via email or over video chat. Visit sba.gov/score to start working on your business goals.

SMALL BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT CENTERS

Small Business Development Center counselors can help entrepreneurs realize their dream of business ownership. SBDC counselors help your business remain competitive in an ever-changing global economy. You have access to free one-on-one counseling and low-cost training. Some of the counseling and training topics available: marketing, regulatory compliance, technology development and international trade. Find your local Small Business Development Center at sba.gov/sbdc.

WOMEN’S BUSINESS CENTERS

Women interested in starting their small businesses can tap into a national network of community-based Women’s Business Centers. The centers offer training and counseling to those looking to make their entrepreneurial mark. If you’re interested in starting or expanding your business, your local Women’s Business Center is a good place to start. Each center tailors services to its community, offering a variety of programs in finance, management and marketing. For your nearest Women’s Business Center, visit sba.gov/women.

VETERANS BUSINESS OUTREACH CENTERS

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.

“...an iconic American form of transportation,” Pence-Dunow says. “A trolley is an experience. People will let a city bus go by and wait for a trolley.” The company is still innovating. Pence-Dunow hopes to expand her line of electric and liquefied petroleum gas–powered trolleys. Hometown Trolleys also has designed bus bodies for its existing chassis and drivetrains. It’s a way of tapping a small but profitable market. Small municipalities often wait years for buses from large manufacturers, since major cities snatch up most of the supply. Hometown Trolley can fill those small orders in much less time.

By 2020, Hometown Trolleys plans to be making more than 200 buses and trolleys a year—far more than the dozen or so it was making when Pence-Dunow took over. “I can’t believe how much we’ve grown,” she says.

In the past four years alone, the company has gone from $2 million in gross sales to $15 million. It moved from a 6,000-square-foot shop to a 32,000-square-foot factory, which is now being expanded. And, best of all, the company has grown its workforce from a dozen people to 54 full-time employees and a few part-timers, with plans to add six more employees soon.

And it’s still a family business. Pence-Dunow’s daughter Jessica does marketing and graphic design for the company. Her son Dustin helps run the production floor. Without help from the SBA, “I would have never stepped out and known what to do,” Pence-Dunow says. “All of that, it was great learning experience that I still use today. I’m doing a lot more on my own, because I have more resources, but I can refer back to that.”

But she says the most important resource was the moral support. “Someone saying, ‘You can do this.’”
Our Local SBA Resource Partners

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

SCORE
Visit sba.gov/score to start working on your business goals.

Arthur and Sandra Johnson, owners of 21 Short Stop in Georgia, received assistance from their local Small Business Development Center and SCORE chapter.

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geneknapp@hotmail.com

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1415 17th St.
Columbus, NE 68602
(402) 562-1242

Lincoln Chapter #39
285 S. 68th St., suite 208
Lincoln, NE 68588
(402) 437-2409
lincoln.scorechapter.org

Norfolk Chapter #160
609 W. Norfolk Ave.
Norfolk, NE 68701
(402) 371-4862
norfolk.score.org

Greater Omaha Chapter #40
10675 Bedford Ave., suite 100
Omaha, NE 68134
(402) 221-3606
(402) 221-3680 Fax
score@scoreomaha.org
omaha.scorechapter.org

Central Nebraska
(402) 817-3822
Women’s Business Centers
For your nearest Women’s Business Center, visit sba.gov/women.

Women’s Business Center
Center for Rural Affairs
Rural Enterprise Assistance Project
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Small Business Development Centers
Find your local Small Business Development Center at sba.gov/sbdc.

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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.

O’Connor Belting, a Delaware family-owned business, expanded with the help of an SBA-guaranteed 7(a) loan.

Business Organizations

Chambers of Commerce

Nebraska
nechamber.net

Omaha
omahachamber.org

Grand Island
gichamber.com

Lincoln Area
lcoc.com

Scottsbluff/Gering
scottsbluffgering.net

York
yorkchamber.org

North Platt
nparea.com

For a listing of other local chambers in Nebraska, go to officialusa.com/stateguides/chambers/nebraska

Economic development authorities/agencies

Nebraska Department of Economic Development
opportunity.nebraska.gov
Your Advocates

The SBA’s 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:
  - When you need economic and small business statistics
  - If your business could be negatively affected by regulations proposed by the government
  - If you have contracting issues with a federal agency

**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 helps you:
  - Reduce unfair penalties and fines
  - Seek remedies when rules are inconsistently applied
  - Recover payment for services done by government contractors

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.

To submit a comment or compliant 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 Nebraska

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

**The Start-Up 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 the applicable 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.

**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 business license office before you locate your business. You may not be permitted to conduct business out of your home or engage in industrial activity in a retail district.

**Name Registration**

- **NEBRASKA SECRETARY OF STATE**
  State Capitol
  1445 K St., suite 2300, Lincoln
  (402) 471-2554
  sos.ne.gov
  sos.ne.gov/admin/about/contact.html

- **State of Nebraska One-Stop Business registration system**
  nebraska.gov/osbr

**Taxes**

Any business with employees must register with the IRS and acquire an Employer Identification Number, also known as the Federal Tax ID Number, and pay federal withholding tax at least quarterly.

- **The IRS Small Business/Self-Employed Tax Center:**
  irs.gov/businesses/small-businesses-self-employed
  Here you can find the useful online tax calendar.

- **The Virtual Small Business Tax Workshop** is the first of a series of video products designed exclusively for small business taxpayers. This workshop helps business owners understand federal tax obligations, irs.gov/businesses/small-businesses-self-employed/small-business-self-employed-virtual-small-business-tax-workshop.

- **For small business forms and publications,** visit irs.gov/businesses small-businesses-self-employed/small-business-forms-and-publications.
Tax Assistance Centers

- **Internal Revenue Service**: 1616 Capitol Ave., Omaha
  or 100 Centennial Mall North, Lincoln
  [irs.gov](https://irs.gov)
- **Taxpayer Education Office**: (402) 221-3501
- **Taxpayer Advocate - Omaha**: (402) 221-4181
- **Nebraska Department of Revenue**
  301 Centennial Mall South, Lincoln
  (402) 471-5729, (800) 742-7474
  [revenue.nebraska.gov](http://revenue.nebraska.gov)
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  PO Box 94818
  Lincoln, NE 68509-4818
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  301 Centennial Mall South, Lincoln, (402) 471-5729
- **Omaha**
  Nebraska State Office Building
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- **Scottsbluff**
  505A Broadway, suite 800, Scottsbluff, (308) 632-1200
- **Norfolk**
  304 N. 5th St., suite D, Norfolk, (402) 370-3333
- **North Platte**
  200 S. Silber St., North Platte, (308) 535-8250

**State Safety & Health Regulations**
Office Of Safety & Labor Standards
- **Lincoln** (402) 471-4721
- **Omaha** (402) 595-3095
- **Hastings** (402) 462-2191
- **North Platte** (308) 535-8300
- **Sidney** (308) 254-6940

**Employee Insurance**
Nebraska Department Of Insurance
941 O St., suite 400, Lincoln (402) 471-2201

**Department of Labor**
Nebraska Workforce Development / Department of Labor
- **Administration Office** (402) 471-9000
- **Office of Workforce Services (check for local area offices)** (402) 471-9000
- **Office of Unemployment Insurance** (402) 471-9000
- **Check for local area offices at dol.nebraska.gov**

**Labor Laws**
301 Centennial Mall South, Lincoln
- **Child Labor and Minimum Wage**
  (402) 471-2239
- **Contractor Registration and Workplace Safety**
  (402) 471-2230

**State Registration of a Trademark**
Nebraska Secretary Of State
State Capitol
1445 K St., suite 2300, Lincoln
(402) 471-2554
[sos.ne.gov](http://sos.ne.gov)

**State Application**
Cody and Chrystal Brooks have a long history with White River Feed, a farm and ranch supply store in Chadron, Nebraska. Cody worked for the company for 12 years before purchasing it in 2012 with his then business partner, Craig Hoffman. The Nebraska Business Development Center (NBDC) helped Cody and Craig construct a business plan to receive a loan and line of credit. The NBDC helped Cody develop 12-month projected sales, profit and loss statements, and his business plan, which proved to be useful long after securing the loan. White River Feed offers a variety of farm and ranch supplies along with feed and seed. It sells agrichemicals, herbicides, pesticides, steel panels and gates, steel cattle feeders, steel feed bunks, wood and steel fence posts, and horse care supplies. Cody’s strategy for increasing sales is simple. He believes strongly in word-of-mouth advertising. White River Feed’s sales have increased every year since its purchase, and it now has five employees. Cody also worked with the NBDC Procurement Technical Assistance Center to secure three government contracts in 2015. Cody and Chrystal bought out Craig’s share of the business. They are considering expansion into South Dakota.

- **How has the SBA helped you grow your business?** When I bought this company five years ago, the SBA helped us structure the loan. The Nebraska Business Development Center at Chadron State College helped us to structure a business plan and that was an essential part of qualifying for the loan. We still utilize our business plan, by looking back on it to see if we are on course. We use it as a gauge to see how we are doing.

- **What are the biggest challenges you face as a small business owner?** The biggest challenge is competition, especially because of the type of business we are in and the area. There are a lot of people who sell feed and seed. We try to provide great products at affordable prices.

- **What advice do you have for other small businesses?** My only advice is to just do it. Don’t have reservations. If it is something you enjoy and are passionate about, do it and don’t look back. It isn’t easy. You are always going to run into bumps on the road, but with hard work you’ll overcome them. Don’t ever turn down the opportunity to learn something.

- **Have you continued to utilize your local SBA district office? If so, how?** We are planning to visit with the SBA in the near future. We are trying to buy the building we are in and we have expansion plans, so we will look to the SBA for help.

- **What are your future plans for expansion, if any?** We do plan to expand. We’d like to open up another store, and at some point, we’d like to put in a feed mill so we can make our own feed. That’s an expensive undertaking, so we aren’t going to rush into it.

- **What do you find are the satisfactions of small business ownership?** Our business is in the agriculture industry. I grew up in this industry and really enjoy it. I enjoy helping people. I work in a small community and the people I help are my friends and neighbors.
“You are always going to run into bumps on the road, but with hard work you’ll overcome them. Don’t ever turn down the opportunity to learn something.”

Cody and Chrystal Brooks, White River Feed, LLC
Write your Business Plan

Your business plan is the foundation of your business. Learn how to write a business plan quickly and efficiently with a business plan template.

Which business plan format is right for you?

Traditional Business Plan
- This type of plan is very detailed, takes more time to write, and is comprehensive.
- Lenders and investors commonly request this plan.

Lean Startup Plan
- This type of plan is high-level focus, fast to write, and contains key elements only.
- Some lenders and investors may ask for more information.

Business plans help you run your business

A good business plan guides you through each stage of starting and managing your business. You’ll use your business plan as a roadmap for how to structure, run, and grow your new business. It’s a way to think through the key elements of your business.

Business plans can help you get funding or bring on new business partners. Investors want to feel confident they’ll 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 choice.

Pick a business plan format that works for you

- There’s no right or wrong way to write a business plan. What’s important is that your plan meets your needs.
- Most business plans fall into one of two common categories: traditional or lean startup.
- **Traditional business plans** are more common, use a standard structure, and encourage you to go into detail in each section. They tend to require more work upfront and can be dozens of pages long.
- **Lean startup business plans** are less common but still use a standard structure. They focus on summarizing only the most important points of the key elements of your plan. They can take as little as one hour to make and are typically only one page.
TRADITIONAL BUSINESS PLAN FORMAT

You might prefer a traditional business plan format if you’re very detail oriented, want a comprehensive plan, or plan to request financing from traditional sources.

When you write your business plan, you don’t have to stick to the exact business plan outline. Instead, use the sections that make the most sense for your business and your needs. Traditional business plans use some combination of these nine sections.

Executive Summary
Briefly tell your reader what your company is 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
Use your company description to provide detailed information about your company. Go into detail about the problems your business solves. Be specific, and list out the consumers, organization, or businesses your company plans to serve.

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

Market Analysis
You’ll need a good understanding of your industry outlook and target market. Competitive research will show you what other businesses are doing and what their strengths are. 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
Tell your reader 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 LLC.

Use an organizational chart to lay out who’s in charge of what in your company. Show how each person’s unique experience will contribute to the success of your venture. Consider including resumes or CVs of key members of your team.

Service or Product Line
Describe what you sell or what service you offer. Explain how it benefits your customers and what the product lifecycle looks like. 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 in detail.

Marketing and Sales
There’s no single way to approach a marketing strategy. Your strategy should evolve and change to fit your unique needs.

Your goal in this section is to describe how you’ll attract and retain customers. You’ll also describe how a sale will actually happen. You’ll refer to this section later when you make financial projections, so make sure to thoroughly describe your complete marketing and sales strategies.

Funding Request
If you’re asking for funding, this is where you’ll outline your funding requirements. Your goal is to clearly explain how much funding you’ll need over the next five years and what you’ll use it for.

Specify whether you want debt or equity, the terms you’d like applied, and the length of time your request will cover. Give a detailed description of how you’ll use your funds. Specify if you need funds to buy equipment or materials, pay salaries, or cover specific bills until revenue increases. Always include a description of your future strategic financial plans, like paying off debt or selling your business.

Financial Projections
Supplement your funding request with financial projections. Your goal is to convince the reader that your business is stable and 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. If you have other collateral you could put against a loan, make sure to list it now.

Provide a prospective financial outlook for the next five years. 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.

This is a great place to use graphs and charts to tell the financial story of your business.

Appendix
Use your appendix to provide supporting documents or other materials that were specially requested. Common items to include are credit histories, resumes, product pictures, letters of reference, licenses, permits, patents, legal documents, and other contracts.

TRADITIONAL BUSINESS PLAN CHECKLIST

- Executive summary
- Company description
- Market analysis
- Organization and management
- Service or product line
- Marketing and sales
- Funding request
- Financial projections
- Appendix
LEAN STARTUP PLAN FORMAT

You might prefer a lean startup format if you want to explain or start your business quickly, your business is relatively simple, or you plan to regularly change and refine your business plan. Lean startup formats are charts that use only a handful of elements to describe your company’s value proposition, infrastructure, customers, and finances. They’re useful for visualizing tradeoffs and fundamental facts about your company.

There are many versions of lean startup templates, but one of the oldest and most well known is the Business Model Canvas, developed by Alex Osterwalder. You can search the web to find free templates of the Business Model Canvas, or other versions, to build your business plan.

We’ll discuss the nine components of the Business Model Canvas version here.

Key Partnerships
Note the other businesses or services you’ll work with to run your business. Think about suppliers, manufacturers, subcontractors and similar strategic partners.

Key Activities
List the ways your business will gain a competitive advantage. Highlight things like selling direct to consumers or using technology to tap into the sharing economy.

Key Resources
List any resource you’ll leverage to create value for your customer. Your most important assets could include staff, capital, or intellectual property. Don’t forget to 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. Is it automated or personal? In person or online? Think through the customer experience from start to finish.

Customer Segments
Be specific when you name your target market. Your business won’t be for everybody, so it’s important to have a clear sense of who your business will serve.

Channels
List the most important ways you’ll talk to your customers. Most businesses use a mix of channels and optimize them over time.

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

Revenue Streams
Explain how your company will actually make money. Some examples are direct sales, members fees, and selling advertising space. If your company has multiple revenue streams, list them all.

“If you fail to plan, you are planning to fail.”

Benjamin Franklin
Entrepreneurship training is available through the SBA’s programs for veterans, sba.gov/veterans. This includes active duty service members, those transitioning out of service, National Guard and Reserve members, and military spouses in the United States and at military installations around the world. Connect to other entrepreneurs and your local network of SBA Resource Partners through these services and programs. Veterans Business Outreach Centers, sba.gov/vboc, provide business training and counseling to those interested in starting or growing a small business.

Veteran-owned and service-disabled veteran-owned businesses nationwide interested in federal contracting can receive entrepreneurship guidance from the Veteran Federal Procurement Entrepreneurship Training Program. This program is administered by the Veteran Institute for Procurement, which has three training programs to assist veterans, VIP START, VIP GROW, and VIP INTERNATIONAL.

The Women Veteran Entrepreneurship Training Program serves women who are veterans, service members, and spouses of service members and veterans as they start or grow their business.

Loan Fee Relief
To encourage lending to veterans who want to start or grow their businesses, the SBA reduces upfront guarantee fees on select loans. That means the cost savings will be passed down to you, the eligible veteran. To learn about this loan fee relief, contact your local SBA district office or ask your SBA Lender about the Veterans Advantage program.

Have an employee who was called to active duty?
Ask your SBA Lender about the Military Reservist Economic Injury Disaster Loan Program. It provides loans up to $2 million to small businesses for working capital caused by the loss of an essential employee called to active duty in the National Guard or Reserve.

If you are a veteran or a service-disabled veteran, there are many opportunities for you and your small business.

Programs for Veterans

Entrepreneurship training is available through the SBA’s programs for veterans, sba.gov/veterans. This includes active duty service members, those transitioning out of service, National Guard and Reserve members, and military spouses in the United States and at military installations around the world. Connect to other entrepreneurs and your local network of SBA Resource Partners through these services and programs. Veterans Business Outreach Centers, sba.gov/vboc, provide business training and counseling to those interested in starting or growing a small business.

Entrepreneurship Training Programs

Boots to Business is an entrepreneurial training program offered by the SBA as a training track within the Department of Defense’s Transition Assistance Program. The curriculum provides valuable assistance to those transitioning out of service and their spouses. You explore business ownership and other self-employment opportunities while learning key business concepts. Participants learn how to access start-up capital using SBA resources. This program provides the foundational knowledge required to develop a business plan.

Boots to Business: Reboot delivers the Boots to Business curriculum to veterans of all eras, members of the National Guard and Reserve, and military spouses in their local communities.

Jack Goodison, a veteran, grew his business in Rhode Island, J. Goodison Co., with the help of an SBA-guaranteed 504 loan.
Programs for Entrepreneurs

SBA’s Emerging Leaders program helps grow businesses.

Business executives looking for their next challenge and the opportunity to take their business to the next level will find it with the SBA’s Emerging Leaders program, sba.gov/emergingleaders.

Graduates of Emerging Leaders, an intense seven-month entrepreneurship program, reported that they have been able to grow their businesses and drive economic development within their communities. Emerging Leaders executives are chosen through a competitive selection process. The program fosters a learning environment that accelerates the growth of high-potential small businesses, while providing training and peer networking sessions.

Emerging Leaders graduates join a network of 5,000 alumni nationwide. Since the start of the program, graduates have reported gaining more than $300 million total in new financing and securing over $2.16 billion in government contracts.

Online Resources for Entrepreneurs

Find short courses and learning tools to start and grow your small business at the sba.gov Learning Center.

The SBA’s free Online Learning Center courses help you start and grow your small business. The Learning Center is a great resource for every entrepreneur, especially rural business owners looking for easy access to vital business training. Courses available include:

- Writing your business plan
- Legal requirements for your small business
- Small business financing options
- Digital and traditional marketing to win customers
- Your options during a disaster
- Access the SBA’s Learning Center at sba.gov/learning.

Aspiring entrepreneurs can learn how to launch a business with the Business Smart Toolkit. This online workshop lays the groundwork, teaching you how to build a business that is ready to take on credit.

- The three parts of the toolkit:
  - Basics of business startup
  - Building business credit
  - How to find additional small business support and educational resources

The toolkit can be presented as a class, like within a community organization, or for small group or individual at-home use. The toolkit and instructor guide are written so that a community volunteer can feel comfortable presenting the information. Find the free download at sba.gov/businesssmart.
American Indians, Alaska Natives, and Native Hawaiians seeking entrepreneurial development training can start and grow their business with the help of these SBA-supported programs. The SBA, sba.gov/naa, also consults with tribal governments prior to finalizing SBA policies affecting tribes.

The Cherokee Nation
Tahlequah, Oklahoma
Receive executive coaching in financial management, sales, marketing and product management. Visit cherokee.org/contact.aspx.

Oregon Native American Business and Entrepreneurial Network
Portland, Oregon & Tulsa, Oklahoma
Develop your business on native lands and find peer mentoring that focuses on building native microenterprise throughout Oregon, Oklahoma, Texas and New Mexico. Visit onaben.org.

Rural Enterprises of Oklahoma, Inc. (REI Oklahoma)
Durant, Oklahoma
Do you need business counseling, 8(a) certification assistance and other training? The organization has two Native American business resource centers in Oklahoma. Visit reiok.org.

The Native American Development Corporation
North Billings, Montana
Receive counseling in government contracting through the SBA’s 8(a) program and other federal and state programs. Register to attend networking events, conferences and workshops at nadc.ecenterdirect.com/signup.

Hi’ilei Aloha LLC
Honolulu, Hawaii
Do you have an idea and want to see if it could become a successful business? For the next entrepreneurship course for Native Hawaiians, visit hilee.org.

Indian Dispute Resolution Services, Inc.
Plymouth, California
Tribal members in California, Nevada, and Oregon can receive computer accounting and business training through the microenterprise initiatives at idrsinc.org.
When Garrett Marrero and Melanie Oxley applied for loans to buy a brewpub in Maui in 2004, it didn’t go well. “We got laughed out of every bank in the state,” Marrero likes to say.

As it turns out, they would have been a good risk. Over the past 14 years, Marrero and Oxley have built an operation that employs hundreds, sells internationally, and enriches its community. They were recognized by the U.S. Small Business Administration in 2017 as National Small Business Persons of the Year.

A California native, Marrero grew up in a family that appreciates craft beer. He tried homebrewing in high school and had friends who brewed. “When I traveled, experiencing the local beer was always important to me,” he says. “So when I came to Hawaii, I thought the local beer was ridiculous. I knew I could put people together to make great beer.”

He and Oxley were living and working in California and, in 2004, decided to move to Hawaii and brew beer. They learned that the Fish and Game Brewing Company on Maui was for sale. Since banks wouldn’t finance the inexperienced entrepreneurs, they sold and mortgaged everything they could, plundered retirement funds, and borrowed from parents and grandparents in order to buy the seven-barrel brewpub and restaurant.

A Good Risk
An SBA loan guarantee helps Hawaii entrepreneurs Garrett Marrero and Melanie Oxley hop up their brewing operation.

written by Pam Kasey
“I had that typical young male can’t-go-wrong kind of attitude, but I think Melanie was more nervous.” Marrero recalls. “It was a little scary. But we both took it as extra motivation to succeed—we couldn’t fail our family and our friends.”

The couple were new to entrepreneurship, but they applied a strong work ethic and good business sense to the task. They quickly set up a 25-barrel brewhouse and, in 2007, were among the earliest small breweries to distribute in cans—a move that craft breweries have since embraced as both financially and environmentally sound. And having savvily gotten a right of first refusal on adjacent units, they expanded. By 2012, they’d grown from 5,000 to 13,000 square feet. “We flat-out needed more space,” Marrero says.

This time, they approached the SBA for help. “The way it works is, you have to have the financing through an SBA lending partner—a local bank—and then the SBA guarantees part of the loan,” Marrero says. Maui Brewing took out a multimillion-dollar loan to buy land and build a building for 25- and 50-barrel brewhouses down the road in Kihei. “We would not have been approved for such a loan without the SBA.”

Maui Brewing Company’s six year-round beers include its signature Pineapple Mana Wheat and Coconut Hiwa Porter which, like many of its seasonal brews, use locally grown ingredients. “They always say small business is the backbone of America; I think farmers even more so,” Marrero says.
“We brew our seasonal POG IPA with passionfruit, orange, and guava juice, locally grown. Integrating that into a style that dates back to the 1600s, an IPA, makes it unique.”

Today the operation consists of the Kihei brewery and three restaurants: the original location, one established on the island of Oahu in 2017, and one opened at the brewery in early 2018. The company distributes in 23 states and internationally. By year-end, Marrero expects to have a fourth restaurant, employ 700 or more, and top $20 million in revenue. Later ambitions include distilled spirits and craft cocktails in cans.

In addition to supporting Hawaii growers, Maui Brewing offers a share of sales to local nonprofits. It also plays an integral role in the Maui Brewers Festival, which draws visitors and raises money for the Maui Arts and Cultural Center.

And Marrero shares his hard-won expertise with aspiring entrepreneurs. His advice? “Work with several local lenders, but definitely involve the Small Business Development Center in your area. They’ll help with feasibility studies, putting together a good loan package,” he says. “Be clear and concise with your vision, and don’t rely on others to sell your story—you are your best advocate.”

Melanie Oxley  and Garrett Marrero

SBA Guaranteed Loans

For small business entrepreneurs who cannot get traditional forms of credit, an SBA-guaranteed loan can fill that need. The SBA guarantees loans made by lending institutions to small businesses that would otherwise be able to obtain financing. The lender works with applicants to determine the best option for the small business. For those who are eligible and cannot obtain conventional financing with reasonable rates and terms, the guarantee reduces a lender’s risk of loss in the event of a default on the loan. The SBA guarantee is conditional on the lender following SBA program requirements. Just like with any other loan, you make your loan payments directly to your SBA Lender in accordance with your terms.

Visit your local SBA office for a lender referral, or use Lender Match, sba.gov/lendermatch.

The SBA’s online tool connects entrepreneurs with SBA Lenders interested in making small business loans in your area.
Local Funding Programs

Visit sba.gov/ne for our full list of SBA Lenders.

Participating SBA Lenders – Preferred Lenders

American National Bank
8990 W. Dodge Road
Omaha, NE 68114
(402) 399-5000

Bank of The West
13320 California St.
Omaha, NE 68154
(402) 554-5690

First National Bank of Omaha
1620 Dodge St.
Omaha, NE 68197
(402) 341-0500

Great Western Bank
14545 W. Center Road
Omaha, NE 68144
(402) 952-6000

Mutual Of Omaha Bank
3333 Farnam St.
Omaha, NE 68131
(402) 351-8000

Core Bank
12100 W. Center Road,
suite 801
Omaha, NE 68144
(402) 333-9100

Nebraska Bank of Commerce
6000 Village Drive
Lincoln, NE 68516
(402) 423-2111

SBAExpress Lenders

Access Bank
8712 W. Dodge Road
Omaha, NE 68114
(402) 763-6000

Adams Bank & Trust
315 N. Spruce St.
Ogallala, NE 69153-2517
(308) 284-4071

American National Bank
8990 W. Dodge Road
Omaha, NE 68114
(402) 399-5000

Amfirst Bank
602 W. B St.
McCook, NE 69001
(308) 345-1555

Auburn State Bank
1212 J St.
Auburn, NE 68305
(402) 274-4342

Bankfirst
100 N. 13th St.
Norfolk, NE 68701
(402) 371-8005

Bank of Bennington
12212 N. 156th St.
Bennington, NE 68007
(402) 238-2245

Bank of Hartington
229 N. Broadway
Hartington, NE 68739
(402) 254-3994

Bank of Keystone
105 Inland Seas
Keystone, NE 69144
(308) 726-2171

Bank of the Valley
404 State St.
Bellwood, NE 68624
(402) 538-3025

Cedar Security Bank
117 Main St.
Fordyce, NE 68736
(402) 357-3508

Centris Federal Credit Union
11825 Q St.
Omaha, NE 68137
(402) 334-7000

Citizens State Bank
921 Avenue E St.
Waverly, NE 68791
(402) 529-3291

Columbus Bank & Trust Co.
2501 13th St.
Columbus, NE 68601-4913
(402) 564-1234

Core Bank
12100 W. Center Road
Omaha, NE 68144
(402) 898-3324

Cornhusker Bank
1101 Cornhusker Highway
Lincoln, NE 68521-2350
(402) 434-2265

Enterprise Bank
12800 W. Center Road
Omaha, NE 68144
(402) 330-0200

Equitable Bank
113 N. Locust St.
Grand Island, NE 68801
(308) 382-3136

Exchange Bank
14 Labarre St.
Gibbon, NE 68840
(308) 468-5741

UMB Bank, National Association
11808 W. Center Road
Omaha, NE 68144
(402) 330-7770

Union Bank And Trust Co.
3643 S. 48th St
Lincoln, NE 68506
(402) 323-1828

US Bank National Association
1700 Farnam St.
Omaha, NE 68102
(402) 492-8321

Wells Fargo Bank
1919 Douglas St.
Omaha, NE 68102-1317
(402) 536-2022

First State Bank Nebraska
2701 Grainger Parkway
Lincoln, NE 68516
(402) 858-1771

SBAExpress Lenders

Access Bank
8712 W. Dodge Road
Omaha, NE 68114
(402) 763-6000

Adams Bank & Trust
315 N. Spruce St.
Ogallala, NE 69153-2517
(308) 284-4071

American National Bank
8990 W. Dodge Road
Omaha, NE 68114
(402) 399-5000

Amfirst Bank
602 W. B St.
McCook, NE 69001
(308) 345-1555

Auburn State Bank
1212 J St.
Auburn, NE 68305
(402) 274-4342

Bankfirst
100 N. 13th St.
Norfolk, NE 68701
(402) 371-8005

Bank of Bennington
12212 N. 156th St.
Bennington, NE 68007
(402) 238-2245

Bank of Hartington
229 N. Broadway
Hartington, NE 68739
(402) 254-3994

Bank of Keystone
105 Inland Seas
Keystone, NE 69144
(308) 726-2171

Bank of the Valley
404 State St.
Bellwood, NE 68624
(402) 538-3025

Cedar Security Bank
117 Main St.
Fordyce, NE 68736
(402) 357-3508

Centris Federal Credit Union
11825 Q St.
Omaha, NE 68137
(402) 334-7000

Citizens State Bank
921 Avenue E St.
Waverly, NE 68791
(402) 529-3291

Columbus Bank & Trust Co.
2501 13th St.
Columbus, NE 68601-4913
(402) 564-1234

Core Bank
12100 W. Center Road
Omaha, NE 68144
(402) 898-3324

Cornhusker Bank
1101 Cornhusker Highway
Lincoln, NE 68521-2350
(402) 434-2265

Enterprise Bank
12800 W. Center Road
Omaha, NE 68144
(402) 330-0200

Equitable Bank
113 N. Locust St.
Grand Island, NE 68801
(308) 382-3136

Exchange Bank
14 Labarre St.
Gibbon, NE 68840
(308) 468-5741
<table>
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<th>FUNDING PROGRAMS</th>
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| Farmers State Bank  
234 S. Commercial Ave.  
Wallace, NE 69169  
(402) 387-4319 |
| First State Bank  
2002 Broadway  
Scottsbluff, NE 69361-1902  
(308) 632-4158 |
| First State Bank  
1005 E. 23rd St.  
Fremont, NE 68025  
(402) 721-2500 |
| First State Bank Nebraska  
4915 Old Cheney Road  
Lincoln, NE 68516  
(402) 420-5200 |
| First Westroads Bank Inc.  
15750 W. Dodge Road  
Omaha, NE 68118-2535  
(402) 330-7200 |
| Five Points Bank  
2015 N. Broadwell Ave.  
Grand Island, NE 68803-2759  
(308) 384-5350 |
| Five Points Bank of Hastings  
2815 Osborne Drive West  
Hastings, NE 68901  
(402) 462-2228 |
| Frontier Bank  
301 S. Main St.  
Madison, NE 68748  
(402) 454-3381 |
| Foundation One Bank  
23804 Cedar Drive  
Waterloo, NE 68069-9501  
(402) 779-2545 |
| Great Southern Bank  
1902 Harlan Drive  
Belleview, NE 68005-3667  
(402) 291-2000 |
| Great Western Bank  
6015 NW Radial Highway  
Omaha, NE 68104  
(402) 952-6000 |
| Henderson State Bank  
1040 N. Main St.  
Henderson, NE 68371  
(402) 723-4441 |
| Heritage Bank  
110 E. Ninth St.  
Wood River, NE 68883  
(308) 583-2262 |
| Home Federal Savings & Loan Association Of Grand Island  
221 South Locust St.  
Grand Island, NE 68801  
(308) 382-4000 |
| Midwest Bank  
114 W. Main St.  
Pierce, NE 68767  
(402) 329-6221 |
| Mutual Of Omaha Bank  
3333 Farnam St.  
Omaha, NE 68131  
(402) 351-6118 |
| Nebraska Bank Of Commerce  
6000 Village Drive  
Lincoln, NE 68516  
(402) 423-2111 |
| Nebraskaland National Bank  
1400 S. Dewey St.  
North Platte, NE 69101  
(308) 534-2100 |
| Northwest Bank  
14320 Arbor St.  
Omaha, NE 68144  
(402) 334-6760 |
| Pender State Bank  
222 Main St.  
Pender, NE 68047  
(402) 385-3063 |
| Peoples-Webster County Bank  
126 W. Fourth St.  
Red Cloud, NE 68970-2433  
(402) 746-2251 |
| Pinnacle Bank  
1401 N St.  
Lincoln, NE 68508  
(402) 434-3100 |
| Platte Valley Bank  
1212 Circle Drive  
Scottsbluff, NE 69361  
(308) 632-7004 |
| Richardson County Bank and Trust Co.  
1616 Harlan St.  
Falls City, NE 68355-2655  
(402) 245-2486 |
| SAC Federal Credit Union  
11515 S. 39th St.  
Belleview, NE 68123  
(402) 292-8000 |
| Security Bank  
202 E. Second St.  
Laurel, NE 68745  
(402) 256-3247 |
| Security First Bank  
5505 Red Rock Lane  
Lincoln, NE 68516  
(402) 323-8045 |
| Security National Bank Of Omaha  
1120 S. 101st St.  
Omaha, NE 68124  
(402) 344-7300 |
| Security State Bank  
(Dundee Bank)  
624 Main St.  
Ansley, NE 68814  
(308) 935-1700 |
| State Bank of Table Rock  
402 Houston St.  
Table Rock, NE 68447  
(402) 839-2035 |
| The Cattle National Bank and Trust Co.  
104 S. Fifth St.  
Seward, NE 68434  
(402) 643-3636 |
| The Jones National Bank and Trust Company of Seward  
510 Bradford St.  
Seward, NE 68434  
(402) 643-3602 |
| The Tri-County Bank  
106 N. Main St.  
Stuart, NE 68780  
(402) 924-3861 |
| Two Rivers Bank  
555 S. 19th St.  
Blair, NE 68008  
(402) 426-9500 |
| UMB Bank, National Association  
11808 W. Center Road  
Omaha, NE 68144  
(402) 330-7770 |
| Union Bank and Trust Co.  
3643 S. 48th St.  
Lincoln, NE 68506  
(402) 323-1828 |
| United Republic Bank  
111 N. 181st St.  
Omaha, NE 68154  
(402) 505-8500 |
US Bank National Association  
1700 Farnam St.  
Omaha, NE 68102  
(612) 492-8321  
Valley Bank And Trust Co.  
1701 First Ave.  
Scottsbluff, NE 69361  
(308) 632-7500

Washington County Bank  
1523 Washington St.  
Blair, NE 68008  
(402) 426-2111  
Wells Fargo Bank  
1919 Douglas St.  
Omaha, NE 68102-1317  
(402) 536-2022

Western Nebraska Bank  
301 Center Ave.  
Curtis, NE 69025  
(308) 367-4155  
West Gate Bank  
6003 Old Cheney Road  
Lincoln, NE 68516  
(402) 323-3456  
York State Bank & Trust Co.  
700 Lincoln Ave.  
York, NE 68467-2995  
(402) 362-4411

Export Express Lenders  
Access Bank  
8712 W. Dodge Road  
Omaha, NE 68114  
(402) 763-6000

Bank of the West  
13320 California St.  
Omaha, NE 68154  
(402) 918-2332

First National Bank Of Omaha  
1620 Dodge St.  
Omaha, NE 68197  
(402) 341-0500  
First Nebraska Bank  
330 N. Spruce St.  
Valley, NE 68064  
(402) 359-2281

First Savings Bank  
3540 S. 84th St.  
Omaha, NE 68124  
(402) 399-8400  
Great Western Bank  
9290 W. Dodge Road  
Omaha, NE 68114  
(402) 952-6000

UMB Bank, National Association  
11808 W. Center Road  
Omaha, NE 68144  
(402) 330-7770

US Bank National Association  
1700 Farnam St.  
Omaha, NE 68102  
(612) 492-8321  
Wells Fargo Bank  
1919 Douglas St.  
Omaha, NE 68102-1317  
(402) 536-2022

State Bank of Table Rock  
402 Houston St.  
Table Rock, NE 68447  
(402) 839-2035

Participating Nonprofit Community Lenders  
Community Advantage  
Nebraska Enterprise Fund  
330 N. Oakland Ave.  
Oakland, NE 68045  
(402) 685-5500  
nebbiz.org

Microloan Program  
Participating Nonprofit Community Lenders, Microlenders  
Center for Rural Affairs Rural Enterprise  
Assistance Project  
145 Main St.  
Lyons, NE 68038  
(402) 687-2100  
cfra.org/reap

REAP Hispanic Business Center Statewide  
Juan Sandoval, REAP HBC director  
902 N. Victory Road  
Norfolk, NE 68701  
(402) 371-7786  
juans@cfra.org

REAP Women’s Business Center Statewide  
Monica Braun, REAP WBC director  
(402) 643-2673  
monicab@cfra.org

Southeast Region:  
Janelle Moran, loan specialist  
62424 729th Road  
Tecumseh, NE 68450  
(402) 335-3675  
janellem@cfra.org

Northeast/Central Region:  
Gene Rahn, senior loan specialist  
206 Sixth Ave.  
Atkinson, NE 68713  
(402) 925-2920  
gener@cfra.org

Southwest and Central Region:  
Dena Beck, loan specialist, senior project leader  
1662 32nd Road  
Minden, NE 68959  
(308) 528-0600  
denab@cfra.org

Nancy Flock, Hispanic loan specialist  
215 S. Sycamore  
North Platte, NE 69101  
(308) 534-3508  
nancyf@cfra.org

Panhandle Region:  
Jerry Terwilliger, loan specialist  
P.O. Box 284  
Morrill, NE 69358  
(308) 247-9926  
jerryt@cfra.org

Community Development Resources  
285 S. 68th St. Place, suite 520  
Lincoln, NE 68510  
(402) 436-2387  
cdr-nebraska.org

Nebraska Economic Development Corporation (NEDCO)  
4445 S. 86th St., suite 200  
Lincoln, NE 68526  
(402) 483-4600  
nedcoloans.org

Community Development Resources (CDR)  
285 S. 68th St. Place, suite 520  
Lincoln, NE 68510  
(402) 436-2387  
cdr-nebraska.org

504 Certified Development Company Loan Program  
Participating Certified Development Companies  
Nebraska Enterprise Fund  
330 N. Oakland Ave.  
Oakland, NE 68045  
(402) 685-5500  
nebbiz.org
Need Financing?

Visit your local SBA office or lender to learn about these SBA loan programs.

**The 7(a) Loan**
The 7(a) loan is the SBA’s largest financing program because it can be used for almost any business purpose, and it offers reasonable rates and terms. If you’re unable to get conventional financing and you meet the eligibility requirements, you could use a 7(a) loan to purchase real estate, equipment, working capital, or inventory for your small business. Loan proceeds may also be used 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 percent

**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 percent

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**SBA Microlenders**
Entrepreneurs can borrow from $500 to $50,000 and access free business counseling from SBA microlenders. If you need working capital or funds for supplies, equipment, fixtures, and furniture, a microloan can help eligible businesses start up and grow.

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

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

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

**MAX LOAN AMOUNT (UP TO 40 PERCENT 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 or 20 year terms

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

**GUARANTEE:** the SBA Lender provides a senior loan for 50 percent of the project cost (with no SBA guarantee); the CDC finances up to 40 percent 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 percent

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**Caplines**
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.

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**SBAExpress Loan**
An SBAExpress loan is a small loan 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 percent; for loans of $50,000 and greater, prime + 4.75 percent

**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 percent

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**Community Advantage Program**
Community Advantage lenders are community-based financial institutions focused on financing for women, veterans, low-income borrowers, and minority entrepreneurs just starting up or in business for a few years. The program can provide access to free business counseling at the same time you are putting together your financing.

**INTEREST RATE:** prime + 6 percent

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

**GUARANTEE:** 75 to 90 percent
Interested in Federal Research & Development?

If your small business is engaged in next gen research and development, you can compete for funding under the Small Business Innovation Research and the Small Business Technology Transfer programs.

The Small Business Technology Transfer Program

The Small Business Technology Transfer program is for entrepreneurs interested in collaborating with one of these agencies for research & development:

- Department of Defense
- Department of Energy
- Department of Health & Human Services
- NASA
- National Science Foundation

Both programs have three phases:

**Phase I** is to establish the technical merit, feasibility and commercial potential of the proposed project. Awards are often up to $150,000 for one year.

**Phase II** funding is based on the results achieved in phase I and the scientific, technical merit and commercial potential of the project. Awards are often up to $1 million for two years.

**Phase III** is for the small business to pursue commercialization. It may involve U.S. government contracts.

Learn about these competitive awards-based programs at sbir.gov.

If your product has a potential for commercialization, look into the **Small Business Innovation Research program**. Many small businesses enter the nation’s research and development arena because of this program. The United States gains your entrepreneurial vision while meeting specific research and development needs.

Each year, federal agencies with large research and development budgets are required to allocate 3.2 percent of it to this program. You could receive funding from one of these 11 participating federal agencies:

- Department of Agriculture
- Department of Commerce - National Institute of Standards and Technology or the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration
- Department of Defense
- Department of Education
- Department of Energy
- Department of Health and Human Services
- Department of Homeland Security
- Department of Transportation
- Environmental Protection Agency
- NASA
- National Science Foundation
**Why Export?**

You want to increase revenue. Exporting would make you less dependent on any one market. It’s also a smart option for stabilizing sales if your product is seasonal.

Small businesses can enter and excel in the international marketplace using State Trade Expansion Program grants and training. To find out if your state is participating visit [sba.gov/internationaltrade](http://sba.gov/internationaltrade). 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**

Ask your SBA Lender about the [Export Express Loan](http://sba.gov/exportexpress) for enhancing your export development.

- **Max loan amount:** $500,000
- **Interest rate:** negotiated between lender and business, fixed or variable rate, typically not to exceed prime + 6.5 percent
- **Terms based on use of loan:** for real estate, up to 25 years; for equipment, up to 10 years; for lines of credit, up to seven years
- **Guarantee:** up to 90 percent

The International Trade Loan can position you to enter or expand into international markets. It can also help you better compete if your business has been adversely affected by unfair trade practices.

- **Max loan amount:** $5 million
- **Interest rate:** negotiated between lender and business, fixed or variable, not to exceed prime + 2.75 percent
- **Terms based on use of loan:** for real estate, up to 25 years; for equipment, up to 10 years
- **Guarantee:** up to 90 percent

Exporters looking to meet their short-term capital needs can use the [Export Working Capital Program](http://sba.gov/exportcapital). Use this loan to purchase inventory to make the products you export or to finance receivables. You can apply for lines of credit prior to finalizing an export sale or contract.

- **Max loan amount:** $5 million
- **Interest rate:** negotiated between lender and business, fixed or variable rate
- **Terms:** typically one year, cannot exceed three years
- **Guarantee:** up to 90 percent

**Benefits of Exporting**

Nearly 96 percent of consumers live outside the U.S., and two-thirds of the world’s purchasing power is in foreign countries. If you’re a small business owner, here’s how to work with the SBA for your trade needs.

**STEP 1 GET COUNSELING**

**STEP 2 FIND BUYERS**

**STEP 3 GET FUNDING**

**One-Stop Exporting Shops**

Find an SBA professional in one of these 21 U.S. Export Assistance Centers located in major metro areas, [sba.gov/tools/local-assistance/eac](http://sba.gov/tools/local-assistance/eac). 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 8) for free exporting assistance from professional business counselors.

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 international@sba.gov. Include your name, company name, mailing address, and phone number, as well as a brief description of the trade problem or challenge you are encountering.
If you own a U.S. small business, you could receive capital from a Small Business Investment Company that is regulated by the SBA. The agency provides guarantees to investment companies with financing expertise in certain sectors or industries. These investment companies then use private funds, along with SBA-guaranteed capital, to invest in qualifying small businesses. The small business then receives a loan, equity, or a combination of both. Equity is a share of ownership an investment company gets in a business. Mature, profitable businesses with sufficient cash flow to pay interest are more likely to receive capital from a Small Business Investment Company. Each one has its own investment profile in terms of targeted industry, geography, company maturity, the types and size of financing they provide. To search the SBIC directory, visit Investment Capital under Funding Programs at sba.gov.
What is the American dream? To many, it is the ideal that every United States citizen has an equal opportunity to achieve success and prosperity through hard work, determination, and initiative. Ember Industries, Inc., a family-owned company in San Marcos, Texas, exemplifies that national ethos. Established in 1986 as a small contract design firm, Ember Industries has grown into a full-service contract manufacturing business that builds, tests, and calibrates electronic devices and wire and cable assemblies. The company’s products are used to build things like above-ground tank monitors for oil fields and Lockheed military drones. In 2015, the company was on track to have one of its most profitable years, and then disaster struck.

“Things were going great. Honestly, the factory was going wonderfully. In June we were on pace for a record month, but instead the Blanco River decided to come over its banks,” says President Rob Leonardis.

In May 2015, the Blanco River flooded disastrously, overflowing its banks to record levels and destroying more than 1,000 homes. Ember Industries suffered catastrophic damages. “We had 32 inches of water in the entire building. Basically, it ruined all of our manufacturing equipment,” says Vice President of Finance and Administration Frank Leonardis. “It shut us down. It was pretty devastating.”

The flood destroyed about one-third of Ember’s raw-material inventory and all of the work in progress as well as office furniture, computers and servers, and all of the company’s high-tech production equipment. “A week into it, our dad came to us and asked, should we be trying to do this? Should we even be trying to rebuild this?” Rob Leonardis recalls. But instead of shutting the doors, the company was approved for a $2 million SBA disaster loan, and just six weeks after the flood, Ember Industries was back to full production.

In 2017, Ember Industries received the SBA Phoenix Award for Outstanding Small Business Disaster Recovery. “Without the SBA loan, we would not have been able to survive as a company,” Rob Leonardis says.

“The Office of Disaster Assistance at the SBA looks at businesses that have suffered through a disaster, recovered, and put their employees back to work. And Rob’s story about how SBA’s disaster loan helped the business recover is one of preserving the American dream,” explains Bill Koontz, public information officer for the Disaster Field Operations Center–West.

After the flood, Ember continued to...
The SBA, the Federal Emergency Management Agency and other organizations work together to provide assistance to those affected by a disaster. Once immediate safety and security needs are met, the SBA helps get you and your community back to where you were before the disaster. The SBA provides loans to businesses of all sizes, nonprofits, homeowners and renters to cover rebuilding costs not covered by insurance or other forms of assistance.

Small businesses and nonprofits are also eligible to apply for economic injury losses, even if they suffered no physical damages. These direct loans come with low-interest rates and long terms. Property owners can also secure additional SBA funds to help protect their business or home against a disaster. Visit sba.gov/disaster.

The President & the SBA Administrator Can Declare a Disaster

Who to contact 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 agency cannot help you with a loan for all your needs, the SBA will, in most cases, refer you back to FEMA.

Who to contact after a disaster is declared by the SBA

Contact the SBA directly to apply for a disaster loan. Businesses of all sizes, nonprofits, homeowners and renters are eligible to apply:

- Online at https://disasterloan.sba.gov/ela/
- Visit a federal/state Disaster Recovery Center in your area
- Call our customer service center at (800) 659-2955 (TTY: 800-877-8339) and ask for an application package to be mailed to you

FEMA grant assistance for homeowners or renters is not available under an SBA declaration.

Information needed to get started:

- Address of damaged residence or business and contact info
- Insurance information, including type of insurance, policy numbers, amount received
- Household and/or business income
- Routing and bank account numbers
- Description of disaster-caused damage and losses

pay all its employees even though they were not able to resume operation immediately. “It is remarkable that Ember Industries has come back. It is remarkable they’ve been as successful in the wake of this as they have been,” says Koontz. “They haven’t just rebuilt, they’ve grown bigger and better.”

“I honestly believe we couldn’t have been able to rebuild without the SBA loan,” Rob Leonardis says. “It allowed us to continue to live the American dream.”
How an SBA Disaster Loan Works

The SBA provides loans to businesses of all sizes, nonprofits, homeowners and renters to cover rebuilding costs not covered by insurance or other forms of assistance.

Verification & Processing
An SBA loss verifier will estimate the total loss to your property damaged by the disaster.

- A loan officer determines your creditworthiness and eligibility after reviewing any insurance or other recovery funds. The SBA can approve and disburse a loan while your insurance recovery is pending. You will be advised in writing of all loan decisions.
- Terms may go up to 30 years. The SBA sets terms based on each borrower’s ability to repay, no early payoff fees or penalties.
- Rates are low, based on the type of loan and if you have credit available elsewhere.

For Physical Damages
A business of any size and any nonprofit may borrow up to $2 million to repair or replace damaged or destroyed real estate, machinery and equipment, inventory, and other business assets.

- A homeowner may borrow up to $200,000 to repair/replace primary residence damage.
- A homeowner or renter may borrow up to $40,000 to repair/replace damage to personal property, including vehicle losses.

For Economic Injury
The SBA also offers Economic Injury Disaster Loans for up to $2 million to help meet working capital needs caused by a disaster.

- Who are eligible: small businesses, small agricultural cooperatives, small businesses engaged in aquaculture, and most nonprofits.
- Economic injury assistance is available regardless of whether the business suffered any property damage.

Closing & Funds Disbursement
Approval decision and disbursement of loan funds is dependent on receipt of your documentation.

- Be sure to sign your closing documents. This can be done by mail or with an SBA representative at a closing center if one is open in your area.
- The SBA disburses loan funds as recovery work is completed, items are replaced, and/or as funds are needed. The SBA will typically make an initial disbursement of up to $25,000, if all requirements are met, within five days of receiving your signed loan closing documents. Your case manager will schedule subsequent disbursements of the full loan amount. Your case manager will work with you to help you meet all loan conditions. Your loan may be adjusted after closing according to your changing circumstances, such as unexpected repair costs or additional insurance proceeds.

Keep in mind
An SBA disaster 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. Be sure to check with other organizations 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 loan.
How to Prepare Your Business for an Emergency

The financial cost of rebuilding a business after a disaster can be overwhelming. However, with a business continuity plan in place, you will be able to rebound and reopen quickly. You’ll be in a better position to contribute to the economic recovery of your community. **First steps include:**

**Establish a protocol to communicate with employees** outside of the office to ensure they and their families are safe. Test the procedures regularly.

**Keep your plan and all related documents in a digital format** or in an accessible, protected, off-site location.

**Review your 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 after a disaster.

**Establish a solid supply chain**
If your vital vendors and suppliers are local and the disaster is widespread, you will all be in the same situation—struggling to recover.
- Set yourself up to be able to get key supplies from companies outside your area, if possible.
- Create a contact list for important contractors and vendors you plan to use in an emergency
- Make sure you know your suppliers’ recovery plans.

**Plan for an alternate location**
- Do some research in advance of the disaster for several alternative places to relocate your company in case a disaster forces you to close your business for an extended time.
- Contact a local real estate agent to get a list of available office space. You could make an agreement with a neighboring business to share office space. You could also make plans for employees to telecommute until your office reopens.

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.
Surety bonds help small businesses win construction, supply, and service contracts. The SBA guarantee provides an incentive for surety companies to work with small businesses that would normally not be able to obtain the bond. Eligible small businesses can receive the bonding assistance necessary to compete for contracting and subcontracting jobs using the Surety Bond Guarantee Program. This program is aimed at small businesses that lack the financial resources or performance track record necessary to secure bonding through regular commercial channels.

**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
- **Subcontract trades** with a desire to establish their own bonding as a prime contractor
- **Those wishing to increase** their current bonding limits

**Surety bonds are requested**

Some contracts require that the business doing the work be properly bonded.

**Surety partners with business**

Authorized surety companies provide surety bonds to businesses that meet their qualifications.

**The SBA guarantees**

The SBA guarantees surety bonds for private surety companies, so more small businesses can qualify.

**Small businesses benefit**

Small businesses get SBA-guaranteed surety bonds so they can get to work.
For Public and Private Prime Contracts and all Subcontracts

**The SBA guarantees**: bid, payment, performance, and ancillary bonds issued by surety companies

**Cost of contract**: up to $6.5 million

**SBA reimburses surety companies in case of default**
90 percent of losses sustained for veteran and service-disabled veteran, minority, 8(a), and HUBZone-certified small businesses; all projects up to $100,000
80 percent for all other small businesses.

For Federal Contracts

**The SBA guarantees**: bid, payment, performance, and ancillary bonds issued by surety companies—if a guarantee would be in the best interest of the government

**Cost of contract**: up to $10 million

**SBA reimburses surety companies in case of default**
90 percent of losses sustained for veteran and service-disabled veteran, minority, 8(a), and HUBZone-certified small businesses; all projects up to $100,000
80 percent for all other small businesses.

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**SBA’s QuickApp Program**

Typically, small businesses provide financial statements and other documentation when applying for surety bond guarantees. This process is streamlined under the SBA’s QuickApp program, which is for contracts below $400,000. The streamlined application reduces the normal paperwork to a simple two-page application, and the small business does not need to file any financials with the SBA.

The SBA partners with 31 surety companies and hundreds of bonding agents. Online applications submitted through SBA authorized agents are approved in less than two days for regular applications and within hours for QuickApps. Find authorized agents at sba.gov/osg.

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**Questions?**

Do you want to discuss the advantages of the SBA’s Surety Bond Guarantee Program or need to locate an SBA authorized agent? Contact a bonding specialist:

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

**Linda M. Laws**  
Seattle, Wash.  
(206) 553-7317

**Jennifer C. Bledsoe**  
Washington, DC  
(202) 205-6153
My Next Career Path

This small business has made it their business to provide quality staffing in the federal arena.

**written by Nikki Bowman**

Renee Boyce, president and CEO of My Next Career Path Staffing, LLC, knows firsthand the challenges of small business ownership. “Some of the biggest challenges are getting capital and financing to allow us to grow,” he says. “Sometimes it is hard to get a seat at the table. As a small business, we just need a fair opportunity to bid on contracts.”

Founded in 2014 in Las Vegas, Nevada, My Next Career Path Staffing (MNCP Staffing) is a consulting and staffing firm that provides resources to private businesses, public sector firms, and local, state, and federal government agencies nationwide. The company offers temporary and permanent recruitment or recruitment by project in the fields of information technology; engineering; medical, clinical, and professional services; and sales and marketing, and it is known for its IT solutions. The company is a certified 8(a), Minority Business Enterprise, Disadvantaged Business Enterprise (DBE), and Emerging Small Business in Nevada as well as a certified DBE in Arizona, California, Maryland, Oregon, Texas, and Utah.

“My Next Career Path saves companies time and money,” Boyce says. “Companies often receive hundreds of resumes in response to job ads, and it’s time-consuming to go through them. Reviewing resumes to locate the best candidates is another full-time job. We save time by honing in on the best matches for the firm.”

All business owners know that making a bad hire is expensive. Not only do you spend time and money training someone who isn’t a fit for the job, but then you have to start another candidate search, My Next Career Path prides itself in locating the candidates who are a great match from the start.

In 2017, Boyce was chosen as the SBA Nevada District Office Minority-owned Business of the Year. “The SBA has helped me grow my business by being a useful resource and providing guidance on working in the federal space,” says Boyce. My Next Career Path became a government contractor in 2016 and now reports more than 60 percent of the company’s business is in the federal arena.

The SBA is a resource for small businesses that are interested in working with the government. Boyce says, “It takes time and patience to work in the federal space. It’s certainly not for every business. But by establishing and
How to do business with the government

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

2. Search the FedBizOpps database (fbo.gov) or web.sba.gov/subnet to see if any federal agencies are looking for your product or service.

3. Attend an SBA district office workshop on contracting. Visit sba.gov/localassistance, or see pages 16-19, to find your local office.

4. Talk to a local Small Business Development Center counselor (page 8) or visit a Procurement Technical Assistance Program adviser for free counseling. Find your closest center at aptac-us.org.


6. See if you’re eligible for a contracting program and start the certification process. All required documents must be uploaded to certify.sba.gov before submitting an offer on a contract set aside for a specific program.

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

The SBA has helped me grow my business by being a useful resource and providing guidance on working in the federal space.”

Renee Boyce, MNCP Staffing president and CEO

building relationships and teaming with partners, we’ve learned how to navigate the federal arena.”

Running a small business can be challenging but it is also very rewarding. Boyce advises other small businesses to use the resources available like PTAC, SBA, and local business chambers. “It is important to build a strong network of relationships,” he points out. “Do not rule out opportunities to subcontract. It will allow you to understand the process and gain experience.”

Boyce has big plans for the future. “My goal is to continue to grow and expand the company globally with even more locations nationwide, while still delivering value-added services to the government and private businesses.”
SBA Contracting Programs

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

The federal government sets aside contracts for small business, and these contracting programs are designed to help you compete for and win federal contracts. Visit SBA.gov/contracting to learn more about set-asides and whether one or more of these government contracting programs is right for your business.

All Small Mentor-Protege Program

Looking for an opportunity to partner with a more experienced firm for mentorship? You may find that effort 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.
  
  • You must be certified as a small business within your NAICS industry classification and have experience in that field.
  
  • Mentors and proteges must be organized for profit or as an agricultural cooperative.
  
  • Mentors cannot own more than 40 percent equity in the protege’s business.
  
  • An SBA determination of affiliation must not exist between the mentor and the protege. All Small-approved partnerships receive an exclusion of affiliation for contracting purposes.

8(a) Business Development Program

If you’re an entrepreneur who is socially and economically disadvantaged, you could get business training and government contracting assistance through the 8(a) Business Development Program. sba.gov/8a

Glenn Davis, an 8(a) program graduate, operates BranCore, a consulting business, out of Richmond, Virginia.

Development Program, sba.gov/8a. The program includes free business development education, training workshops, and match-making opportunities with federal buyers. Firms owned by Alaska Native Corporations, American Indian tribes, Native Hawaiian organizations, and Community Development Corporations are also eligible for 8(a) business development assistance.

To be eligible for the 8(a) program, your small business must meet the following criteria:

• Qualify as a small business which is unconditionally owned and controlled by one or more socially and economically disadvantaged people of good character

• Be controlled by a U.S. citizen who lives in the United States

• Demonstrate current capacity and potential for success

Socially disadvantaged: those who have been 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 of people are assumed to be socially disadvantaged: 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 they have suffered disadvantage.

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

The benefits:

• 8(a) businesses are assigned an SBA professional to help coordinate your 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.

**What is an 8(a) sole-source contract?**
A direct awarding of a contract to an 8(a) small business that can provide the needed services.

**HUBZone**
Businesses located in Historically Underutilized Business Zones, also called HUBZones, sba.gov/hubzone, must be certified to gain special access to federal contracts.

To qualify for the program, a small business must:

- Be at least 51 percent owned and controlled by a U.S. citizen(s), a Community Development Corporation, an agricultural cooperative, or an Indian tribe.
- Be located within a HUBZone, which includes Indian reservations and military facilities closed by the Base Realignment and Closure Act. Enter your address in our interactive map to see if your business is located in a HUBZone, [https://maps.certify.sba.gov/hubzone/map](https://maps.certify.sba.gov/hubzone/map).
- Have at least 35 percent of your employees residing in a HUBZone.

**For Service-Disabled Veterans:**
If you’re a service-disabled veteran looking to enter the federal marketplace, you may be eligible for this small business certification.

- To determine your eligibility, contact a veterans’ business development officer at your local SBA office, or the SBA’s Office of Veterans Business Development at sba.gov/ovbd.
- After you have set up to do business with the government in [sam.gov](https://www.sam.gov), update your status as a service-disabled veteran business.

**Keep in mind**
The SBA does not officially certify this designation, so when a contract awarded based on this eligibility is protested, the SBA will determine if your business meets the eligibility status, ownership and control requirements.

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**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](https://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](https://www.sam.gov).

5. **Search the database**
   - Search the FedBizOpps database (fbo.gov) for your new business opportunity.
Local Contracting Resources

Regional/State Contracting Programs

Procurement Technical Assistance Centers

Businesses that want to sell products or services to federal, state, or local governments receive one-on-one counseling and training at Procurement Technical Assistance Centers, free or low cost.

How can a procurement assistance center help you?

• A center adviser can help you determine if your business is ready for government contracting.

• An adviser can help you register in the System for Award Management (SAM.gov).

• Your adviser will help you see if you are eligible for any small business certifications and programs.

Federal contracting can be complex, but you don’t have to do it alone. Visit sba.gov/localassistance to find your local SBA office or an SBA Resource Partner near you (see page 8).

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Ensures Omaha’s certified small and emerging businesses are ready to bid and capitalize on new projects and reach their goals.
Despite recent budget cuts, the U.S. federal marketplace remains a lucrative opportunity for small businesses. The federal government typically spends approximately $500 billion in contracts every year and the law requires that 23 percent of these dollars be awarded to small businesses.

But doing business with the largest purchaser of goods and services in the world isn’t easy. One of the biggest challenges that small businesses face is uncovering the right opportunities—ones that match their capabilities and growth plans.

Here are eight tips and resources to help you find government contract opportunities that make sense for your small business.

1 Familiarize yourself with the rules. Before a contract opportunity comes along that excites you, be prepared. Familiarize yourself with what’s involved with selling to the federal government. It’s quite different to the private sector with much longer lead times and strict bidding and product requirements.

2 Understand what the government is buying. Now it’s time to get strategic. Every agency and department has unique goals. Identifying these can help you target a niche or opportunity for your products or services.

The good news is that the government offers potential contractors something that no other sector does—an insight into its budgetary priorities.

What the government intends to buy and how much it has to spend is all in the public domain. These budgets (actually they read more like mission strategy papers than budgets) offer sufficient context for savvy small businesses to identify opportunities and focus their contracting sales and marketing strategy. Each federal agency or department budget is listed on the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) website.

3 Zero in on agencies that aren’t meeting their small business goals. Each year the SBA negotiates formal goals with individual agencies to ensure that small businesses get their fair share of federal contracts. For several consecutive years, many agencies have fallen short of their targets. So who made the grade and who didn’t? The Federal Procurement Data System posts scorecards for each agency. Could there be an opportunity here for your small business to lend its services and goods to help these agencies hit their targets next year?

4 Research existing and upcoming opportunities. Once you’ve identified agency initiatives that align with what your business has to offer, start tracking contract opportunities and solicitations that align with these on sites such as USAspending.gov and FedBizOpps.gov. Market intelligence firms like ONVIA or ImmixGroup can also do the work for you (ImmixGroup also has a useful blog that highlights upcoming opportunities as well as contracting tips).

5 Put boots on the ground. Make a point of attending agency- or industry-specific government events. These are hosted by the private sector but attract the procurement community, influencers and industry experts. Useful sites to explore for upcoming events include GovWin, GovEvents, and if you’re interested in the lucrative IT government market Digital Government Institute, ACT-IAC and GovMark Council are worth checking out.

6 Find a partner and advocate in the OSDBU. Another excellent way of getting in front of government buyers is to take advantage of the Office of Small and Disadvantaged Business Utilization (OSDBU) outreach events and expos. These serve to connect business owners to government buyers. You can view the upcoming event calendar here.

These events also offer guidance on how small businesses can break into the contracting market and take advantage of programs like the 8(a) Business Development Program—a business development tool, which helps thousands of aspiring entrepreneurs gain a foothold in contracting with financial assistance and teaming opportunities.
Get help from SBA procurement reps.
Another vital government resource are SBA’s local Procurement Center Representatives (PCRs). PCRs provide services that include training, counseling and business match-making events. Find the PCR in your area.

Don’t go it alone – partner with a government mentor.
Anyone embarking on new ventures can benefit from a mentor. The SBA operates a notable mentor-protege program that can help you get access to contracts. The All Small Mentor-Protege Program (page 45) rewards protege small businesses and experienced mentor firms with government contracting opportunities. The program’s objective is to motivate larger companies to lend their knowledge to smaller, less experienced businesses so they can together compete for government contracts.

Additional Resources
For more tips and insights on breaking into and growing your business in the government contracting marketplace, check out these resources:

- SBA Contracting Guide: A deep dive into getting started, available resources and more.
sba.gov/contracting

- Contracting Blogs: Learn about the latest resources and programs, and get tips on how to succeed. sba.gov/blogs/contracting

- SBA Government Contracting Classroom: Self-paced online courses on all aspects of the contracting process.
sba.gov/contracting/resources-small-businesses/government-contracting-classroom
To further the mission of helping small businesses succeed, the SBA has regional offices across the country. Here are some fun facts about each region from sba.gov.

**Reasons to Love Your Region**

**Region 1** (Connecticut, Massachusetts, Maine, New Hampshire, Rhode Island, Vermont) New Hampshire was home to the first ski club in the United States. As of 2014, Region 1 had the highest number of small business skiing facilities per square mile in the country, and all six region 1 states had skiing facilities.

**Region 2** (New York, New Jersey, Puerto Rico, Virgin Islands) Small businesses are of key importance to Puerto Rico’s economy. Four out of five Puerto Rican workers are employed at small businesses, as compared to 48% for the United States as a whole.

**Region 3** (District of Columbia, Delaware, Maryland, Pennsylvania, Virginia, West Virginia) Washington, D.C., and Maryland rank 1 and 3 respectively for the number of businesses owned by women. These two states and the district are in the top 10 for the amount of sales and employment from women-owned businesses.

**Region 4** (Alabama, Florida, Georgia, Kentucky, Mississippi, North Carolina, South Carolina, Tennessee) Region 4 is a center of minority-owned businesses. 23% of all minority-owned businesses are located in region 4, making it the second in the nation. This includes over 35% of all African American-owned businesses, the highest compared to any other region.

**Region 5** (Illinois, Indiana, Michigan, Minnesota, Ohio, Wisconsin) Region 5 has an active veteran business community. It ranks second in terms of the number of veteran-owned businesses, with Ohio and Illinois in the top 10 states.

**Region 6** (Arkansas, Louisiana, New Mexico, Oklahoma, Texas) Region 6 leads the nation in long-term GDP growth (2009–2016) with 22% over the seven-year period. Texas and Oklahoma experienced the largest growth in the region with 28% and 22% respectively.

**Region 7** (Iowa, Kansas, Missouri, Nebraska) Region 7 has a booming small health care industry. The region has the most hospitals, general health care, and social assistance small businesses per capita than any other region.

**Region 8** (Colorado, Montana, North Dakota, South Dakota, Utah, Wyoming) Region 8 is a great place for crafty entrepreneurs. Montana ranks first in the nation in the number of small breweries per capita; Colorado is third, and the region as a whole ranks second.

**Region 9** (Arizona, California, Hawaii, Nevada, Guam) Region 9 is a diversity hub. Its 1.9 million minority-owned businesses amount to 24% of all U.S. minority owned businesses, placing it first in the United States in this category. Hawaii tops the country in diversity: 64% of Hawaiian businesses are minority-owned.

**Region 10** (Alaska, Idaho, Oregon, Washington) Region 10 leads the country in coastline, fishing, and seafood exports. The region’s maritime endowment is led by Alaska, whose 6,640-mile-long coast is longer than those of the other 49 states combined. The region has the most small fishing operations of any region, and three of its ports—Portland, Seattle, and Anchorage—account for 67% of America’s fish exports.
Do you want your business to stand out?

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