

Small Business Development Center

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ's)

Whether you are already in business or just starting out, we want to help. We've sorted through our most popular questions asked throughout the years and have made them available to you here.

What does the SBDC do?

The SBDC provides no-cost confidential business advising to small business owners as well as no fee or low cost workshops designed around the entrepreneur experience.

Where can I find grants?

Grants are very few and far between and there are very few available for small business owners. In fact, most government grants are awarded to non-profit organizations or local governments, not to private companies. For information on whether or not you qualify for a grant, click on the following link. <http://www.sba.gov/loans-grants>

What are the different funding sources available to me as a small business owner? Sources of money to start your business:

- Personal Savings
- Lenders (Banks and Credit Unions)
- SBA Guaranteed Loans
- Commercial Loans
- Investor(s)
- Credit Cards
- Family and Friends
- Retirement Account
- Partners
- Lines of credit
- Micro Lenders – Accion, People Fund, etc.
- Crowdfunding – Kickstarter, etc.
- Factoring companies
- Trade credit

How much does SBDC charge for its services?

The SBDC provides confidential one-on-one business consulting at no charge. Some services, such as classes, have a nominal fee.

Are the SBDC and SBA the same thing?

No. The SBDC receives a portion of its funding from the US Small Business Administration and works closely with the agency in its delivery of services. For more information about the SBA, click on the following link www.sba.gov.

What should I bring to a meeting?

Coming prepared to meetings is important. If this is your first visit, please download the following document (641) and bring in to your appointment with you. If you are visiting with us once again and your business advisor has asked for you documentation or for your follow up on something specific, please bring the information with you. It is not our wish nor our intent to waste your time or ours with meetings that aren't productive. Always bring something to write with for note-taking as typically your advisor will give you something to follow up with.

How long will the SBDC help me?

It is not our wish or intent to waste your time or ours with meetings that aren't productive. As long as both you and the business advisor feel like progress is being made in your endeavor, we will continue to meet with you.

I'm already in business. Can the SBDC help me?

Yes. The SBDC provides many services that can help existing businesses cope with growing pains, expanding to new markets and planning for the future. Confidential advising sessions are available to small business owners including business planning, marketing, financial analysis, procurement and many other issues you might face. Other special services available through other centers within our institute focus on assistance with procurement, market research and international trade. We also offer training classes directed at helping businesses grow and improve their bottom line at every stage of the growth process.

I have a nonprofit business. Can the SBDC help me?

Unfortunately, no. Because the SBDC Network is an economic development arm of the State of Texas and relies on tax-supported state appropriations, it is mandated to work only with for-profit companies. For information on assistance for nonprofit companies, contact the Center for Nonprofit Support in San Antonio.

<http://www.saafdn.org/Nonprofits/WelcomeNonprofits.aspx>.

How long does it typically take to start a small business?

This is really up to you. It will take as long as it takes you to complete your feasibility study, prepare your business plan, gather your money, purchase what you need to for your business to function, and arrange your business operation affairs. This could take a few weeks or many months. If you have difficulty with any of these items, the time to learn and solve problems must be added. Setting up a meeting with one of our business advisors to help you through the process helps as well.

I'm interested in acquiring certifications for my business. Can you help me with this?

Yes, our business advisors can help guide you through the process. The [UTSA Valdez Institute for Economic Development](#) is also host to the [SBDC CGC](#) and we can refer you to that specific program if you need assistance in this area.

I can't figure out what kind of business structure to set up. What would you recommend?

Each of the different forms of structure: sole proprietorship, partnership, or corporation have their advantages and disadvantages. You should decide based on what is best for you. While our business advisors will not dispense legal advice, they are well versed in each of the different structures and can help inform you so that you can make the best educated choice for your business. This topic is also discussed extensively in our [Start Smart class](#).

Why do I need a business plan?

Developing a business plan is important to help plan your business strategically and increase the likelihood of a successful venture. It is also necessary if you are going to be needing funding for your business. Lending Institutions or investors require a business plan that gives them a good idea of what they are working with. You can find more information in our [Business Plan Overview class](#).

What is a feasibility study?

A feasibility study is exactly that: testing the feasibility of your business idea and whether or not it is something that you are prepared for or will be able to reasonably bring to fruition. How do you do this? Come in and meet with one of our business advisors and they'll guide you through it!

Will the SBDC write my business plan for me?

Your business plan is something that your business advisor will provide assistance and guidance with, but they are not allowed to write your business plan for you.