

## **SBDC Legislative Overview & History**

### **SBDC Introduction & Orientation** (*Attach SBDC services brochure*)

Chair Lively and Members of the Committee, I'm Mark Gregory, Director of the Oregon Small Business Development Center Network.

Small Business Development Centers, founded in 1983, are a bridge between small businesses, resource partners, public agencies, host colleges and universities and public officials who are engaged in supporting Oregon businesses. Our 19 Centers and 45 locations across Oregon are run by prior small business owners and finance experts, assisting small business owners, with a pioneering spirit of innovation, planning, growth and determination. Our primary services are no-cost, confidential, 1 on 1 advising to small businesses in Oregon. We also provide instruction to businesses to help build essential skills and learn about changes in their markets.

SBDC's are federally funded through the Small Business Administration (SBA), Business Oregon, and in partnership with all 17 community colleges and two of our regional universities. The SBA has only six full time employees in Oregon. As their primary business outreach and technical assistance partner during COVID-19 and recent disasters, we provide a lifeline to small businesses seeking capital, while supporting wildfire response and planning operational pivots needed during recovery. Our organization is part of America's Small Business Development Centers that support 62 networks nationwide. Through this Network, we share online resources, internal best practices and provide peer to peer support between Lead Offices.

This past year, the Oregon SBDC supported more than 24,000 hours of 1:1 advising with clients and additionally supported training to over 12,000 attendees (with many more supported through our participation in townhall meetings, partner coordinated client meet-ups and other public forums). Our services brochure provided with my written testimony will provide you with a greater depth of information toward understanding SBDC services.

### **State Agency Partnerships**

In 2017, HB 2152 was passed at an important time of collaboration for the SBDC Network and our 19 centers across Oregon. The bill had two parts: a marketing authorization component that expanded our outreach efforts and a component that encourages state agencies to work with the Small Business Development Centers *whenever practical*.

We already do excellent work with the Secretary of State and the Bureau of Labor and Industries on business regulation. We also have teamed with ODOT to help disadvantaged minority owned small businesses to grow their operations so they have the capacity to grow and take on additional state or federal contracts. Our

prior work also includes assistance contracts with the Public Utilities Commission to support greater business utilization of broadband within their business through e-commerce and e-operations, targeted Oregon Employment Department initiatives to support Self Employment Assistance Programs as well as training with inmates as part of their release from the Department of Corrections. Our SBDCs work with many of the small businesses that our other state agencies need to communicate with. We work to make it easier for small business owners to access public resources and training opportunities that help them succeed and comply with regulations. Small business owners and entrepreneurs are busy, particularly now amidst so many changes and combining COVID-19 requirements, resource discussions and critical training.

## **2020 and COVID-19 efforts and outcomes**

This past year, our advisers helped guide Oregon's businesses through the PPP and EIDL loan processes. We helped businesses adapt to the quickly changing ecosystem where suppliers, employees and customers suddenly had different needs. We were witness to our communities coming together to help businesses survive and adapt, and we were honored to be a part of this journey. This led to more than ten billion dollars in capital provided to Oregon businesses and a substantial number of state small business grants which our centers helped support. SBDC clients validated that we played a significant role in attaining over \$152 million in capital through our 1:1 assistance, while we supported substantially more businesses through webinars and online forums.

Our Network also cosponsors workshops with other technical assistance providers (including those serving minority owned businesses), state and federal agency partners as well as legislators across a broad range of business and resource topics. We succeed when Oregon's businesses succeed. The Oregon SBDC Network is also our state's largest minority technical assistance provider serving more than 2,100 minority owned businesses last year with more than 5,000 hours of advising. We are working closely with Business Oregon and respective minority technical assistance providers to ensure that both our partners and respective clients are supported by our centers and have access to updated resource information, assistance tools and direct support as we are *stronger together*.

## **Oregon Restaurant COVID Assistance Program (ORCA):**

Funded by a CARES Act grant from the US Small Business Administration (and in partnership with the Oregon Restaurant and Lodging Association [ORLA]), ORCA's team of restaurant industry experts has provided guidance and advice to restaurants of all sizes: from one-person owned food trucks to multi-location regional chains. Also, ORCA worked closely with Oregon's 19 SBDCs in their support of restaurant clientele, via a webinar (hosted by the Southern Oregon University SBDC) and client referrals/co-counseling. ORCA's ten-person counseling team includes six current SBDC personnel and four individuals who maintain private

restaurant consulting practices. Additionally, ORCA has obtained access to a robust library of on-demand national restaurant webinars and resources through Restaurantowner.com.

To date, ORCA has had 24 requests for assistance: 19 via the ORCA web portal ([www.oregonsbdc.org/ORCA](http://www.oregonsbdc.org/ORCA)) and 5 via direct referral from ORLA.

## **Wildfires**

The Oregon Small Business Development Centers have been working for several years with the State of Oregon through the Office of Emergency Management and other state and federal agencies such as FEMA to provide disaster response support and a resiliency guide for small business. This guide was developed to support disaster planning and recovery efforts with business impacted by natural disasters. The guide was initially developed through the Vermont Small Business Development Center Network, shared nationally and revised for Oregon.

We received and tracked 142 referrals thus far from SBA office of disaster assistance related to wildfires this past year.

13 Regional Capital Access Team members supported outreach to those leads.

## **In Conclusion**

Oregon's Small Business Development Centers are an essential service to Oregon's small businesses, helping businesses with one on one advising, guidance and instruction. We are dedicated to helping Oregon's small businesses succeed. 2020 and the start of 2021 have been a difficult time for many businesses. The SBDCs serve as an on-the-ground, local resource to help businesses prepare for and access state and national resources. We also encourage these businesses to meet with advisers to help plan for the future.

Our work is ongoing and we will be there to help our businesses become more resilient and continue to be a driver of our local economy.

Lastly, our Centers are always open to businesses who need help and you can always refer businesses to us by visiting [oregonsbdc.org/centers](http://oregonsbdc.org/centers). My door is open and I look forward to helping you and this committee this session.