

2024

Annual Report





Here For You

When small
businesses win,
Colorado does, too.

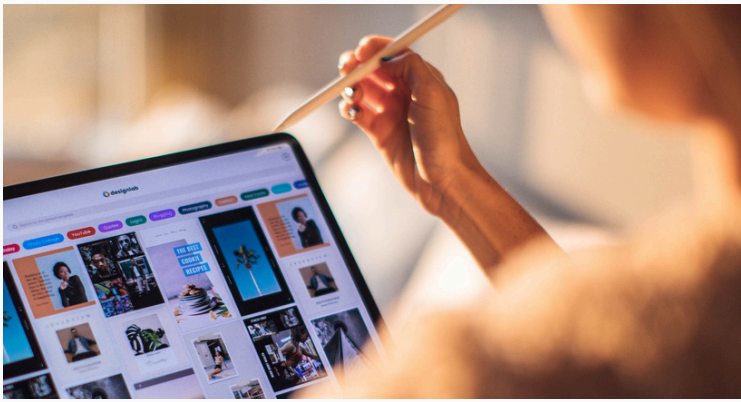


The Colorado Small Business Development Center (SBDC) Network plays a crucial role in the state's economic health by assisting small businesses in all stages of development. Through a network of 14 regional service centers, hosted by local partners like universities and governments, the SBDC offers no-cost, confidential advising and affordable training. These centers also act as vital connectors, linking businesses to funding programs and resources through partnerships with organizations like the Colorado Office of Economic Development and International Trade (OEDIT). The SBDC's mission is to empower Colorado's 715,000+ small businesses to thrive, contributing to the unique character of communities statewide.

Want to see the numbers behind our work? Our annual report gives you a clear picture of the SBDC's impact on Colorado's economy and the small businesses we support. You'll find stories of client success, key metrics, and a solid look at how we're contributing to the state's business environment.



Funded through a cooperative agreement with the U.S. Small Business Administration (SBA), the Colorado SBDC is a partnership between the State of Colorado, OEDIT, the SBA, Colorado's institutions of higher education, local governments, economic development organizations, and Chambers of Commerce.



A Message From

Eve Lieberman

Executive Director
Colorado Office of Economic Development &
International Trade



As the host agency for the Colorado Small Business Development Lead Center (SBDC) since 1989, we at the Office of Economic Development and International Trade (OEDIT), are incredibly proud of the SBDC's work in advancing our state's small businesses. The [U.S. Small Business Administration Office of Advocacy's 2024 Small Business Profile](#) highlights the significant impact of these businesses. With over 715,000 small businesses comprising 99.5% of all Colorado businesses and employing approximately 1.1 million people (47.5% of the state's total employment), their importance cannot be overstated. The profile demonstrates a healthy increase in new businesses, with small businesses driving a substantial portion of both openings and job growth.

Several key sectors, including Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services, Real Estate, and Construction, show a high concentration of small businesses, contributing significantly to Colorado's employment and overall economic health. Notably, small business employment growth in Colorado has outpaced the national average, and these businesses are active exporters, generating billions of dollars in international trade.

The SBDC Network, with its 14 centers, plays a vital role in supporting this vibrant small business ecosystem. The SBDC provides entrepreneurs and small business owners with a wide range of essential resources and services, such as business advising, training, market research, and access to capital support. By offering expert guidance, the SBDC helps businesses overcome challenges, develop strategic plans, and achieve sustainable growth. This support, in turn, fuels job creation, economic activity, and the prosperity of our state.

We are excited to continue our vital partnership with the SBDC to ensure that every small business in Colorado receives the support they need to adapt, innovate, and thrive in today's dynamic business environment.



A Message From

Hannah Krieger

State Director

Colorado Small Business Development
Center Network



Colorado's economic landscape offers a dynamic environment for small business owners. Our state's small business ecosystem provides incredible support for entrepreneurs as they start, grow, and exit their businesses.

As State Director of the Colorado Small Business Development Center (SBDC) network, I'm proud to lead our 14 strategically positioned service centers as catalysts for forward momentum. We go beyond addressing immediate needs to helping businesses anticipate future demands and equipping business owners with the tools, resources, and knowledge necessary for long-term success. By providing tailored advising in areas like business planning, digital transformation, and growth strategies, we equip businesses to lead within their industries and communities.

We are building a collaborative ecosystem that anticipates the future of business. Through cutting-edge workshops, specialized training programs, and strategic networking events, we connect entrepreneurs with thought leaders, emerging technologies, and future-focused investors. This enables businesses to not only adapt to change but to actively drive it.

The SBDC's mission is to empower all Colorado small businesses to thrive, leaving a legacy of resilient businesses and vibrant communities. Our network is fully invested in the future of Colorado's entrepreneurial landscape, and I'm personally grateful for the trust these businesses place in our team.

I encourage business owners to connect with their local SBDC service center and discover the many ways we can help them not only meet today's challenges but prepare for tomorrow's opportunities. By tapping into our no- or low-cost services, business owners can confidently navigate the path ahead knowing they have an established resource like the SBDC at their side.



2024 Impact Numbers

Colorado SBDC Network Statewide



Businesses Started

We guide entrepreneurs through the essentials of launching and growing a successful business.

452

Increased Contracts

We provide tailored support to bolster operational and financial readiness, and make connections.

\$104,333,845



Increased Sales

We provide strategic advice and marketing support that drives sales.

\$81,034,518

2024
Impact
Numbers

Colorado SBDC Network Statewide



Capital Formation

We provide guidance to secure funding through loan preparation, investor access, and financial planning.

\$120,707,061

Clients Advised

We provide confidential, personalized advice to help navigate challenges and seize opportunities.

8,030



Training Attendees

We offer on-demand and live trainings to enhance business skills and develop operational knowledge.

21,578



2024 Impact Numbers

Colorado SBDC Network Statewide



Jobs Retained

We equip businesses with the tools needed to navigate challenges and maintain their workforce.

1,528

Jobs Created

We aid in new job creation by helping businesses scale through expert guidance and tools.

1,808



How Can We Help?

Since 1987, the Colorado Small Business Development Center Network has been supporting and championing entrepreneurs and small business owners. Offering a comprehensive suite of programs, resources, and trainings for businesses at every stage, we're here to help you. Scan this QR code to find an [SBDC location near you](#).



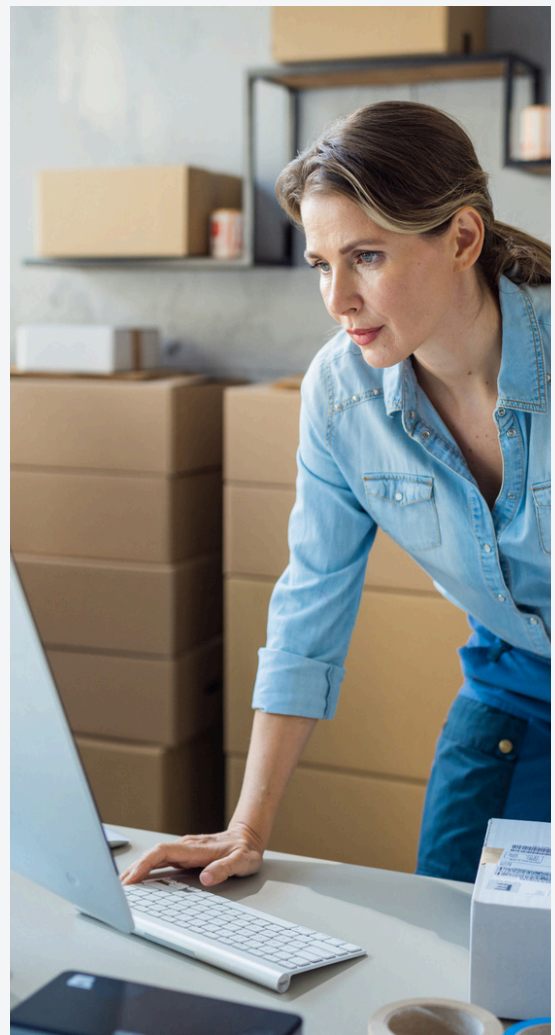
Colorado SBDC At Your Service

Programs

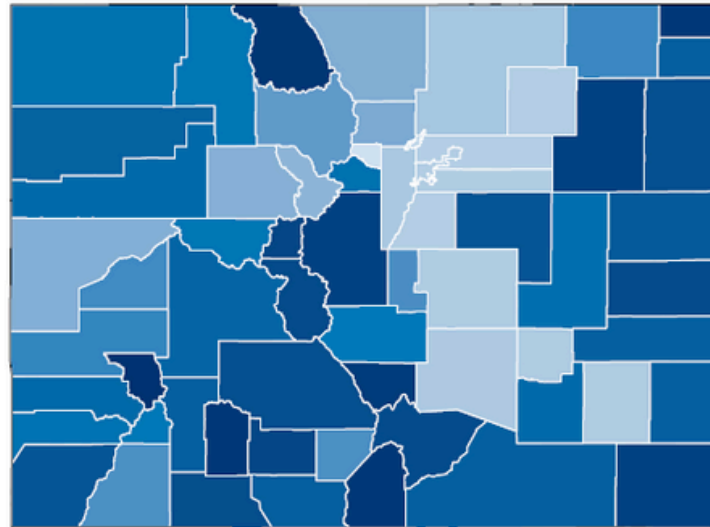
- **Childcare Businesses**
Business support and resources for centers and in-home childcare businesses through a partnership with the Colorado Department of Early Childhood.
- **Cyber CYA**
Cybersecurity guidance focused on helping businesses keep digital content secure and compliant.
- **Exit Planning**
On-demand curriculum and business advising to help business owners maximize the value of their business when it's time to transition.
- **Leading Edge**
Intensive strategic business planning programs for existing and new businesses.
- **TechSource**
Direct assistance to technology ventures and assistance using new business technology tools.

Services

- Free and confidential advising for existing and new businesses on virtually any business topic
- Free or low-cost business planning workshops
- International trade assistance
- Loan packaging and access to capital assistance
- Access to business resource libraries and current business data, demographics, and market analysis
- New business feasibility analysis



2024 | Small Business Profile & Demographic



Share of employees working at small businesses by county

Sources of original data: [Nonemployer Statistics](#) (Census), [Statistics of U.S. Businesses](#) (Census)

Fast Facts

- Colorado is home to 715,576 small businesses
- 99.5% of all Colorado businesses are small businesses
- Colorado small businesses employs 1.1 million employees
- Women made up 45.8% of workers and owned 45.5% of businesses
- Veterans made up 5.8% of workers and owned 6.3% of businesses





Achieve Sports Center

22675 E Aurora Parkway
Aurora, CO 80016
achievesports.com

Aurora-South Metro SBDC

Dream - Believe - Achieve. Chris and Alan Herron's guiding philosophy in business and life is making a positive impact. Their Achieve Sports business excels in training, development, and competition across various sports, including gymnastics, turf, and court sports. They take pride in positively impacting individuals, families, and the community.

Starting with Achieve Gymnastics in 2013, they have since expanded to unveil Achieve Sports Center, a 73,000-square-foot sports, fitness, and recreation facility in Aurora, employing over 100 people. Their business excellence and community stewardship has been recognized with several accolades, including the SBA's Colorado Small Business Persons of the Year and the Creativity & Innovation Award from the City of Aurora.

To grow their business, Chris and Alan connected with the Aurora-South Metro SBDC. They received over 15 hours of advising in marketing, cash flow optimization, strategic planning, and funding connections. This support helped them enhance their SEO strategy, create new marketing formats, and secure a \$150,000 commercial bank loan, enabling them to add two new jobs and retain over 100 positions. They are also exploring employee ownership models through the SBDC's support.

Beyond business growth, Achieve Sports also revitalized a shopping center with the opening of their second location, and engaged Arapahoe/Douglas Works! to hire three new employees. The Herrons exemplify how partnering with a local SBDC can help scale a business while making a significant community impact.



“We have had such a wonderful and positive experience in our partnership with our local SBDC! We tell every small business owner that we know to get in touch with their SBDC!”

- Chris & Alan Herron, Owners



Flora Materials

268 Apache Trl

Carbondale, CO 81623

floramaterials.com

Boulder SBDC

Flora Materials is a woman-owned, biomaterials company revolutionizing the construction industry with sustainable, bio-based building materials that prioritize people and the planet. Founded in 2023, Flora Materials is the research and biomaterials development lab within West 40 Studio, a full-service architecture and design firm in Carbondale. This partnership bridges the gap between design and innovation, bringing together materials scientists, engineers, and visionary designers to advance sustainability in architecture and construction.

Flora Materials founder, Natalie York first discovered the Boulder SBDC in 2021 at an event in Vail. Two years later she was encouraged to apply for the TechVenture Accelerator for Women (TVX) with the statewide TechSource program. Natalie credits the this program with the confidence to move forward with her algae-based flooring solution.

The company's novel approach replaces polyvinyl chloride (PVC), a petroleum-derived material, with an algae-based polyurethane composite that significantly reduces carbon emissions. In addition to helping the Army achieve its 50% greenhouse gas reduction goals, Flora's algae-based building materials also offers transformative benefits for the broader construction industry. It is estimated that the production of PVC used in traditional flooring materials contributes upwards of 10 million tons of CO₂ annually. By improving recyclability, minimizing waste, and leveraging algae's carbon-capturing abilities, Flora's building materials could have a drastic impact on lowering the construction industry's carbon footprint.

Flora was awarded a Phase I Small Business Innovation Research in 2023 with the U.S. Army for \$250,000 for an algae-based composite flooring solution. Flora recently was awarded a Phase II contract with an additional \$1.9 million in funding to develop prototype solutions targeted toward construction and other Army sustainability requirements. With flooring as its initial focus, Flora is poised to expand its product line and revolutionize the entire construction industry.

"I've used other services through SBDC, specifically accounting advice on how to manage my SBIR. Everyone I've reached out to working at SBDC has been so helpful and supportive and wants me to succeed as a small business here in Colorado."

-Natalie York, Owner





Rocky Mountain Clubhouse

413 1/2 W Rainbow Boulevard

Salida, CO 81201

rockymountainclubhouse.com

Central Mountain SBDC

Rocky Mountain Clubhouse in Salida, CO, located along Highway 50, is one of the town's hidden gems. Built in 2005, this 18-hole mini golf course, clubhouse, and patio are nestled within a beautiful botanical garden. After several years running the mini golf course, Carole Stowell, the previous owner, decided to sell and sought a buyer who would preserve the business.

In fall 2023, Mike De Runtz visited friends in Salida, played the course, and noticed the "for sale" sign. Seeing an opportunity to combine his passions for golf and entrepreneurship, Mike contacted the Central Mountain SBDC and leveraged their expertise to explore lending, insurance, cash flow management, and proforma analysis. Through this partnership he quickly became part of the Salida business community, easing his transition from out-of-towner to local business owner.

Renovating the 20-year-old building was challenging. Mike and four friends remodeled the 500-square-foot clubhouse and 400-square-foot patio, removing old fixtures, power washing, painting, and installing new flooring. After nine months of work, Rocky Mountain Clubhouse re-opened, welcoming guests with a team of four new employees.

Mike's dedication to the business is evident in the enhancements he's made. Improved snack options, including ice cream, and a new liquor license for beer, wine, and cocktails cater to diverse tastes. The introduction of private parties and events positions Rocky Mountain Clubhouse as a prime venue for celebrations.

Rocky Mountain Clubhouse is excited to start its first season under new ownership. The business aims to be an active community member through discounted programs for schools and non-profits, sponsorships, and donations.



"I am thankful to have found the Central Mountain SBDC, which not only introduced me to the vibrant Salida business community, but also provided me with essential resources in lending, insurance, cash flow management, and proforma analysis, ensuring a solid start for my business."

-Mike De Runtz, Owner



Konjo Ethiopian Food

5505 W 20th Avenue, Suite #106

Edgewater, CO 80214

konjoethiopianfood.com

Denver Metro SBDC



In 2008, Fetien Gebre-Michael pioneered Denver's Ethiopian culinary scene by launching Konjo Catering, the city's first Ethiopian catering company. She quickly identified a strong appetite for Ethiopian cuisine, leading her to introduce The Ethiopian Food Truck, which became an instant hit, drawing lines two blocks long. Fetien's vision expanded to opening Denver's first fast-casual Ethiopian restaurant, but the search for an affordable location proved challenging.

A turning point arrived in 2018 when Konjo Catering was selected for the SBDC's "Trout Tank Food Frenzy" Pitch Competition. The Denver Metro SBDC provided crucial support, helping Fetien refine her business concept with in-depth market analysis, a solid revenue model, and detailed financial projections. This support proved vital in demonstrating the project's viability to potential investors.

The effort paid off: Konjo Catering won the competition. By November 2019, Konjo Ethiopian Food, Denver's first fast-casual Ethiopian restaurant, opened its doors within The Edgewater Public Market.

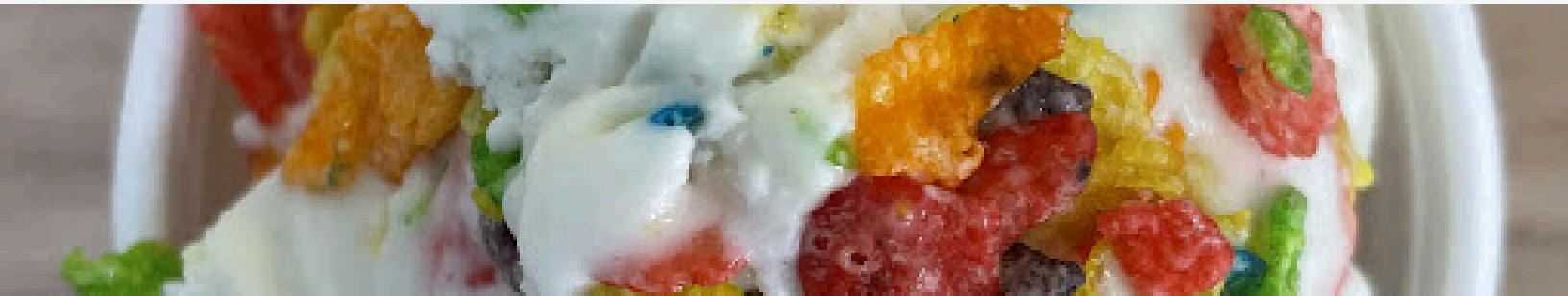
As Konjo Ethiopian Food approaches its fifth anniversary, it continues to thrive and expand its impact. The restaurant has become a popular destination for both residents and tourists, offering a unique blend of authentic Ethiopian flavors and fast-casual convenience. The strategic planning and support from the SBDC transformed a passionate endeavor into a successful business that fulfills a distinct market demand.

Beyond its culinary achievements, Konjo Ethiopian Food enriches Denver's diverse food culture and community. The restaurant actively participates in local events and festivals, showcasing its vibrant cuisine and heritage. This commitment to quality and community engagement has cemented Konjo Ethiopian Food's position as a beloved and essential part of Denver's dynamic dining landscape.

"The SBDC was an integral part of our success. They gave us the tools and the confidence we needed to execute our vision."

-Fetien Gebre-Michael, Owner





Mosqueda Delicacies
Ice Cream & More
216 Main Street
Fort Morgan, CO 80701
mosquedadelicacies.com

East SBDC

Driven by a shared love for ice cream and desserts, sisters-in-law Gloria and Blanca Mosqueda founded Mosqueda Delicacies in Fort Morgan. While the ice cream shop attracts visitors from around the world today, their bumpy start almost kept this town gem from opening.

The Mosqueda's' encountered numerous health and zoning regulations that threatened to derail their dream. Undeterred, they sought help from the SBDC and began working with Advisor Merle Rhoades from the East CO SBDC. Rhoades provided essential guidance, assisting them in navigating zoning issues, creating a strategic plan, conducting financial analysis, and implementing key business and marketing strategies, enabling them to open in 2016.

However, the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic presented new challenges. Like many small businesses, Mosqueda Delicacies struggled to survive. They adapted with curbside delivery but soon realized they needed further support to stay afloat. Once again, they turned to the SBDC, who helped them secure local grants to sustain their operations.

In the summer of 2021, after struggling to pay bills and working without pay, they sought advice from Rhoades again. Initially planning to sell the business, a financial analysis showed they would gain little from selling the buildings and equipment. Instead, they decided to keep the business, raising prices and cutting store hours, with just two employees running the shop.

In 2022, they received a major boost when Mosqueda Delicacies was selected for HGTV's "Fort Morgan, CO" Home Town Take Over (Season 2). The renovation and national exposure helped transform the business into a beloved destination in Fort Morgan, amplified by SBDC support and a growing network of mentors.

"The guidance from the SBDC has been the cherry on top of our success sundae—thank you for helping our dreams scoop higher!"

-Gloria & Blanca Mosqueda, Co-owners



Kristi Redlinger's leap from a stable commercial banking career to the world of business owner is a great example of the magic that happens when entrepreneurs team up with the SBDC. Driven by a desire for professional autonomy, Kristi launched The Boring Bookkeeper.

Recognizing the importance of a solid business foundation, Kristi partnered with Grand Junction SBDC consultant Bob Delavan. Together, they crafted a detailed three-year financial plan, outlining revenue projections and strategic expense management. This collaborative process provided Kristi with a clear roadmap for her business's financial health.

Adding to her entrepreneurial toolkit, Kristi enrolled in the SBDC's 11-week Leading Edge business planning course. This program expanded her knowledge across critical business domains, including commercial insurance, recent HR legislation, and artificial intelligence. Kristi credits the course with giving her the business savvy needed to make informed decisions regarding business entity selection, marketing, and forecasting. By actively engaging with SBDC advisors and leveraging the course's resources, she developed a business plan that now serves as the operational blueprint for The Boring Bookkeeper.

Since launching in June 2024, Kristi has consistently surpassed her revenue targets. Notably, she achieved her first-month revenue goal within the first week and reached her two-month target in just four weeks. After nine months, The Boring Bookkeeper has exceeded its revenue projections by 53% while maintaining a Net Profit Margin of 19%.

Furthermore, Kristi recently hired an intern through the Mesa County Workforce Center and contracted with two local bookkeepers to help manage overflow. As she looks to the future, Kristi plans to create at least two jobs in 2025, further contributing to the local economy.

Kristi plans to continue leveraging SBDC resources to further scale her business, enhance services, and connect with fellow business owners.

“Going through this course helped me consider things I hadn’t known much about before, such as commercial insurance, recent legislation in human resources, and harnessing the benefits of Artificial Intelligence.”

-Kristi Redlinger, Owner





Cups Community Coffee

1033 S. Taft Hill Road

Fort Collins, CO 80521

cupstafthill.com

Larimer SBDC

Cups Community Coffee, a local cafe in West Fort Collins, found invaluable support through its collaboration with the Larimer SBDC. Navigating the complexities of a recent ownership change amidst the pandemic, coupled with escalating operational costs, Amy Snider, the cafe's owner, sought strategic guidance to ensure both survival and growth. The SBDC's Leading Edge Strategic Planning Series proved transformative, providing a renewed sense of direction and a clear vision. The blend of structured learning and advising led by Bill Welter met a critical need for external support, effectively filling the role of a traditional business advisory board.

A significant impact of the SBDC's involvement was achieving greater financial clarity and efficiency. SBDC consultant Sean Orner's expertise in QuickBooks was instrumental in streamlining the cafe's financial management. She guided Amy on how to optimize her QuickBooks, clean up financial records, and key systems, resulting in improved financial tracking and informed decision-making. Furthermore, the SBDC facilitated a partnership with Front Range Community College's Bookkeeping Help Center, a guided student internship program where accounting students, under Sean's direction, provide bookkeeping assistance. In addition, Amy took advantage of the PSD's Work-based Learning Program to provide experience to high school students and thoroughly enjoyed helping students develop career pathways.

Beyond building financial acumen, the SBDC's comprehensive advising, strategic planning and financial management, empowered Amy to confidently expand catering services and explore new growth opportunities. The SBDC's guidance and resources have been crucial in helping Cups Community Coffee not only weather difficult times but also solidify its position as a vital community asset.



“I found the reconnection with SBDC to be just what I needed to feel the support, have accountability, and get advice and resources to propel me forward. We are so glad to have the resource of the SBDC available and I tell everyone I know in small business to take advantage of this wonderful community partner.”

-Amy Snider, Owner



Tree of Life Childcare

9280 Harrison Street

Thornton, CO 80229

treeoflifechildcarecolorado.com

North Metro SBDC



“We believe your child is a precious seed who will grow into a beautiful tree with the help of all, you and us, as a team.”

Tree of Life childcare center, owned and operated by Monica Martinez-Jaik, provides a nurturing environment where children are encouraged to respect themselves, others, and nature while developing independence and a love of learning. With over 20 years of experience, Monica, a licensed childcare provider proficient in the Montessori Method and bilingual in Spanish and English, leads a dedicated team focused on the intellectual, social, physical, and emotional development of each child.

Recognizing the importance of online visibility, Maria Cooper, staff support at Tree of Life, reached out to North Metro SBDC to learn ways to boost their online presence. Their Google Business Profile was new and unoptimized, hindering discoverability and impacting enrollment opportunities. SBDC Lead Advisor and Marketing Specialist, Diego Leyes, provided targeted solutions, optimizing the profile with relevant keywords, compelling content, and accurate information to improve search rankings.

He also offered personalized guidance on enhancing online visibility and attracting local families, empowering Tree of Life to manage and update their profile for sustained growth. In-person support was provided through the SBDC's partnership with Alianza at the Alliance Center.



The SBDC's impact is clear: Tree of Life's Google Business Profile rankings improved significantly, leading to increased profile views and engagement from local parents. This online boost translated into more inquiries and potential enrollments, directly contributing to the center's growth and demonstrating the SBDC's value in helping small businesses thrive.

“You can have the best business idea, but without visibility, your business won't thrive. The missing piece is client attraction. We understood this, but didn't know how to execute it effectively. For us, Diego provided the guidance we needed. Following his advice marked a turning point—phone calls and traffic increased fivefold. Now, our childcare is fully booked, and we're in the process of expanding.”

-Maria Cooper, Support Staff



Run Wild Retreats + Wellness

runwildretreats.com

Northwest SBDC

Run Wild Retreats + Wellness experienced a complete business lifecycle transformation through its strategic partnership with the Northwest SBDC. From its humble beginnings as a sole proprietorship to its successful sale, the SBDC partnered with owner Elinor Fish to provide critical guidance and support at every stage of the company's evolution.

Elinor launched her business in 2010 as a sole proprietor. As Run Wild Retreats + Wellness continued to grow and attract a clientele of women seeking adventure and wellness through running retreats, the SBDC provided crucial support to navigate the complexities of scaling the business. The SBDC assisted Elinor in hiring employees, analyzing cash flow to optimize operations, and preparing for further growth through product sales. This hands-on support enabled Elinor to effectively manage the burgeoning demand for her unique travel experiences.

When the COVID-19 pandemic brought the travel industry to a standstill, Elinor once again relied on the SBDC for assistance. The SBDC helped her navigate COVID-19 support and funding programs, which were essential for sustaining the business during a period of unprecedented disruption. This support allowed Run Wild to weather the storm and emerge stronger as travel restrictions eased.

Finally, after a strong post-pandemic recovery and achieving over one million in revenue, Elinor worked with the SBDC on a strategic exit plan. The SBDC's Exit Planning Program guided her through the process of maximizing business valuation and preparing Run Wild for a successful sale. With the support of an SBDC Exit Planning Advisor, Elinor evaluated potential exit pathways, understood the business's value, and confidently decided to sell, ultimately closing the transaction in August 2024.

“Truly, I have been singing the praises of the SBDC. The information they provided over the years helped me have all my finances in order, my systems documented, and everything organized, which made it so that the final sale could go smoothly. I am so proud of what I accomplished and how I exited when I wanted and on my terms.”

-Elinor Fish, Owner





Sarah Sit & Play House & Pet Sitting

330 E Costilla Street, #95
Colorado Springs, Co 80903
sarahsitandplay.com

Pikes Peak SBDC

Sarah Sit and Play emerged from a simple need: reliable pet care in the Pikes Peak region. Initially, Sarah Groh's services were driven by word-of-mouth, catering to friends and their referrals. Recognizing the growing demand, she launched her business in March 2022, and by May 2023, she took the crucial step of becoming a member of the National Association of Professional Pet Sitters (NAPPS) and registering as an LLC. This foundation laid the groundwork for her business to scale beyond informal favors, marking the transition to a professional pet-sitting service.

To navigate this growth, Sarah sought enlisted the Pikes Peak SBDC to help her set growth strategies and establish benchmarks for her first year of operation. The SBDC provided crucial support in several key areas, including writing a comprehensive contract outlining her services and responsibilities, strategizing on raising service fees to reflect her expertise, creating a contract agreement for 1099 contractors, and securing vital liability insurance coverage. These steps were essential for Sarah to build a solid operational framework and mitigate potential risks.

With the SBDC's guidance, Sarah raised her service fees, directly contributing to increased revenue. To meet the rising client demand, she began training and hiring contract sitters to expand her service capacity. She also developed and implemented formal agreements with both clients and 1099 contractors, ensuring clarity and professionalism in her operations. Securing liability insurance provided crucial protection, allowing her to operate with confidence.

The results of these strategic changes were remarkable. By the end of her first year, Sarah had successfully managed a team of seven sitters and two dog walkers, serving 45 regular clients and completing a total of 94 house sits. This significant growth demonstrates the effectiveness of Sarah's proactive approach and the invaluable support provided by the SBDC. By formalizing her business, implementing professional practices, and expanding her team, Sarah transformed a simple idea into a thriving pet-sitting enterprise.

"I recommended the SBDC at Barnes & Noble to a guy in the biz book section. We were talking and he had "Small Business for Dummies" in his hand. I told him to call the SBDC!"

-Sarah Groh, Owner & Founder





Conley Waste Management

215 4th Street

Saguache, CO 81149

conleywastemanagement.com

San Luis Valley SBDC

The San Luis Valley SBDC proved to be an indispensable asset to Conley Waste Management, providing critical support that extended beyond mere consultation. In a period marked by significant economic challenges, including a 48% increase in refuse truck costs since 2020 and a tight labor market, the SBDC offered a lifeline. Their expertise in business consulting helped Conley Waste Management navigate these hurdles, providing strategic guidance for sustainable growth.

A key contribution of the SBDC was their ability to identify and facilitate access to vital grant opportunities. For a small business like Conley Waste Management, operating in a rural community, the process of finding and applying for grants can be overwhelming. The SBDC's targeted approach allowed the company to secure two small business grants, directly fueling their expansion plans. This financial support was pivotal, especially as the company embarked on a significant diversification effort into renewable energy.

Conley Waste Management's commitment to renewable energy, encompassing 235 acres of land and long-term lease agreements with major solar companies, represents a substantial investment in the community's future. The SBDC's support in securing grants enabled the company to allocate resources effectively, ensuring the success of these ambitious projects.

By simplifying the complex grant application process, the SBDC allowed the company to focus on its core mission: delivering reliable waste management services and expanding into renewable energy. This strategic partnership has enabled Conley Waste Management to not only weather economic storms but also to thrive and contribute positively to its community. The SBDC's impact is evident in the company's ability to diversify, expand, and create jobs, solidifying its role as a vital community partner.

“The SBDC is an excellent business aid as they have a variety of management and technical assistance to meet the growing needs of businesses in 2025. We're happy to be a client and look forward to utilizing the service for future grant related opportunities.”

-Elvie Ray Conley, Founder & CEO and
Elvie Ray Conley, Jr. M.A., COO





Kenny's Flamen' Steel LLC

36 Verdosa Drive

Pueblo, CO 81005

www.youtube.com/@KennysSteel

Southern SBDC

Kenneth Zittel, a high school entrepreneur, faced a unique set of challenges when launching his business, primarily due to his age. Designing the ARC SKATE during shop class revealed his passion and vision, but his youth often led to skepticism from others. Beyond the typical hurdles of turning an idea into a business, Kenneth had to rapidly acquire fundamental business knowledge that most entrepreneurs gain through years of experience.

Time management posed another significant obstacle. Balancing full-time studies, a part-time job, and business development demanded substantial sacrifices. While his peers enjoyed leisure and social activities, Kenneth dedicated his evenings and weekends to his venture. However, these early sacrifices laid the groundwork for his future success, instilling a strong work ethic and determination.

Recognizing Kenneth's potential, the Southern Colorado SBDC enrolled him in the Future CEO Summer Camp. This provided crucial business fundamentals and access to expert mentorship. Consultant Kurt Madic offered personalized guidance, navigating the complexities of registering a minor-owned business and securing a provisional patent for the ARC SKATE. This support was instrumental in legitimizing his venture and protecting his innovative design.

With his business officially operational, Kenneth focused on acquiring clients. The SBDC's training, combined with his own drive and determination, enabled him to secure initial sales and envision future expansion.

The SBDC's foundational support was pivotal in Kenneth's journey, demonstrating the power of mentorship and guidance for young entrepreneurs. It not only provided the necessary tools and knowledge but also instilled confidence, enabling him to overcome the challenges associated with his youth.

"It's important to have other people believe in you and your dream, the SBDC does that!"

-Kenneth Zittel, Owner





Chef Safari's African Fusion

225 Girard Street
Durango, Colorado 81303
chefsafari.com

Southwest SBDC

Chef Safari believes, "Passion turns perfection into art," a philosophy evident in every dish served from his Durango food truck, Chef Safari's African Fusion.

His remarkable journey began in Kenya's most prestigious resorts, propelling him across continents. He honed his skills in Germany, Sweden, Sardinia, Barcelona, Zanzibar, and the United States, accumulating awards and recognition. Notably, he broke barriers as the first African chef within the Royal Caribbean Cruise fleet.

In 2015, Chef Safari decided to pursue his entrepreneurial dream and partnered with the Southwest SBDC. The SBDC became instrumental in translating his vision into reality. Through the 12-week Leading Edge program and QuickBooks workshops, he gained crucial business acumen. Advisors provided invaluable guidance on cash flow management, financial projections, and the intricacies of forming his LLC.

The SBDC's support extended beyond foundational knowledge. They facilitated a GoFundMe campaign, a pivotal element in launching his food truck. The SBDC's comprehensive assistance prepared Chef Safari for a successful business launch. He received tailored support in sales and marketing strategies, diligently tracked customer reviews, and refined his service offerings. Advisors collaborated with him to brainstorm marketing and business expansion ideas.

In October 2023, Chef Safari's African Fusion opened its doors at the Ska Brewing World headquarters in Durango. Thanks to the SBDC's unwavering support and Chef Safari's dedication, his business continues to thrive, delighting customers with authentic African cuisine and his infectious warmth. This success story exemplifies how a passionate individual, coupled with strategic guidance, can create a thriving business. "Jambo!"—stop by and experience the art of culinary passion.

"The SBDC helped me put together my business plan and financial projects when I was first starting out. They are the first place I go when I need help with my business now."

-Arnold Safari, Chef & Owner





Elegant Perfume Collection

2050 Greeley Mall, #2002
Greeley, CO 80631

East SBDC

This success story was written in Spanish to demonstrate the value of bilingual business support.

"Encontrando el local fue un poco batalloso, también conseguir los proveedores adecuados también fue un desafío.

Jeisy con el East SBDC nos ayudó en comprender y a procesar la registración del negocio tanto a nivel federal, estatal y local incluyendo en sacar los permisos adecuado para poder vender.

Los resultado que obtuvimos por usar los recursos del SBDC fue que pude abrir mi negocio, y lo mejor de todo es que fue en mi idioma. Jeisy me ha ayudado tanto a entender los procesos que se requieren y es la persona a quien me dirijo siempre por cualquier pregunta que tenga.

Finding the location was a bit of a struggle, also finding the right suppliers was also a challenge.

Jeisy with East SBDC helped us understand and process business registration at the federal, state and local level, including obtaining the appropriate permits to sell.

The results we obtained from using the SBDC resources was that I was able to open my business, and the best of all is that it was in my language. Jeisy has helped me so much to understand the processes required and is the person I always turn to with any questions I have.

"Gracias a Jeisy y al SBDC pude abrir mi pequeño negocio de perfumería. Gracias a que el SBDC tiene gente que habla español puedo manejar mi negocio con más seguridad porque sé que ellos estarán siempre disponibles para ayudarme en cada paso."

-Israel Batista, Propietario

"Thanks to Jeisy and the SBDC I was able to open my small perfumery business. Thanks to the fact that the SBDC has people who speak Spanish, I can manage my business with more confidence because I know that they will always be available to help me at every step."

-Israel Batista, Owner



Thank You To Our Statewide Host Organizations

The Colorado Small Business Development Center Network would like to acknowledge and thank each one of our host organizations. Given your support, effort, and community dedication, Colorado's economic development continues to thrive. We couldn't do what we do without you, and for that, we're grateful.

City of Aurora

15151 E. Alameda Parkway, #2300, Aurora, CO 80112

Aurora-South Metro SBDC

sbdc.colorado.gov/aurorasouthmetro



City of Boulder

1500 Pearl Street, Suite 300, Boulder, CO 80302

Boulder SBDC

sbdc.colorado.gov/locations/boulder



Chaffee County

123 G Street, Suite 29, Salida, CO 81201

Central Mountain SBDC

sbdc.colorado.gov/centralmountain



Denver Metro Chamber of Commerce

1445 Market Street, Denver, CO 80202

Denver Metro SBDC

sbdc.colorado.gov/locations/denver



University of Northern Colorado
Monfort College of Business
Kepner Hall, 800 17th Street, #0025, Greeley, CO 80639
East Colorado SBDC
<https://sbdc.colorado.gov/locations/east>



Business Incubator Center
2591 Legacy Way, Grand Junction, CO 81503
Grand Junction SBDC
sbdc.colorado.gov/grandjunction



Front Range Community College
4616 S. Shields Street, Blanca Peak 151
Fort Collins, CO 80526
Larimer SBDC
sbdc.colorado.gov/locations/larimer



Front Range Community College
3645 W. 112th Avenue, Westminster, CO 80031
North Metro Denver SBDC
sbdc.colorado.gov/northmetro



Eagle County
500 Broadway, Eagle, CO 816131
Northwest Colorado SBDC
sbdc.colorado.gov/locations/northwest



Colorado Springs Chamber & EDC

559 E. Pikes Peak Avenue, Suite 101
Colorado Springs, CO 80903

Pikes Peak SBDC

sbdc.colorado.gov/pikespeak



Adams State University School of Business

208 Edgemont Boulevard, Alamosa, CO 81101

San Luis Valley SBDC

sbdc.colorado.gov/slv



Pueblo Community College

121 W. City Center Drive, Suite 150, Pueblo, CO 81003

Southern Colorado SBDC

sbdc.colorado.gov/locations/southern



Fort Lewis College

835 Main Avenue, Suite 225, Durango, CO 81301

Southwest Colorado SBDC

sbdc.colorado.gov/locations/southwest



Region 10 Small Business Resource Center

145 S. Cascade Avenue, Montrose, CO 81401

West Central SBDC

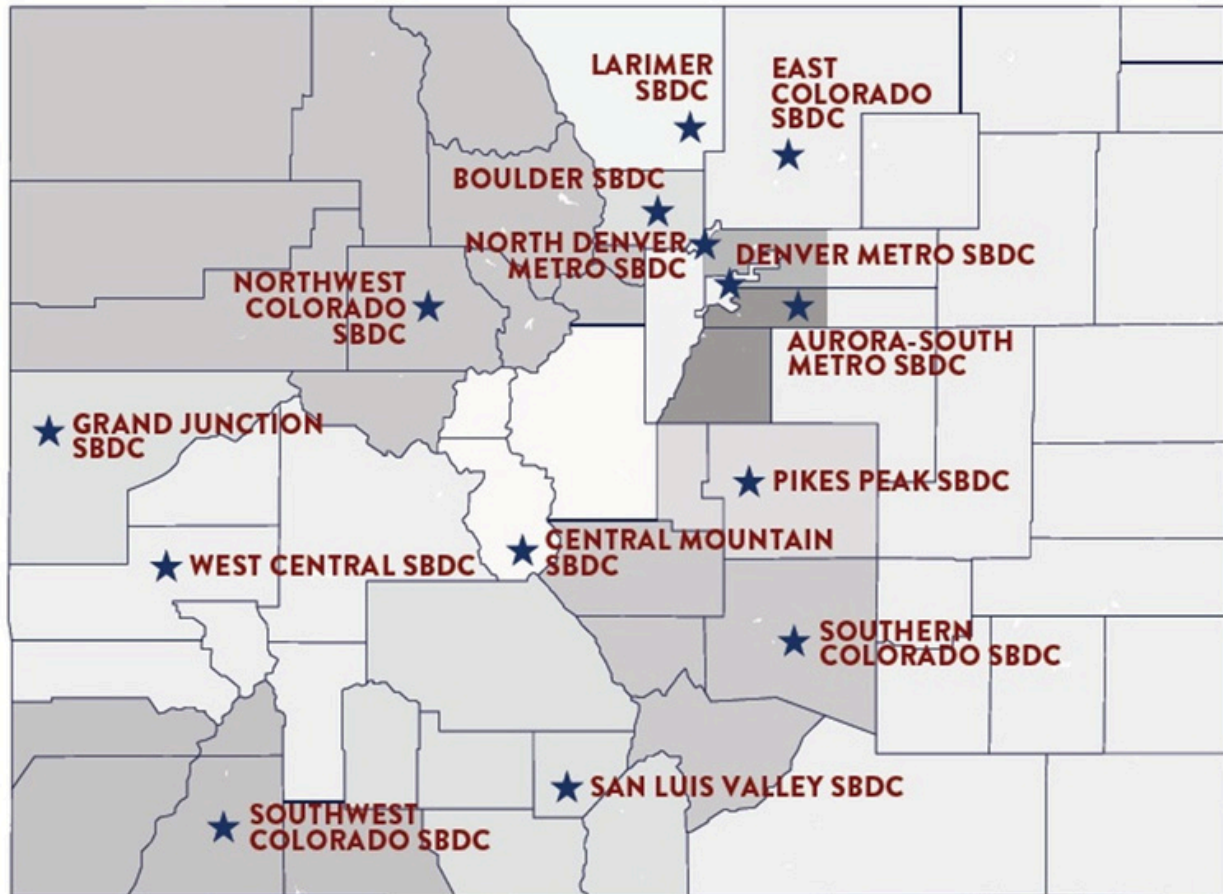
sbdc.colorado.gov/westcentral





Colorado Locations

Small Business Development Centers



★ Full-time SBDC Center (advising and training)

Office

1600 Broadway, Suite 2500
Denver, CO 80202

Contact

303-860-5881
sbdc@state.co.us
sbdc.colorado.gov

