

## **ADDITIONAL TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE RESOURCES**

The [U.S. Small Business Administration](#) (SBA) offers a variety of services and loan programs that may be of interest to small business owners, including EDA RLF borrowers. SBA offers technical assistance, counseling, mentoring, and financial assistance to small businesses (generally defined as those businesses with fewer than 500 employees) across the country. SBA provides this assistance first-hand and by working with its resource partners. SBA's three primary resource partners are Small Business Development Centers, Women's Business Centers, and SCORE – Counselors to America's Small Businesses.

Although entrepreneurs may contact any of these resource partners directly, SBA encourages small business owners to first contact their [local SBA district office](#), where counselors are trained to assess the entrepreneur's needs and recommend the appropriate SBA programs and resources.

### ***Small Business Development Centers***

SBA [Small Business Development Centers](#) (SBDC) are a collaborative effort between the federal and local government, the private sector, and institutions of higher education. Hosted by colleges and universities, SBDCs are able to harness the expertise of faculty and students across a range of disciplines to provide comprehensive services to a wide variety of small businesses.

The program's goal is to provide one-stop access to a variety of resources and information to help small businesses. SBDCs are located in all 50 states and four territories. To locate a SBDC in your state, please visit [SBA's SBDC locator](#)

SBDCs offer one-on-one counseling and training on writing business plans, marketing, contracting with the federal government, human resources, taxes, protecting against identity theft, and other important topics. Additionally, the [Association of Small Business Development Centers](#) provides supplemental information to small businesses, including the Small Business Digest (practical articles on relevant topics written by business experts), a small business learning center, and links to other helpful resources and organizations.

### ***An SBDC Success Story***

One particularly successful SBDC client is a high-end food manufacturer that has partnered with SBDC throughout the company's lifecycle. The relationship began in February 2004, when the founder approached SBDC for assistance with numerous start-up tasks, including recruiting and developing the firm's human resources, writing a business plan, acquiring financing, and completing an appropriate environmental assessment of a proposed site for the firm.

By 2007 the company's sales had doubled, to \$500,000, but this put a strain on cash flow and the firm nearly went bankrupt. The local SBDC stepped in once again to help the company update its business plan, stabilize its finances, and secure \$230,000 in leases, private equity, and loans.

These actions have helped put the company on a path to sustainable long-term growth. The company now has 17 full-time and three part-time employees and four brands. Sales are up 40 percent for 2009 and are projected to hit \$900,000. The company plans to launch two new brands in 2009, and if current trends continue, the company should reach \$5,000,000 in sales and create more than 30 additional jobs within the next 3 years.

### ***Women's Business Centers***

The Office of Women's Business Ownership runs more than 100 Women's Business Centers (WBCs) across the country. The WBCs offer specialized services to meet the needs of entrepreneurial women including daycare services, counseling, and training.

Please visit the [Office of Women's Business Ownership web site](#) for more information or view the [District Offices and WBCs Directory](#) (PDF) to find a WBC in your area. The [Association of Women's Business Centers](#) provides additional information and resources to women seeking to start, or currently operating, their own business.

### ***SCORE – Counselors to America's Small Businesses***

The [Counselors to America's Small Businesses](#) (also known as the SCORE program) provide technical assistance and mentoring to start-up and existing small businesses. SCORE volunteers consist of retired business owners, corporate leaders, and other executives that bring a wide array of business skills to the table.

SCORE offers free and confidential business advice as well as free or low-cost workshops to provide technical assistance to businesses, ranging from "Writing a Winning Business Plan" to "Recordkeeping – Accounting for a Small Business." SCORE also offers many free online workshops on topics that include "Assessing Your Company's Financial Needs," "Targeting Your Market," and "Personalization Strategies to Attract and Retain Customers."

SCORE has 370 chapters and more than 11,000 volunteers across the country. View the [SCORE Chapter Locator](#) to find SCORE offices near you.

SCORE has also implemented an [online mentoring system](#) to connect start-up businesses with experienced professionals regardless of location. Through the system, business owners or entrepreneurs are matched with business professionals across the country. This can be especially helpful for entrepreneurs in rural areas, individuals unable to meet with a mentor during regular business hours, or individuals seeking to launch or expand a business in a very specialized field.