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Accelerating business success



Small Business Resource Guide
Manitowoc County, Wisconsin

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Small Business Resource Guide

Introduction

Going into business? Expanding your business? Relocating your business? Just looking for some help or some answers? Many different programs and resources are available that may be unknown to you. The *Small Business Resource Guide* will provide you with basic information to guide you through programs and resources that are available at the local, state, and federal levels.

Progress Lakeshore staff is committed to providing the best economic development assistance to you. While we have tried to be comprehensive in our listing of programs and resources, and complete annual reviews of programs and resources available. This guide is subject to change. Also, please keep in mind that this publication may not include every item that relates to your situation; therefore, you should consult with your business advisors, an attorney, an accountant, or the appropriate government official to be sure that requirements specific to your business have been satisfied. Current information can always be found at:

www.progresslakeshore.org

Contact Progress Lakeshore at (920) 482-0540.



202 North 8th Street Suite 101, Manitowoc, WI 54220

We wish you success in your endeavor and are eager to help with your business venture. We hope the *Small Business Resource Guide* will provide you with some of the tools and guidance you need!

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What makes an entrepreneur?

What it takes

The dream of going into business has never been as popular as it is today. Despite the tremendous risk of going into business millions of new businesses are started each year in the United States. Statistics show that many of these new businesses won't last more than a few years and that owners close their doors as a result of poor market research, inability to compete effectively, mismanagement, and/or many other reasons.

Starting a business is not difficult; keeping the business running is. Not enough people take the time to ask key questions about themselves or their abilities before starting out. The hard truth is entrepreneurship is not for everyone; it takes some basic skills that can be learned and requires a few personality traits. Take the time to analyze yourself and decide whether owning a business is suitable to your own personality, skills, and lifestyle. Venturing out on your own is a major decision, involving too much time, money, and energy to be careless with. Considering you have read this far, chances are you already have many of the attributes that many entrepreneurs share.

Personal Qualities:

- Patient and persevering. Successful entrepreneurs are normally willing to work long, hard hours, and willing to weather the highs and lows of business.
- Love a challenge and are driven by a need to challenge one's self.
- High tolerance for ambiguous, unstructured situations.
- A desire for change and constant improvement. Entrepreneurs frequently monitor social trends and adopt new technologies.
- Action-oriented.
- Think positively and quickly get over their failures, learn quickly, enjoy feedback, and are able to learn from mistakes.
- Both listen and communicate well.
- Independent and extroverted.
- Self-confident and determined to succeed. Entrepreneurs should be comfortable with having all of the decisions rest upon them.
- Creative, innovative, and open-minded.

Physical and Psychological Qualities:

- Ample health and energy.
- Emotional stability.
- Money — enough to start the business, as well as to support yourself during the risky start-up period.
- Time — a business requires much time and attention, especially during its launch.
- Influence from entrepreneurial role models.
- Personal intelligence.

Business and Managerial Skills:

- Able to set realistic attainable goals.
- Love to take risks, but ensure that these risks are calculated, not foolish.
- Able to exert influence on and inspire others without a need to impose status or power.
- Able to get along with and adapt to all types of people.
- Able to trust others and give out responsibility.
- Possess good communication skills (the ability to put your ideas into writing, as well as to persuasively present your ideas to a group of people).
- Possess general financing, production, administration, human resources, sales, and marketing skills.

Lifestyle Considerations:

- Other commitments and obligations — your decision will not only affect you. Get opinions and input from others.
- Family — there are many added responsibilities associated with having a family. You must not only provide food, clothing, and shelter, but also adequate time, love, attention, and security. Therefore, you should guarantee that your new venture does not put others at risk.
- Your own happiness and whether you are passionate enough about your business idea to ensure that you will enjoy it daily. Considering your natural talents, skills, and sources of enjoyment may lead you to the best business idea.

All of these characteristics, combined with know-how, personal contacts, and the development of business expertise, generally separate the successful from the unsuccessful in entrepreneurialism. Act wisely by taking a look at yourself, your needs, desires, and capabilities before taking the plunge into the world of business.

Nevertheless, please be aware that entrepreneurial characteristics are somewhat flexible and do have the potential to be developed. If you anticipate any areas of difficulty, it is best to deal with them sooner rather than later. Here's what you can do:

- Educate yourself through books, courses, and discussions with other business owners.
- Take some additional time to get the experience you may lack.
- Develop the skills and traits you do not have.
- Partner with someone to handle the things you can not.
- Hire others for areas in which you are unfamiliar or inexperienced.

Calculate the odds of success

The next step in the business development process is defining and analyzing your business idea. The small business failure rate most certainly would fall if more people would take the time to research and evaluate their business idea before they take the plunge.

To get started you should start out by defining exactly what your business idea is in writing. Ask yourself, "Why will my business be a success?" Spend time to research and evaluate your idea. Review your business idea with professionals like the those at the Progress Lakeshore, Lakeshore Technical College, Small Business Development Center, SCORE, or Urban Hope Entrepreneur Center. (See page 9 for more information on these programs or services.) Think through your idea with these questions: What business am I interested in starting? What services or products will I sell? Is my idea practical, and will it fit a need? What is my business's competitive advantage? Can I deliver a better quality service? Can I create demand and will customers buy it?

Discuss the products or services with potential customers. Would they buy from you? At what price? With what frequency? Why would they buy your product over the competition? What risks or hurdles do they see related to your idea?

Study the competition. Identify the competition's strengths and weaknesses while trying to be objective. What could you do better than the competition? What do they do really well? How do they operate? Analyze the market you will be serving. Determine if there is too much market competition or none based upon your location, breadth of distribution, levels of promotions, and likely prices. How is the market changing? What are the price markups/structures? What are the trends in your industry? What will it take to be successful in the industry?

You should also consider financial feasibility. How much will it cost to get your business started? What sources of capital do you have available? Keep in mind that the vast majority of businesses are started with personal finances or by friends and family members. What will it cost to keep the business running? What are your profit goals and what level of sales can you expect during the first year or two?

If after all this self-examination your business idea still seems like a good idea, you can move ahead with confidence. On the other hand, you may discover your idea has some flaws in it or you're just not able to find all the answers you are looking for. In this event you could:

- Decide to postpone action on your idea until you can get more information.
- Rethink your idea and improve it.
- Conclude that becoming a business owner is not for you. Deciding not to start a business can be a good decision, too.
- Shop your idea to a third party.

Consider your options

You do not have to go it alone. Linking up with a business partner can be a way to help share the burden and joys of owning a business. It could provide another dimension of success by complementing and enhancing your skills and personality. Keep in mind that starting a business with a partner can sometimes complicate the situation. A good partnership will establish a formal partnership agreement in consultation with an attorney including items such as who will be responsible for what task, what type of consultation is made before a decision is reached, what happens if one of the partners decides to leave the business, etc.

Starting a business from scratch is only one way to begin. There are some other options that you might want to consider. Buying an established business that's already up and running may spare you many of the problems associated with starting up and may reduce some of the risk of going into business. But buying a business requires due diligence and professional assistance and advice.

Another option to consider is purchasing a franchise. Franchising is a way to get into business with a proven product, service, or business format. It is an approach that is based on the principle that if you do what has worked for others you will be successful too. While not completely risk free franchises have a much lower failure rate than non-franchise businesses.

If you have a patent, trademark or copyright, you may want to license your product to another firm instead of starting your own business. You may decide that it is better to have others with the experience and equipment to manufacture and market your product and collect royalties from them.

Timeline for Starting a Business

If you have read this far you and are still considering starting a business, that's great! Now you need to understand the many things that need to be accomplished before opening. The following is an estimated timeline for starting a business. Each business is different and not everything listed below will apply to your situation, and some may become clearer as you read through sections of this publication. To avoid surprises it is always best to check with your federal, state, and local regulations and officials.

PRE-PLANNING

- Prepare a written business plan based on sound business practices. This should include information about you, the business, management team, projections, and complete financial statements.
- Assess your personal skills for being self-employed and for your commitment to the business.
- Analyze your business idea by looking into similar businesses for comparisons of profitability, start-up costs, etc.

9-12 MONTHS PRIOR TO START-UP

- Determine time required to obtain business permits.
- Contact and join chamber of commerce.
- Visit with others in your network: attorneys, bankers, CPA's, consultants.
- Check out community amenities (real estate, schools, etc.).
- Subscribe to local papers.
- Decide on business location.
- Obtain licenses (local, county, state).
- Prepare preliminary business plan and budget.
- Interview bankers.
- Determine when the phone book is printed.

6-9 MONTHS PRIOR TO START-UP

- Check zoning ordinances.
- Check utility requirements.
- Prepare leasehold improvement plan.
- Determine office and plant layout and design.
- Choose advisors: attorney, accountant, consultant, insurance agents and brokers.
- Review leases and contracts with attorney and advisors.
- Obtain bids on major business equipment.

4-6 MONTHS PRIOR TO START-UP

- Decide on a form of business organization (sole proprietor, corporation, LLC, etc.).
- Prepare advertisements.
- Prepare final budget and review with banker.
- Order business systems: receivables, check disbursements, payroll system.
- Order sign for office.

0-4 MONTHS PRIOR TO START-UP

- Make sure business filings and license applications are complete.
- Arrange for insurance.
- Arrange for telephone service installation.
- Open checking accounts.
- Sign up for credit card systems at local bank.
- Arrange for business announcement ads in local papers.
- Order office opening announcements.
- Arrange to give talks to community groups.
- Consider membership in civic and church organizations.
- Contact State Department of Workforce Development if hiring new employees.
- Prepare job descriptions for employees.
- Write policy manual for office employees.
- Check local resources for personnel.
- Begin screening process for new personnel.
- Contact IRS for booklets and apply for Federal Employment ID number.
- Apply for state ID number.
- Contact state for tax forms and employer's requirements.
- Obtain payroll withholding booklets from tax authorities.
- Review tax requirements with your accountant.
- Arrange for janitorial service, waste removal, laundry service, grass mowing.
- Order supplies: appointment cards, business cards, stationery, deposit stamp for checks, telephone message pads.
- Interview and select collection agency.
- Determine business hours.
- Determine pricing schedule.
- Order publications.
- Purchase office equipment and furniture.
- Start setting up office.
- Schedule utilities to be turned on.
- Hire and train office personnel.
- Establish petty cash fund.
- Prepare a press release and begin advertisement.
- Mail announcement.
- Plan an open house.

Preparing a Business Plan

A business plan is simply a written document that describes the future path of a business. A good business plan explains the business concept, summarizes the objectives of the business, identifies the resources (both in terms of money and people) that will be needed by the business, describes how those resources will be obtained, and tells the reader why the business will succeed. Virtually all sources of financing will want to see your plan, and a substantial part of the lender/investor's decision on whether or not to finance the business is based on this plan.

There are many substantial benefits to writing a business plan. First and foremost research has shown that 60 percent of businesses that complete a business plan survive two or more years; whereas, 15 percent of businesses without business plans survive two or more years. Your success is largely dependent on how much you understand your business and business sector. Writing a business plan will force you to think about your business, research some options, recognize opportunities and risks, and test some of your assumptions. As such, it helps you organize your thoughts and your resources. It will help you identify the cash needs of your business. A business plan can be used to raise funding from banks and from investors. Your business plan can be used to tell employees, investors and others about your plans and strategies. A business plan provides a benchmark against which to compare the progress and performance of your business. Below is a general outline.

1. Executive Summary (2 pages maximum)
This is an important section of the plan because it provides a concise overview of the complete plan. Often a lender or prospective investor may only read this section and the financial plan. This section should be written last.
2. Business Description
 - A. Type, form, and history of business.
 - B. Mission and goal of business.
 - C. Why will this business be successful?
 - D. What is the growth potential?
 - E. What is your "competitive advantage"?
3. Industry Analysis
 - A. Describe recent trends in the industry.
 - B. Characteristics of firms in the industry.
Average firm size
Cost structure
Typical profit margins, gross and net
Seasonal sales patterns
Other important characteristics
 - C. Industry outlook/forecast.
4. Competitive Analysis
 - A. Who are your competitors?
 - B. Describe/profile key competitors.
 - C. Strengths/weaknesses of key competitors.
 - D. What can you learn from competitors?
5. Market Analysis
 - A. Define the market (who buys and why?).
 - B. How is the market segmented?
 - C. How large is the market?
 - D. Identify your target markets.
 - E. Describe your customer buying practices.
 - F. Describe market trends and growth potential.
6. Marketing Plan
 - A. What are your marketing objectives?
 - B. How will you position your business in the market?
 - C. How will you advertise and promote your products services?
 - D. What is your marketing budget?
7. Management Plan
 - A. Who will manage the business?
 - B. What qualifications do they have?
 - C. Describe the strengths/weaknesses of the management team.
8. Operations Plan
 - A. Describe your production and/or service delivery methods.
 - B. Describe your facilities, capital equipment and technology requirements.
 - C. How many employees will you need?
 - D. Who are your suppliers and contractor?
 - E. Identify fixed and variable costs of production/service delivery.
 - F. Describe your quality control methods.
9. Financial Plan
 - A. Provide a detailed list of start-up costs.
 - B. What is your break even volume?
 - C. Provide proforma (projected) financial statements for the first three years.
 1. Income statement (profit & loss).
 2. Cash flow statement.
 3. Balance sheet.
 - D. Explain all assumptions used in developing financial projections.
10. Milestone Schedule
 - A. What is the timeline (key activities and target dates for start-up).
 - B. Describe key objectives and the schedule for their accomplishment.
11. Critical Risks
 - A. What potential problems could arise?
 - B. How likely are they to occur?
 - C. How do you plan to manage or overcome these problems?
12. Appendix
This section should include all supporting documentation such as resumes, contracts, advertisements, price quotes, magazine articles, etc. They should be referenced in the text and placed here.

Only you can write your business plan. A business plan is an expression of your ideas and no one can possibly understand your ideas better than you. You could have someone else write your business plan, but then it would not be your business plan.

This does not mean that you cannot or should not get help in preparing your business plan. If you need help with the writing, the research, or the financial projections there are many sources of assistance available and you should take advantage of them. Sources of assistance and advice are identified throughout this resource guide.

Choosing Your Business Advisors

To get a list of accountants, attorneys, bankers, or insurance agents, business planners call the Progress Lakeshore at (920) 482-0540. Here are some suggested partners to get you started on the right track with your business:

- **Accountant:** To discuss appropriate business forms, equipment, operating budgets, tax planning, and the bookkeeping system design. Will file governmental forms necessary to start a business. For help in selecting an accountant contact the Wisconsin Institute of Certified Public Accountants.
- **Attorney:** To set the form of the business, file proper papers, interpret rights and obligations of business person(s). To select an attorney contact the State Bar of Wisconsin at (608) 250-6006.
- **Banker:** To provide financial expertise, special financial services and open a business bank account.
- **Insurance Agent/Broker:** To evaluate insurance needs and to set up a program for business protection, including general, fire and liability coverage and worker's compensation.
- **Business Planner:** To give advice on starting a business, help with the rules and regulations, and assistance with the business plan. See the Local Business Development Assistance Section below for more information.

Naming Your Business

You are required to register your business name, if you are planning on obtaining financing for your business. To name your business, you first need to see if the name is available. You may check at www.wdfi.org/apps/cris/.

There are differences in the procedure for sole proprietorships, corporations, limited liability companies, or limited liability partnerships. (For more information on these business structures, please see page 12.) For a sole proprietorship, you may register your business name with the Manitowoc County Register of Deeds located at . The Registration of Firm Names is available online at www.wrdaonline.org/Forms/firmnameform.pdf. To register your firm name a small fee is required. If you need assistance with the form, please contact the Progress Lakeshore at (920) 482-0540. For a corporation, limited liability company, or limited liability partnership, you must register your name with the Wisconsin Department of Financial Institutions. Call WDFI at (608) 261-7577 for more information.

Local Business Development Assistance

Progress Lakeshore

202 North 8th Street Suite 101, Manitowoc, WI 54220
(920) 482-0540

- Offers business development assistance, business planning, demographics and market research, statistics, financing, strategic planning, regulatory matters, site selection, permitting/licensing assistance, and business name registration assistance.

Manitowoc Branch of SCORE—Chapter 508

202 North 8th Street Suite 101, Manitowoc, WI 54220
(920) 222-2167

- SCORE provides mentoring, business plan assistance, marketing ideas, financial resources, and contacts for business advisors.

Lakeshore Technical College—Center for Entrepreneurship

1290 North Avenue
Cleveland, WI 53015-1414
(920) 693-1000

- Consult with, train, and assist Lakeshore area residents and LTC students seeking to start or further develop their own businesses. Offer courses, workshops, and seminars.

UW-Green Bay Small Business Development Center

Manitowoc County Office Complex
202 North 8th Street Suite 101, Manitowoc, WI 54220
(920) 683-4169

- The SBDC provides business plan assistance, financing plan development, and assistance in the areas of marketing, pricing, etc.

Permits, Licenses and Government Regulations

State of Wisconsin Permits and Licenses

Some types of businesses are required to have a permit or a license to operate in the State of Wisconsin. The Wisconsin Department of Regulation and Licensing is responsible for credentialing and regulating more than 60 different professions and occupations in the state as well as more than two dozen types of businesses. Contact the DRL at (608) 266-2112 or on the web at www.drl.state.wi.us. Another resource is the Business Assistance Center. The BAC specializes in helping start-ups and entrepreneurs find the licenses and permits they need to operate in Wisconsin. They provide a number at 1-800-HELP-BUS(iness).

Local Permits and Licenses

All businesses should contact their local municipal official regarding local permits, licenses, and regulations which apply. Please contact:

Cato (town).....	(920) 775-4741
Centerville (town).....	(920) 693-8030
Cleveland (village).....	(920) 693-8181
Cooperstown (town).....	(920) 863-3261
Eaton (town).....	(920) 773-2644
Francis Creek (village).....	(920) 682-7410
Franklin (town).....	(920) 732-3337
Gibson (town).....	(920) 755-4744
Kellnersville (village).....	(920) 732-3016
Kiel (city).....	(920) 894-2909
Kossuth (town).....	(920) 732-3772
Liberty (town).....	(920) 775-4496
Manitowoc (city).....	(920) 686-6930
Manitowoc (town).....	(920) 682-5363
Manitowoc Rapids (town).....	(920) 682-3300
Maple Grove (town).....	(920) 754-4874
Maribel (village).....	(920) 863-6006
Meeme (town).....	(920) 693-3441
Mishicot (village).....	(920) 755-2525
Mishicot (town).....	(920) 755-2681
Newton (town).....	(920) 758-3202
Reedsville (village).....	(920) 754-4371
Rockland (town).....	(920) 772-4474
Schleswig (town).....	(920) 894-2483
St. Nazianz (village).....	(920) 773-2471
Two Creeks (town).....	(920) 755-2221
Two Rivers (city).....	(920) 793-5565
Two Rivers (town).....	(920) 682-8677
Valders (village).....	(920) 775-4522
Whitelaw (village).....	(920) 732-3239
Manitowoc County.....	(920) 683-4185

Building, Zoning, and Land Use Permits

The business or property must be zoned for business use.

Construction of new buildings and most business remodeling projects will generally require building permits. A home based business located in a residential zoning district may require a re-zoning or conditional use permit to operate legally. For more information on building permit or zoning questions in cities and villages consult the list above. For more information on building permits in towns consult the list above and for zoning information contact the Manitowoc County Planning Department at (920) 683-4185.

Generally, construction/remodeling projects over 5,000 square feet will be required to submit plans to the Division of Safety and

Buildings at the Wisconsin Department of Commerce. Call the Division of Safety and Buildings in Madison at (608) 266-3594.

Health Inspections

Manitowoc County requires any business involved in the sale of food or provide lodging to have inspection(s). For more information call the Manitowoc County Health Department at (920) 683-4155.

Fire Inspections

Most businesses are required to have annual fire inspections. For more information please contact the appropriate persons under Local Permits and Licenses.

Environmental Laws

Contact the Manitowoc County Soil and Water Conservation Office for information on manure storage, manure spreading, and nutrient management plans at (920) 683-4183.

For federal and state environmental licenses contact the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources. To find out more information call the WDNR Business Sector Specialists at (608) 267-9500.

Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)

Employers must provide reasonable accommodation to qualified individuals with disabilities who are employees or applicants for employment, except when such accommodations cause undue hardship to the business. For more information on reasonable accommodation and undue hardship call 1-800-669-3362 to request a free copy of *Enforcement Guidelines on Reasonable Accommodation and Undue Hardship Under the ADA*, or review it at the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission's website, www.eeoc.gov. More help can be gained from the ADA Wisconsin Partnership. The ADA Wisconsin Partnership can help with questions about ADA, help find solutions, send ADA publications, provide ADA training, and refer to additional resources. For more information call 1-800-708-3034.

Occupational Safety and Health Act

OSHA requires that employers under this act must provide a workplace free from recognized hazards that may cause or are likely to cause death or serious physical harm to employees. Employers are responsible to comply with standards, rules, and regulations issued by OSHA. These regulations differ from industry to industry. It is import to note that most businesses with 10 or fewer employees are exempt from OSHA record keeping requirements. However all business owners should be familiar with OSHA requirements that pertain to their business. You may call the OSHA office in Appleton at (920) 734-4521 for more information.

Copies of OSHA forms and publications are available through OSHA Publications Office, PO Box 37535, Washington D.C. 20013-7535, by phone at (202) 693-1888. Many forms can be downloaded at www.osha.gov/pls/publications/pubindex.list.

For additional help with OSHA safety contact the Wisconsin Safety Consultation Program through the Department of Commerce. They do not issues citations, enforce penalties, or report possible safety violations to OSHA. Their phone number is 1-800-947-0553. For help with OSHA health contact Department of Health and Family Service, Bureau of Occupation Health at (608) 266-0417.

Tax Information and Filing Requirements

A significant task that new business owners face is complying with the extensive tax and information filing requirements imposed by various governmental agencies. Stiff penalties are commonly assessed if the required forms and returns are not properly prepared and filed in a timely manner. There are several forms required to be filed when the business is started. While this is not intended to be an all-inclusive list of the filing requirements, it summarizes the most prominent requirements common to most businesses. Many industries have specific filing requirements that are not part of the following text, but should not be overlooked.

Professionals with experience in your industry should be consulted to assure that any such filings are properly handled. Please refer to the "Additional Information and Technical Assistance" for information and contacts at the Internal Revenue Service and the State of Wisconsin Department of Revenue.

Internal Revenue Service (IRS)

All tax forms filed with the IRS require the use of an Employer Identification Number (EIN). This number is obtained by filing Form SS-4 with the IRS. You can also apply for an EIN immediately by calling 1-866-816-2065. A completed SS-4 then must be filed within 24 hours. A new business will not need an EIN if it has no employees and is organized as a sole proprietorship. The proprietor's Social Security Number is used to identify the business.

The IRS has publications to assist small business such as the *Tax Guide for Small Business* and *Starting a Business and Keeping Records*. The IRS also holds workshops for people starting a small business. Please call the IRS Taxpayer Education Department at (414) 297-3302 for information.

The IRS website offers special pages of information and links for small business owners and self-employed person(s). The site is www.irs.gov/businesses/small/index.html.

Wisconsin Department of Revenue (DOR)

All new businesses operating as retailers selling tangible personal property or performing taxable services in Wisconsin must file Form BTR-101 Application of Permit to obtain a seller's permit number. This same application must also be filed to obtain a Wisconsin EIN for payroll tax purposes. The DOR uses information provided on BTR-101 to determine filing requirements for sales/use tax and withholding tax. There is a nominal fee required for a seller's permit.

The DOR website contains a wealth of information for small business owners and prospective entrepreneurs. The site address is www.dor.state.wi.us.

Wisconsin Department of Workforce Development (DWD)

DWD requires new employers to file a Wisconsin Employers Report to determine their status for Wisconsin unemployment tax purposes. Generally, employers are liable for unemployment tax if they pay Wisconsin wages of \$1,500 or more in any calendar quarter or employ one individual (full or part time, not necessarily the same persons) in each 20 or more calendar weeks in Wisconsin. The DWD website is www.dwd.state.wi.us.

Income Tax

Income tax laws are extensive and can be confusing. A qualified accountant or tax attorney should be consulted when you are dealing with income taxes. Income taxes have a direct result and a potentially significant impact on the cash flow of your business. The business owner may request an extension to file tax returns; however, these extensions do not extend the time for paying the tax. Proper tax planning is essential in order to make the most of the income tax laws. You will probably need to develop a relationship with a qualified professional who has experience with the taxation of

your type of business. Tax planning is not a one time shot right before the return is due. Tax planning is a year round endeavor requiring communication on both sides. If your company is doing business in more than one state it is essential that you familiarize yourself with tax laws and filing requirements of each of those states. Each state has its own rules and regulations; if you are in non-compliance you may be barred from doing business in that state.

Income tax laws are quite complicated. The amount you may save by attempting to tackle your own taxes, particularly as they relate to a business, can be greatly overshadowed by the expense you may incur if you make a mistake. This takes on greater significance when the return is for a corporation-especially the first return. However, a far greater consideration than potential mistakes is missing opportunities, which may be available to you and your business. Therefore, you should look to a qualified tax attorney or accountant.

Selecting the Legal Entity for Your Enterprise

Which form of organization will be best for your business? You should discuss the best business entity for your situation with an attorney or accountant. The type of business entity that you choose will be dependent on how much personal liability you choose to assume. Taxing structures for the different types of entities, management structure, and type will determine which entities you may or may not have, and what degree you need to raise capital from external source to fund expansion and growth. There are several ways to form a business including: sole proprietorship, partnerships, limited liability companies, and corporations.

Sole Proprietorship

A sole proprietorship is typically a business owned and operated by one individual, or very often by a husband and wife. A sole proprietorship is not considered to be a separate legal entity under the law, but an extension of the individual(s) who own(s) it. The sole proprietorship is the most common form of business organization as it is the easiest to set up. Profits are taxed as income to the owner personally. This rate is usually lower than the corporate tax rates would be. However many the benefits, the owner is personally responsible for debts and liabilities assumed by the business. The income or loss of a sole proprietorship is combined with the other earnings of an individual for income tax purposes.

Partnership

A partnership is a legal entity recognized under the law and as such it has rights and responsibilities in and of itself. A partnership can sign contracts, obtain credit, and borrow money. When a partnership is small, most creditors require a personal guarantee of the general partners for credit.

Partnerships can take these legal forms: general, limited, or limited liability. In a general partnership, two or more individuals join together to run the business enterprise. A partnership must usually file a fictitious business name statement to operate a business under the partnership name. Each of the individual partners has ownership of company assets and responsibility for liabilities, as well as authority in running the business. The authority of the partners, and the way in which profit and losses are to be shared, can be modified by the partnership agreement. The responsibility for liabilities can also be modified by agreement among the partners, but the partnership creditors typically have recourse to the personal assets of each of the partners for settlement of partnership debt.

A limited partnership is comprised of one or more general partners who are personally liable for partnership debts and one or more limited partners who contribute capital and share in the profits or losses of the business. The limited partners do not participate in managing the business and are liable for the debts of the partnership only to the extent of their capital contributions. The rights, responsibilities, and obligations of both the limited and general partners are typically detailed in a written partnership agreement. It is strongly recommended to have such agreement for any partnership, whether limited or general.

A relatively new type of partnership, legislatively authorized, is a Limited Liability Partnership (LLP). An LLP provides limited liability to all partners and is formed by filing a registration statement with the Wisconsin Department of Financial Institutions. It functions as a general partnership with its operation and rights of partners to participate being governed by its partnership agreement.

Limited Liability Company

A relatively new type of business entity legislatively authorized in most states is a Limited Liability Company (LLC). An LLC provides limited liability to all owners. Owners of an interest in an LLC are often referred to as members. An LLC is created by filing Articles of Organization and paying a processing fee to the Wisconsin Department of Financial Institutions. For more information about the process contact the DFI at (608) 261-7577. You may also download files and create an LLC using "QuickStart" at the DFI website: www.wdfi.org.

Offering limited liability protection to its owners makes an LLC resemble a corporation, but it typically lacks certain corporate characteristics. In most cases an LLC will be classified as a partnership for federal and state tax purposes. Members will report their share of the LLC's income, loss, deductions, or credits on their individual tax returns.

Corporation

A corporation is a separate legal entity that exists under the authority granted by state law. A corporation has substantially all of the legal rights of an individual and is responsible for its own debts. It must file income tax returns and pay taxes on the income it derives from its operations. Typically, the owners or shareholders of a corporation are protected from the liabilities of the business. However, when a corporation is small, creditors often require personal guarantees of the principal owners before extending credit. The legal protection afforded the owners of a corporation can far outweigh the additional expense of starting and administering a corporation. A corporation must adopt and file articles of incorporation and bylaws with the Wisconsin Department of Financial Institutions, which governs its rights and obligations to its shareholders, directors, and officers. You may call the DOA at (608) 261-9555.

Corporations must file annual income tax returns with the IRS and the Wisconsin Department of Revenue and possibly other states in which it does business. The elections made in a corporation's initial tax returns can have a significant impact on how the business is taxed in the future. Corporations may be taxed under subchapters "C" or "S" per IRS Codes as elected by the shareholders. In an "S" corporation income or loss is passed through to the individual shareholders tax returns. For additional information please contact your tax advisors.

Hiring Employees

A business must conform to certain requirements when hiring employees. Both federal and state laws regulate employment. The following is a brief summary of the major legal requirements. A qualified tax attorney or account should be consulted.

Federal Employer Identification Number (EIN)

The EIN is often referred to as a “tax ID number.” A new business will not need a EIN if it has no employees and is organized as a sole proprietorship. The proprietor’s Social Security Number is used to identify the business. If the business changes to a partnership, or corporation, or if it hires an employee, then an EIN will be required. To obtain an EIN, the business owner must complete an SS-4 form and submit it to the IRS. To receive a free federal business tax kit, which includes information on the EIN and other tax information dealing with hiring employees call the IRS at (800) 829-3676. You can also apply for an EIN immediately by calling 1-866-816-2065. A completed SS-4 then must be filed with 24 hours.

Wisconsin Employer/Withholding Tax Identification Number

A Wisconsin Employer/Withholding Tax Identification Number is required for payroll purposes. It can be obtained by completing Form BRT-101. Similar to federal regulations, no state tax number is required if the business has no employees and is a sole proprietorship. Call the Sheboygan office of the Wisconsin Department of Revenue at (920) 459-3101.

Labor Standards Laws

Both federal and state laws cover a variety of issues relating to the pay and treatment of employees. The following is a partial listing of areas covered by regulations: minimum wage, overtime pay, employment of children, prevailing wage requirements. For more information call the US Department of Labor, Wage, and Hour Division (608) 264-5221 and Department of Workforce Development Equal Rights Division (608) 266-6860. The Department of Labor has an office at the Bay Area Workforce Development Board office at 733 Dewey Street, Manitowoc, WI 54220. Please call at 920-683-2888.

Equal Rights and Opportunity

In Wisconsin, it is illegal to discriminate against job seekers and current employees on the basis of sex (including pregnancy), age (40 and over), race, color, national origin, ancestry, religion, handicap, sexual orientation, marital status, and, in most cases, arrest or conviction record. Call the Department of Workforce Development Equal Rights Division at (608) 266-2660.

Unemployment Compensation

Unemployment Compensation coverage for employees must be contributed by most employers. This is done in the form of a payroll tax. For more information contact the Department of Workforce Development Division of Unemployment Compensation at (608) 261-6700.

Worker’s Compensation Insurance

Most Wisconsin employers must carry a special insurance to cover liability due to work-related employee injury or illness. Worker’s compensation insurance is usually obtained through private insurance companies. For more information, call the DWD Division of Worker Compensation at (608) 266-1340.

Employee vs. Independent Contractor Issues

The IRS and the Wisconsin Department of Revenue presume that any worker is an employee unless an employer can prove otherwise. This is an area often misunderstood by small businesses. Mistakes can be made by not properly withholding income and social security taxes for an individual who is thought to be an independent contractor but is actually an employee. Such mistakes may have serious financial and legal implications. For more information contact the IRS at (800) 829-3676 or their Appleton office at (920) 433-1913.

Immigration Law

Regulations require that employers take steps to ensure that employees are eligible to work. You will be required to have new employees fill out an I-9 form and keep the completed form on file. For more information, contact the US Immigration and Naturalization Service, Bureau of Citizenship and Immigration Services in Milwaukee 1-800-357-2099; www.immigration.gov/graphics/index.html.

Workplace Safety and Health Regulations

For information on state right-to-know rules and workplace standards, contact the Wisconsin Department of Commerce — Division of Safety & Buildings at (608) 266-3151. The Occupation Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) establishes rules which cover every employer and which require a workplace free from safety and health hazards. For more information, contact the OSHA office in Appleton at (920) 734-4521 for more information. Please refer to the section on “Permits, Licenses, and Government Regulations”.

Posting of Labor Law Posters

Employers are required to post various posters to inform workers of their rights under labor regulations. Each regulating agency contacted should be asked about posting. Requirements include the posting of non-discrimination and safety law notices.

Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990

Employers are responsible for providing reasonable accommodation to qualified individuals with disabilities who are employees or applicants for employment except when such accommodations cause an undue hardship. Please refer to the section on “Permits, Licenses, and Government Regulations”.

Human Resources Issues

For additional information on human resources issues, please visit the website of the Lakeshore Area Human Resource Association (LAHRA) at www.wishrm.org/chapter/lkshr/index.html

Meeting Your Financial Needs

Inadequate capital is the cause of many small business failures. Planning for the proper initial capitalization for your business or expansion is a critical process. There are basic paths to financing capital for your business.

The first place to look for money is yourself. In fact, the vast majority of new businesses (up to 75 percent) are financed mostly or exclusively by the founder's own resources. First, you will need to determine how much money you will need to start your business. Then you will need to determine how much money you have to invest in your business as equity capital. The amount of personal assets you are willing to risk in the business is a personal decision. However, you will almost always be expected to invest at least some of your own money in the business because lenders see this as evidence of your commitment to the business. If you do not have enough personal capital to meet all the financial needs of your business, you must look to a lender or investor for the balance.

Before you approach a lender or investor, it's a good idea to have a written business plan (see "Preparing the Business Plan" Section).

Sources of Financing

Grants

You may have heard that there are grants to start or expand a small business. In reality, you probably are not going to find any grants for your business. State and federal agencies, as well as non-profit foundations, do make grants, and some of that money may even go to businesses. However, the vast majority of grant funding is to support projects which are expected to provide a benefit to the public. For more information about state and federal financing programs, including grants, look under the "Financial Assistance" section in this chapter.

Friends and Relatives

Many small businesses (and perhaps as many as 75 percent of start-up firms) are financed either by their own money or investments from friends and family. Family and friends are often willing to help you start or expand your business. The downside of family and friends financing is that there may be emotional entanglements and personal problems may result, especially if money is lost or can't be repaid on time. Keep the relationship businesslike and things will probably work out. Family and friends are also potential co-signers or collateral providers for loans.

One other way to reduce emotional entanglements and personal problems is a company called Circle Lending. SCORE has partnered with Circle Lending, a company that helps manage loans from friends and family by helping create a legally binding agreement between you and your friend or family member, secure the loan with collateral, and help set up a repayment schedule. For more information call (800) 805-2472 or visit their website at www.circlelending.com/sbb.

Financial Institutions

Most often entrepreneurs will have to take out personal loans or personal credit cards to finance their enterprise. These are in the common forms of debt or equity financing. Debt financing is a "promise to repay" loan. Loans can be unsecured resulting in a higher interest rate or secured by some form of collateral resulting in a lower interest rate. In some cases they are structured as a line of credit (allowance to borrow repeatedly without have to reapply for approval each time), or a term loan which is paid back on a schedule. Financial institutions also issue equity financing where you sell a portion of ownership in your personal assets (home, etc) for the needed capital or resources. Credit cards are another option although at a much higher interest rate than a financial lending institution and should be used with some caution.

Trade or Supplier Credit

Payment terms offered by your suppliers are a potential source of funds.

Customers

When customers pay for work in advance or provide some of the material or service themselves, in effect they are helping finance your business operations.

Commercial Finance Companies

Commercial finance companies make business loans at interest rates several points above that which banks usually charge and that are collateralized with commercial property.

Angel Investors

Angel investors are usually wealthy individuals or business people who make high-risk investments in start-up or small businesses. Angel investors typically focus on companies that have already developed a basic concept and business strategy in their seed stage of investment and have potential for rapid growth. Many angel investors also offer their business expertise and actively participate in the management, operation, and marketing of the business. For information on Angel Investing in Wisconsin visit the website of the Wisconsin Angel Network at www.wisconsinangelnetwork.com.

Other Sources of Financing

Venture capitalists, investment bankers, insurance companies, pension funds, etc. are all potential sources of equity financing. These entities usually look for companies that need relatively large amounts of money (at least \$1 million) and that will offer fantastic rates of return (usually higher than 30 percent annually) over two to five years. Unfortunately, very few start-up businesses meet their criteria.

The Economic Development Corporation of Manitowoc County has a Private Investment Committee with local ties to area investors. The Private Investment Committee will invest in a select few qualified business ventures. For more information call (920) 482-0540.

The New Venture Capital Fund goals are to target 12 businesses in northeast Wisconsin within the next 5 years with investments up to \$1 million per venture. For more information contact General Partner Charlie Goff at (920) 731-5777.

Financial Assistance

A variety of financial programs have been established to assist new and expanding businesses.

LOCAL FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE

Progress Lakeshore

202 North 8th Street Suite 101, Manitowoc, WI 54220
(920) 482-0540
www.progresslakeshore.org

- Manitowoc County Revolving Loan Fund: Provides a flexible source of “gap” funding for commercial and industrial projects. The project must leverage private funds and create jobs in Manitowoc County.
- Technology Zone Tax Credits: Designed to provide tax credits to businesses engaged in research, development, or manufacture of advanced products. Also provides tax credits to knowledge-based operations or any business that uses advanced technology production processes, systems or equipment in traditional manufacturing operations.
- Private Investment Committee: The Progress Lakeshore has a Venture Capital Committee with local ties to area investors, which will invest in a select few qualified business ventures.

City of Manitowoc

900 Quay St, Manitowoc, WI 54220-4543
(920) 686-6930
www.manitowoc.org

- City of Manitowoc Commercial Revolving Loan Fund: Program encourages the revitalization of businesses in downtown Manitowoc. Provides long-term, fixed rate financing at 4% interest with low down payment requirements. Loans are secured. Blended program and conventional rates result in interest rates between 1-1 1/2% below prime. May be combined with the Manitowoc County Revolving Loan Fund.
- City of Manitowoc Industrial Revolving Loan Fund: Program provides capital for projects City-wide. Provides long-term, fixed rate financing at 65-75% of prime, with low down payment requirements. Loans are secured. May be combined with the Manitowoc County Revolving Loan Fund.

City of Two Rivers

2210 Washington St, New Holstein, WI 53061
(920) 898-5766
www.tworiverseconomicdevelopment.org

- City of Two Rivers Revolving Loan Fund: Provides a flexible source of “gap” funding for commercial and industrial projects. The project must leverage private funds and create jobs in Two Rivers. May be combined with the Manitowoc County Revolving Loan Fund.

Mishicot Main Street Program & Mishicot Area Growth and Improvement Committee (MAGTC)

511 E. Main Street/PO Box 237, Mishicot, WI 54228-0237
mishicot@milwpc.com
www.mishicot.org

- Façade/Sign Grant: The Village of Mishicot Main Street Program offers a grant program for the improvement of building facades and signage. Applications are can be accepted for all Mishicot area businesses. Grants up to \$1,000 maximum.

Two Rivers Main Street Program

1609 Washington Street/PO Box 417, Two Rivers, WI 54241
920-794-1482

- If you are located within the Business Improvement District, you may be eligible one-time federal and state tax credits for building rehabilitation.

STATE AND FEDERAL FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE

Wisconsin Economic Development Corporation (WEDC)

201 West Washington Ave, PO Box 7970, Madison, WI 54707
(800) 435-7287, (608) 266-1018
www.commerce.state.wi.us

The Wisconsin Department of Commerce is the state’s primary agency for delivery of integrated services to businesses. Here are several brief descriptions of programs:

- Community Development Block Grant Economic Development Program: Provides grant to communities to loan to businesses for start-up, retention, and expansion projects based on the number of jobs created or retained.
- Rural Economic Development Program: Provides working capital or fixed assets financing for businesses with fewer than 50 employees.
- Industrial Development Bonds: IRB's are tax exempt bonds issued by a municipality (city or village) or other government entity. The municipality passes the financing through to an industrial company. The net effect of the IRB is to provide the company with lower interest financing. They have been used extensively by local communities in Manitowoc County.
- Technology Development Fund and Technology Loan Fund: Helps Wisconsin businesses research and develop technological innovations that have the potential to provide significant benefit to the state.

Wisconsin Housing and Economic Development Authority

201 W Washington Av, Madison, WI 53703
1-800-334-6873 Ext. 624
www.wheda.com

- WHEDA Small Business Guarantee: Helps borrowers obtain financing on favorable terms to start-up, expand, or acquire a small business.
- Agribusiness Guarantee: Helps new or existing businesses obtain financing on favorable terms to develop or expand production of products using Wisconsin’s agricultural commodities.

Small Business Administration

Wisconsin District Office
740 Regent St, Ste 100, Madison, WI 53715
(608) 441-5263
www.sba.gov/wi

SBA is an independent federal government agency. The SBA does not directly loan money; it guarantees loans that are made by private lenders. Here is a partial list of SBA financing programs:

- 7(a) Loan Guarantee Program: SBA’s primary business loan program provides guarantees of up to 85% (75% for loans over \$150,000) and can be used for a variety of general business purposes. Many financial institutions process these loans, contact the SBA Wisconsin District Office for more information.
- LowDoc Loan Program: This is a streamlined version of the 7(a)

program for loans of \$150,000 or less. The application for LowDoc loans is a one-page form. The SBA processes the application within 36 hours. The nearest LowDoc lender is:

Great Lakes Asset Corporation
1317 Lombardi Access Rd, Ste 103,
Green Bay, WI 54304
(920) 499-6444

- 7(m) Microloan Program: Under this program, SBA makes funds available to non-profit intermediaries who, in turn, make loans to eligible borrowers in amounts that range from under \$100 to a maximum of \$35,000. The nearest Microloan lender is:

Impact Seven, Inc.
147 Lake Alameda Dr, Alameda, WI 54805
(715) 357-3334

Wisconsin Business Development Finance Corporation

2905 Universal Street, Suite 230
PO Box 3178, Oshkosh, WI 54903-3178
(920) 920-231-5570
www.wbd.org

- SBA 504 Loan Program: The 504 Loan Program provides business with long-term, fixed-rate financing for major fixed assets such as land and buildings.

Impact Seven, Inc.

147 Lake Alameda Dr, Alameda, WI 54805
(715) 357-3334
www.impactseven.org

- SBA 504 Loan Program: The 504 Loan Program provides business with long-term, fixed-rate financing for major fixed assets such as land and buildings.
- 7(m) Microloan Program: Under this program, Impact Seven makes loans to eligible borrowers in amounts that range from under \$100 to a maximum of \$35,000.

Great Lakes Asset Corporation

1317 Lombardi Access Rd, Ste 103, Green Bay, WI 54304
(920) 499-6444 or (800) 281-6444
www.greatlakesasset.com/pages/1/index.htm

- SBA 504 Loan Program: The 504 Loan Program provides business with long-term, fixed-rate financing for major fixed assets such as land and buildings.

USDA Rural Development—Wisconsin State Office

4949 Kirschling Ct, Stevens Point, WI 54481
(715) 345-7615
www.rurdev.usda.gov/wi

- Business & Industry Guaranteed Loans: USDA Rural Development offers direct and guaranteed loans for businesses in rural areas through the Business & Industry program. Loans may be used for working capital, machinery & equipment, real estate, and certain types of debt refinancing.

MINORITY, WOMEN, DISABLED, AND VETERANS PROGRAMS

Wisconsin Department of Commerce — Minority Business Development

101 Pleasant St, Ste 205, Milwaukee, WI 53212
(414) 220-5367
www.commerce.state.wi.us

- Minority Business Development Loan: Offers low-interest loans for real estate, equipment, or working capital. Loans may be made for 5 to 15 years depending on the loan type.
- Minority Business Certification: Certification as a minority business allows minority firms to sell their products and services

to the State of Wisconsin.

Manitowoc County Veteran Services

1110 S. 9th Street, 1st Floor, Manitowoc, WI 54220
(920) 683-4055

- Personal Loan Program: The WDVA offers low-interest loans up to \$15,000 with 10 years to repay. These loans may be used for a variety of purposes including the purchase of a business or business property.

Small Business Administration—Wisconsin District

Veteran's Business Development
310 W Wisconsin Ave, Ste 400, Milwaukee, WI 53203
(414) 297-3941
www.sba.gov/vets

- Provides loan guarantee programs, venture capital assistance, and Military Reservist Economic Injury Disaster Loans.

Great Lakes Asset Corporation

1317 Lombardi Access Rd, Ste 103, Green Bay, WI 54304
(920) 499-6444 or (800) 281-6444
www.greatlakesasset.com/pages/1/index.htm

- SBA Loan Prequalification: Allows women, minorities, veterans, and disabled business applicants to have their loan applications for \$250,000 or less analyzed and potentially sanctioned by the SBA before they are taken to lenders for consideration. The program focuses on the applicant's character, credit, experience, and reliability rather than assets.

Department of Vocational Rehabilitation (DVR)

349 N Peters Av, Fond du Lac, WI 54935
(920) 849-3909 or (800) 562-5330

- Offers individuals with physical or mental impairments self-employment training, help in developing a business plan, tuition assistance, up to \$1,000 for initial supplies, up to \$3,000 for occupational tools and equipment, up to \$1,200 for the purchase of a computer, and transportation assistance as well as child care, medical services, and others.

Wisconsin Housing and Economic Development Authority

201W Washington Ave, Madison, WI 53703
1-800-334-6873 Ext. 624
www.wheda.com

- Linked Loan Deposit (LiLD) Subsidy: Provides an interest rate subsidy on lender financing to women or minorities to start-up or expand a business.

Wisconsin Women's Business Initiative Corporation (WWBIC)

2745 N Dr Martin Luther King Jr Dr, Milwaukee, WI 53212
(414) 263-5450
www.wwbic.com/index.htm

- Microloans to businesses owned by women, minorities, and low-income individuals of up to \$35,000.

Count-Me-In

240 Central Park South, Ste 7H, New York, NY 10019
(212) 245-1245
www.count-me-in.org/index.html

- Uses a unique women-friendly credit scoring system to make loans of \$500 to \$10,000. Loans can be used for working capital, purchase of inventory or equipment, marketing materials for a sales event, or other uses.

Additional Information and Technical Assistance

Starting your own business can be the most exciting and rewarding experience of your life. There are many valuable resources for a person hoping to start a new business or take over or move an existing business. This is not a complete listing of resources. However, it will help you get started in the right direction towards fulfilling your dream.

LOCAL TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE

Progress Lakeshore

202 North 8th Street Suite 101, Manitowoc, WI 54220
(920) 482-0540
www.progresslakeshore.org

- Offers business development and planning assistance, statistics, marketing, contacts, gap financing, tax credits, available properties and buildings list, permitting and licensing assistance, business name registration assistance, and referrals to many programs and services.

Manitowoc Branch of SCORE—Chapter 508

Counselor Tom Finely or Diane Unger
202 North 8th Street Suite 101, Manitowoc, WI 54220
(920) 222-2167

- SCORE provides mentoring, business plan assistance, marketing ideas, financial resources, and contacts for business advisors.

University of Wisconsin Extension—Manitowoc County/ Green Bay Small Business Development Center

Manitowoc County Office Complex
202 North 8th Street Suite 101, Manitowoc, WI 54220
(920) 683-4169

- The SBDC provides business plan assistance, financing plan development, and assistance in the areas of marketing, pricing, etc.

Lakeshore Technical College

1290 North Avenue
Cleveland, WI 53015-1414
(920) 693-1000

- Consult with, train, and assist Lakeshore area residents and LTC students seeking to start or further develop their own businesses. Offer courses, workshops, and seminars.

E-Hub

201 W Walnut St, Green Bay, WI 54303
(920) 884-9707
www.cenational.org/urbanhope/indexMain.asp?
text_placement=homepage

- Provides business planning skills, entrepreneurial training, mentoring, financial training and assistance programs, research center and library, and contacts for business advisors and business services.

Mishicot Main Street Program

511 E. Main Street/PO Box 237, Mishicot, WI 54228-0237
mishicot@milwpc.com
www.mishicot.org

- Offers assistance with business plan development, advertising, financial analysis, inventory control, merchandising, marketing and other facets of operating your business

Two Rivers Main Street Program

Mike Zimmer
1609 Washington Street/PO Box 417, Two Rivers, WI 54241
920-794-1482
www.trmainstreet.org/index.htm

- Offers assistance with business plan development, advertising, financial analysis, inventory control, merchandising, marketing and other facets of operating your business

LOCAL BUSINESS ASSOCIATIONS

Cleveland Area Chamber of Commerce

Tim Schueler
(920) 693-8256

- Member organization for the growth and development of the Cleveland Area.

Kiel Area Association of Commerce

PO Box 44, Kiel, WI 53042
(920) 894-4638
http://www.kielwi.org

- Offers group health insurance and opportunities for marketing, promotion, social events, and industrial site listing.

St. Nazianz Growth, Inc.

Fritz Koeppen
(920) 773-2330

- A non-profit community development corporation established in 1968, whose goal is to enhance the quality of life of in the St. Nazianz area.

Manitowoc County Chamber of Commerce

1515 Memorial Dr, Manitowoc, WI 54221
(920) 684-5575
www.manitowocchamber.com

- Referrals, ribbon cutting, networking, community recognition, education programs, chamber bucks, advertising and marketing, long distance telephone group rate, and website development group rates.

OTHER SOURCES OF TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE

Business Answerline

1-800-940-7232

- Free information service provided by the Small Business Development Center (SBDC) for small business owners and prospective entrepreneurs.

Business Wizard

www.wisconsin.gov/state/app/wizard/LoadIntro

- Using a series of five question and answer pages, the Wizard provides customized information to help you start and operate a Wisconsin-based business.

Business Procurement Assistance Center

Morraine Park Technical College
2151 North Main St, West Bend, WI 53090
(262) 335-5893
matcmadison.edu/bpac

- Assists businesses in winning government contracts by providing services that include government market research, electronic bid matching, and bid preparation service.

Demographic Services Center

101 E Wilson St, 4th Flr, PO Box 8944, Madison, WI 53708
(608) 266-1927
www.doa.state.wi.us

- Develops population estimates and projections for local government units.

US Immigration and Naturalization Service

Bureau of Citizenship and Immigration Services
517 E Wisconsin Ave, Milwaukee, WI 53202
(800) 357-2099

- Provides information on immigration law.

US Economic Development Administration

Chicago Regional Office (serves Wisconsin)
111 N Canal St, Ste 855, Chicago, IL 60606
(312) 353-7706

- Provides grants for infrastructure development, local capacity building and business development to help communities alleviate conditions in economically distressed areas.

US Small Business Administration

Madison District Office
740 Regent St, Ste 100, Madison, WI 54706
(608) 297-3941

- The SBA's many business assistance programs are available through the Madison District Office.

State Bar of Wisconsin Business Assistance Program

5302 E Park Blvd, Madison, WI 53718
(608) 250-6006
www.wisbar.org/bar/pbbap.htm

- Provides small and emerging businesses with up to two hours of counseling services from a business lawyer at no cost.

Wisconsin Business Development Finance Corporation

2905 Universal St, Ste 230, PO Box 3178, Oshkosh, WI 54903
(920) 920-231-5570
www.wbd.org

- Works with the SBA and private-sector lenders to provide financing to small businesses through SBA 504 financing.

Wisconsin Department of Administration

Bureau of Procurement
101 E Wilson St, 6th Flr, PO Box 7867, Madison, WI 53708
(608) 266-2605
vendornet.state.wi.us/vendornet/vguide/index.asp

- Provides information on state government purchasing and procurement procedures and assistance with bidding.

Wisconsin Department of Commerce

Northeast Wisconsin Technical College
2740 W Mason St, Bldg C, Rm C232, Green Bay, WI 54303
(920) 498-6302
www.commerce.state.wi.us

- Commerce has a broad range of financial assistance programs to help businesses undertake economic development.

Business Development Assistance Center

201 W Washington Av, PO Box 7970, Madison, WI 53707
(800) HELPBUS(iness) or (800) 435-7287

- Provides managerial assistance to small businesses, particularly first-time entrepreneurs. The office furnishes information on government regulations and financing alternatives, and refers businesses to appropriate resources.

International Division Consultant Brad Schneider

Oshkosh Chamber of Commerce
120 Jackson St, Oshkosh, WI 54901
(920) 303-9353

- Assists in assessing product demand in foreign markets, helps businesses plan entry into international markets, and connects businesses to potential customers, distributors, or partners, as well as support service providers.

Wisconsin Department of Financial Institutions*Corporation Section*

345 W Washington Av, 3rd Flr, PO Box 7846, Madison, WI 53707
(608) 261-7577
www.wdfi.org/corporations

- The filing office for the organizational instruments to create corporations, limited partnerships, limited liability partnerships, and limited liability companies, as well as documents to amend those charters.

Securities Division

345 W Washington Av, 4th Flr, PO Box 1768, Madison, WI 53701
(608) 266-1064
www.wdfi.org/securities

- Regulates the offer and sale of securities, franchise investment offerings, and corporate takeovers. It provides assistance in understanding and complying with the Wisconsin Uniform Securities Law and gathering information regarding franchise opportunities.

Wisconsin Department of Revenue*Income, Sales, and Excise Tax Division*

265 W Northland Av, Appleton, WI 54911
(920) 832-2727
www.dor.state.wi.us

- Provides forms, publications, and answers about Wisconsin taxes (income, sales, and use taxes, etc.).

Compliance Bureau

PO Box 8906, Madison, WI 53708
(608) 266-2276

- Business tax registration, sales tax, seller's permit, consumer use tax permit, withholding tax ID number, etc.

Bureau of Manufacturing and Utility Assessment

200 N Jefferson St, Ste 626, Green Bay, WI 54301
(920) 448-5191

- Tax assessment/exemption information for manufacturers.

Wisconsin Department of Workforce Development

Division of Worker's Compensation

PO Box 7901, Madison, WI 53707
(608) 266-1340 or (608) 266-2041 (to order publications)
www.dwd.state.wi.us/wc/default.htm

- Administers programs to make sure injured workers receive required benefits; encourage rehabilitation and re-employment for injured workers and promote the reduction of work-related injuries, illnesses, and deaths.

Equal Rights Division

201 E Washington Av, PO Box 8928, Madison, WI 53708
(608) 266-6860
www.dwd.state.wi.us/er

- Enforces state laws that protect citizens from discrimination in employment, housing, public accommodations, family and medical leave and the labor laws regarding wages, hours, and conditions of work.

Division of Unemployment Insurance

PO Box 7942, Madison, WI 53707
(608) 261-6700
www.dwd.state.wi.us/ui

- Administers programs to collect employer taxes, pays benefits to unemployed workers, resolves benefit claims and employer tax issues, detects welfare and unemployment insurance fraud, and collects unemployment insurance and welfare overpayments.

Center for Innovation and Development

UW-Stout

278 Jarvis Hall, Menomonie, WI 54751
(715) 232-1457

- Provides a broad range of interaction to businesses through assistance from UW-Stout's technical faculty and staff, access to the University's facilities and programs, including product engineering and design, prototype development, product evaluation, technical training, management, processing, materials, automation, and other areas.

Wisconsin Housing and Economic Development Authority

PO Box 1728, Madison, WI 53701
(800) 334-6873 or (608) 266-7884
www.wheda.com

- Offers loans and loan guarantees for small business and agricultural development projects.

Wisconsin Innovation Service Center

UW-Whitewater

402 McCutchan Hall, Whitewater, WI 53190
(262) 472-1365

academics.uww.edu/business/innovate/index.html

- Helps inventors and entrepreneurs to determine the potential for commercial success of inventions and new product ideas and to understand the commercialization process.

Wisconsin Institute of Certified Public Accountants

PO Box 1010, Brookfield, WI 53008
(800) 772-6939
www.wicpa.org

- Offers advice and information on selecting and working with a CPA.

Wisconsin Manufacturing Extension Partnership

2601 Crossroads Dr, Ste 145, Madison, WI 53718
1-877-800-2085
www.wmep.org

- WMEP is a technical and business resource that helps manufacturers be successful through modern tools and strategies such as lean manufacturing, strategic repositioning, value chain management, quality and ISO, job shop improvements, etc.

Wisconsin Secretary of State

30 W Mifflin St, 10th Flr, PO Box 7848, Madison, WI 53707
(608) 266-5503 or (608) 266-5653 (trademark & trade name registration)
www.state.wi.us/agencies/sos

- Administers a variety of responsibilities in state government, including registering trade names and trademarks.

Wisconsin TechSearch

Kurt F. Wendt Library
215 N Randall Av, Madison, WI 53706
(608) 262-5913
www.wisc.edu/wendt/wts/index.html

- Offers document delivery and reference services to business and industry. On-line literature, patent, and trademark services are available.

WEB RESOURCES

The internet offers a wealth of invaluable information to entrepreneurs and small business owners. Here are just a few recommended ones to get you started:

Progress Lakeshore

www.progresslakeshore.org

A website incorporating all the information in this guide plus additional information on technical and financial programs and services.

Wisconsin Department of Commerce

www.commerce.state.wi.us/

An extremely well done site specific to doing business in Wisconsin with sections on start-up, expansion, finance, international business, technical resources, business statistics, and more.

Small Business Administration (SBA) Online

www.sbaonline.sba.gov

Includes information on SBA programs and publications on starting, financing, and expanding a small business as well as an SBA classroom, outside resources, and an online library.

Small Business Classroom

www.sba.gov/training/entrepreneurship.html

The SBA is collaborating with My Own Business, Inc. to provide a free online Entrepreneurship course for small business owners and entrepreneurs. This 11 session virtual business seminar focuses on the most important areas of business start-up and operating a business. The course is interactive and has an online tool to create a business plan. The course can be used in sequence or the eleven topics can be studied independently.

US Business Advisor

www.business.gov

The one-stop electronic link to government for business is the SBA's small business online access to guides and government forms needed to comply with regulations or apply for government-backed loans or other federal assistance.

Export.gov

www.export.gov/comm_svc

This export portal of the US Commercial Service offers valuable assistance to help your business export goods and services to markets worldwide. From this site you can access a global listing of trade events, international market research, and practical tools to help with every step of the export process.

About.com's Small Business Information Center

sbinformation.about.com/smallbusiness/sbinformation

A wealth of information on topics from business plans, home businesses and starting and financing a business to government help, legal matters, and web marketing. This site includes a one-stop page of recommended web sites for small business information.

Commerce Clearing House's Business Owner's Toolkit

www.toolkit.cch.com

Features small and home office guides to everyday business matters such as starting and planning your business, finance, marketing, your office and equipment, personnel, accounting, and taxes couple with a comprehensive listing of business tools including model business forms, financial templates, and checklist.

Yahoo! Small Business

smallbusiness.yahoo.com

Combines news and wide-ranging content, small business communities where professionals can meet and share ideas and interactive business and communication tools to enhance productivity.

Bplans.com

www.bplans.com

Provides sample business plans, marketing plans, online business plan books, and access to expert advice. You'll find sample business plans from sectors such as manufacturing, health, international marketing, retail, and computers.

BizMove

www.bizmove.com

Offers reference materials and services for small and home-based business owners including recommended websites, a small business search engines, business forms and a library.

EntreWorld

www.entreworld.org

Provides a wealth of information on starting your business including a resource database of more than a thousand web resources for entrepreneurs, advice from top experts, events calendars, email newsletters, and more.

Franchise.com

www.franchise.com

A great site to not only learn about franchising, but also a valuable resource for browsing what franchise opportunities are available both in the US, Canada, and abroad.

International Franchise Association

www.franchise.org

One stop shopping experience for franchise information. The IFA is a membership organization of franchisers, franchisees, and suppliers. Included on this website are franchise opportunities, developments, an resource center, and franchise information for minorities and women.

MoreBusiness.Com

www.morebusiness.com

Has lots of useful small business information on topics ranging from starting your own business and incorporating to templates and tools with sample business and marketing plans.

Women-21.gov

www.women-21.gov/

A government website that specializes in resources specifically for Women Entrepreneurs has recently been updated and improved. It provides key resources, targeted information, registration for online programs and networking opportunities to help women entrepreneurs and their businesses reach their maximum potential. The website is a collaboration between the Department of Labor and the Small Business Administration.