



5th Annual Revised **WNC Business Assistance Directory**

Western North Carolina has a growing number of business resources providing technical assistance, training and development with the collective goal of increasing the sustainability and profitability of area entrepreneurs.

The agencies, organizations and initiatives in this directory provides the support to the growing WNC business community individually as well as collaboratively.

Brought to you by the
Minority Enterprise Development (MED) Week Committee of WNC, Inc.
P.O. Box 1744
Asheville, NC 28802
wncmedweek.org

ABTECH Center for Business and Technology Incubation

1465 Sand Hill Road, Candler, NC 28715
(828) 254-1921 x 5850 / www.abtech.edu/sbc

The Center for Business and Technology Incubation provides support services for local entrepreneurs through its Small Business Center, Technology Commercialization, the BioNetwork BioBusiness Center and Blue Ridge Food Ventures. Services include free one-on-one counseling, training for current and prospective business owners, a commercial kitchen, a natural products laboratory, a medicinal herb manufacturing facility as well as a business incubation program.

Counseling covers a variety of topics from business plan development to strategic planning, trademarks and exporting. Additionally, the Center offers a number of resources and services to help businesses at multiple stages, including business incubation which is designed to provide companies maximum flexibility while working closely with them to identify areas of improvement and assist in locating needed resources.

AdvantageWest Economic Development Group

Blue Ridge Entrepreneurial Council – mraker@awnc.org
Certified Entrepreneurial Community Program – mraker@awnc.org
Blue Ridge Food Ventures – mlsurgi@awnc.org
AdvantageGreen – mraker@awnc.org
134 Wright Brothers Way, Fletcher, NC 28732
(828) 687-7234 / www.advantagewest.com

AdvantageWest Economic Development Group serves 23 western counties in North Carolina through a diverse program of work which includes entrepreneurship and small business through the following programs; Blue Ridge Entrepreneurial Council (BREC), Blue Ridge Food Ventures, AdvantageGreen and The Certified Entrepreneurial Community ProgramSM (CEC).

BREC supports entrepreneurs through education, mentoring, networking forums and access to capital through the Advantage Opportunity Loan Fund. Blue Ridge Food Ventures operates as a kitchen incubator on the campus of A-B Tech-Enka and provides assistance for users producing value-added products. AdvantageGreen supports the expansion of green industries throughout the region. The Certified Entrepreneurial Community ProgramSM is a community development program designed to take community leaders through a rigorous five-step process to ensure the necessary infrastructure is in place for entrepreneurial development thereby improving the overall business climate for existing industry as well.

Asheville Area Chamber of Commerce

Small Business & Entrepreneurship
36 Montford Ave., Asheville, NC 28801
(828) 258-6116 / plewis@ashevillechamber.org

The Small Business & Entrepreneurship Department of the Asheville Area Chamber of Commerce provides marketing information and business orientation services to walk-in and call-in inquiries. This department also provides information and referrals to start-up or expanding businesses that are seeking support in all areas of business development. Additionally, Small Business & Entrepreneurship conducts business recognition programs such as the **Sky High Growth** and the **"We're for Business"** Awards, and plans and facilitates educational programs and leadership development training classes for businesses.

Small Business is also responsible for the Chamber's Business Healthcare Roundtable, which meets routinely to study ways to facilitate more affordable group health care insurance for area businesses.

Asheville SCORE

Federal Bldg, 151 Patton Ave - RM 259, Asheville NC 28801-5007
(828) 271 4786 / www.ashevillescore.org

Asheville SCORE provides free and confidential face-to-face business mentoring and email counseling in addition to a variety of low cost seminars on various business subjects. SCORE has approximately 40 volunteer members who provide professional guidance and information that will maximize the probability of success for existing and emerging small businesses. Men and women members have many years of diverse real world business experience.

The organization offers information and advice to help solve new and/or ongoing business problems for as long as entrepreneurs request it. Asheville SCORE also offers Business Assessment Team counseling when a select group of counselors focuses on one or more business problems of a larger company. Asheville SCORE conducted 1,000 face-to-face and email counseling sessions and 32 seminars with 450 attendees.

Appalachian Sustainable Agriculture Project (ASAP)

306 West Haywood Street, Asheville, NC 28801
(828) 236-1282 / www.asapconnections.org

ASAP's mission is to help local farms thrive, link farmers to markets and supporters, and build healthy communities through connections to local food. Over the last decade, ASAP has helped build a thriving local food community in the Southern Appalachians by providing marketing support and training to area farmers, by connecting area chefs and foodservice buyers at schools and hospitals with the farmers who best suit their needs, and by spearheading a Local Food Campaign. The campaign offers a *Local Food Guide*, a free print and online directory of the area's family farms, farmers tailgate markets, and business that use local agricultural products. ASAP also defines "local" through their Appalachian Grown™ branding and labeling program, which clearly identifies items grown or raised in the Southern Appalachians.

In addition, ASAP runs the Growing Minds Farm to School Program, organizes Asheville City Market, and coordinates the Mountain Tailgate Market Association, a network of tailgate markets in counties throughout Western North Carolina. Every summer, ASAP also hosts the Family Farm Tour—a weekend where WNC farms open their doors and offer enriching on-farm experiences. Search their online Local Food Guide at www.buyappalachian.org.

Buncombe County Government

Finance / Purchasing Division
200 College Street, Suite 420 Asheville, NC 28801
(828) 250-4800 / www.buncombecounty.org

Buncombe County's Minority Outreach Plan works to provide minorities equal opportunity to participate in all aspects of County contracting and purchasing programs, including but not limited to, participation in procurement contracts for equipment, professional and other services contracts, and construction contracts. Buncombe County has a current verifiable goal of twelve percent (12%) for minority participation on building construction or repair projects, ten percent (10%) each for procurement, and services. The County posts bidding opportunities on its website and has instituted an electronic registration and bidding process to allow vendors to receive notification of opportunities to bid.

Cherokee Business Development & The Sequoyah Fund

PO Box 1200, Cherokee, NC 28719

(828) 497-1666 / www.sequoyahfund.com

Cherokee Business Development Center is a division of the Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians Department of Planning and Development. *Sequoyah Fund* is an independent, non-profit Native American Community Development Financial Institution (CDFI). The two entities work together to provide training, technical assistance and resources to support entrepreneurship, business start-up and expansion, and community development on the Qualla Boundary. Programs are designed to create jobs and bring new goods and services to the area. We are investing in our community to stimulate economic development, promote self-sufficiency, self-determination, and an enhanced quality of life for the area.

New endeavors include: *The New Economy Loan Fund*: a new loan product from the Sequoyah Fund, that provides business loans totaling \$50,000-\$250,000 for green, knowledge-based, or creative economy businesses located in the seven far-western counties of North Carolina and on the Qualla Boundary. *Credit Counseling*: assistance with personal and business financial management including free credit checks, credit counseling, budgeting, and money management. The Sequoyah Fund has created a Credit Repair Loan to assist those clients needing assistance with debt management.

Eagle Market Streets Development Corporation (EMSDC)

P O Box 3015-28802, Asheville, NC 28801

(828) 281-1227 / stephanie@eaglemarketsts.net

Is the 501(c) 3 nonprofit dedicated to: Developing People, Property and Businesses. EMSDC is located in beautiful downtown Asheville, NC; more specifically we reside in the Eagle Market Streets District, aka, The Block, the oldest thriving African American commercial business district in the country. Eagle Market Streets has the unique distinction of being both a CDC (Community Development Corporation) and a CBDO (Community Based Development Organization). These two distinctions provide the impetus for the agency to do both bricks and mortar and social justice community economic development.

Currently EMSDC has two program focuses, property development and business development. Our bricks and mortar program, the Eagle Market Place Project, is a mixed used project; the project will rehab two iconic structures, the Dr. Collette and the Del Cardo and will provide new construction of 4, affordable townhouses and 70 units of workforce/affordable housing. EMSDC is working with Mountain Housing Opportunities, Inc. as the developer to complete this project. Our social justice program, The Block Academy, (Building Lifelong Opportunity, Community and Knowledge), an economic development tool which provides entrepreneurship and job creation training for start-up and expanding microenterprise businesses.

Handmade In America

125 South Lexington, Asheville, NC 28801

(828) 252-0121 / www.handmadeinamerica.org

The mission of HandMade in America is to celebrate the hand and the handmade, to nurture the creation of traditional and contemporary craft, to revere and protect our resources, and to preserve and enrich the spiritual, cultural, and community life of our region. Our programs impact children, craft artists, farmers, travelers, rural women entrepreneurs, the environment, and communities at large.

Land-of-Sky Regional Council (LOSRC)

339 New Leicester Hwy, Asheville, NC 28806

(828) 251-6622 / info@landofsky.org

Land-of-Sky Regional Council is a multi-county, local government planning and development organization in North Carolina. It is one of 17 such organizations in the state and serves Region B, which includes the counties of Buncombe, Henderson, Madison and Transylvania. The council houses several departments which provide a myriad of services to member governments. These departments include: The Area Agency on Aging, Local Government Services, Mountain Area Workforce Development Board, Mountain Mobility and Volunteer Services.

Business Services provided by LOSRC

Regional Brownfields Program - The Land-of-Sky Regional Brownfields Initiative works with prospective developers who are interested in redeveloping a Brownfield site. The RBI offers technical assistance and grant funding to help a prospective developer through the Brownfields Agreement Process towards redevelopment. The RBI works as a liaison between the developer, the NC Brownfields Program (NCBP) and an environmental engineering firm to obtain appropriate information about a site's conditions. Program website - <http://brownfieldsinitiative.wordpress.com/>

Regional Housing Program - Our Housing program can assist businesses in securing funding to provide water and sewer needs for an expanding business.

Waste Reduction Partners (WRP) - Waste Reduction Partners helps organizations improve environmental and energy management through efficiency techniques that save money. The WRP team conducts on-site assessments and provides consulting services to businesses and public facilities throughout North Carolina. Highly-experienced volunteer engineers, scientists and staff provide clients with innovative cost-saving strategies and resources to meet their goals. Consulting services are confidential and are provided at no cost to the client, supported through government and utility-sponsored grants. Program website - <http://wastereductionpartners.org/>

Evolve Energy- EvolveEnergy^P seeks to deliver the innovation, finance, policy and workforce tools needed to support the expansion of existing clean energy businesses and the formation of new ventures. Through partnership, we are building on our unique assets to develop a clean energy cluster with lasting regional and global significance. Program website - <http://evolveenergyp.com/>

Meet the Geeks

Learn more at www.meetthegeeks.net

Meet the Geeks (MTG) is a volunteer-driven organization that seeks to build and support the IT community throughout Western North Carolina. Since its founding in March 2005, it has established a successful series of networking events, created an online portal for local IT professionals, participated in recruiting and developing new IT business in the area, developed a series of classes on IT and business topics, and initiated efforts to build the regional IT community.

Meet the Geeks serves more than 400 members. The bi-monthly networking events regularly bring 40 - 50 IT professionals, business owners, educators and students together to socialize and make connections that result in new opportunities. Membership and the majority of our events are free and open to the public.

Mountain BizWorks

153 Lexington Avenue
Asheville, NC 28801
(828) 253-2834 / www.mountainbizworks.org

Mountain BizWorks is a nonprofit community development financial institution serving Western North Carolina. Through lending (loans up to \$50,000 or more in some cases), consulting (designed to help existing businesses improve operations and increase revenues) and training (including business-planning, marketing and bookkeeping classes; one-on-one-coaching; and networking alliances), Mountain BizWorks provides the tools and resources businesses need for long term success and helps them grow from pre-launch ideas to durable small businesses that create jobs and regular income for local families. Since 1989, Mountain BizWorks has helped over 6,000 entrepreneurs start or grow their businesses.

NC Community Colleges BioNetwork

Asheville-Buncombe Technical Community College, Enka Campus
1463 Sand Hill Road, Suite 200, Candler NC 28715
(828) 254-1921 ext 4853 / www.ncbionetwork.org/bionetwork-centers/biobusiness-center

BioNetwork presents world class workforce training and education to the Biotechnology, pharmaceutical and life science industries. BioNetwork trains at all levels of this industry, upgrading the skills of incumbent workers, from entry level to management. Our seven centers, strategically and geographically positioned, develop short and curriculum designed courses to meet the needs of industry. The BioBusiness Center & Laboratory at A-B Tech Community College also provides business, education and laboratory services to entrepreneurs, new and existing businesses in the Natural Products, Life Sciences and Biotechnology industries.

NC Department of Commerce, Business & Industry Development Division

134 Wright Brothers Way, Fletcher NC 28732
(828) 654-9852 / cmesser@nccommerce.com

The North Carolina Department of Commerce is the state's leading economic development agency, working with local, regional, national, and international companies. The department's mission is to improve the economic well being and quality of life for all North Carolinians. The mission is carried out by recruiting new jobs and domestic and foreign investment; serving existing business and industry, including providing international trade assistance; encouraging entrepreneurship and innovation; marketing North Carolina and its brand; supporting workforce development; strengthening communities; and promoting tourism, film, and sports development. The department also provides data, statistics, information, and reports for state government and agencies which regulate commerce in the state. There are seven economic development regions throughout the state. The western regional office is located in Fletcher and serves 23 counties.

Through the western regional office, we managed several new and existing industry projects as well as assisted various communities with industrial site preparation. As a result, more than 1900 new jobs and \$150 million of investment were announced in the western region.

North Carolina Lawyers for Entrepreneurs Assistance Program (NCLEAP)

8000 Weston Parkway, Cary NC 27513

(800) 662-7407 / www.ncleap.com

NC LEAP provides free business-related transactional legal assistance to income-eligible, low-wealth clients seeking to start or expand their businesses in North Carolina. NC LEAP services include entity formation (i.e. partnership, LLC, corporation, etc), contract drafting and review, lease negotiation and review, employment law issues, succession planning, and intellectual property assistance (i.e. trademark and copyright registration, patent consultation, etc). NC LEAP provides these services through a network of volunteer business law attorneys across the state, and is a pro bono project of the North Carolina Bar Association Foundation.

Office for Historically Underutilized Businesses (HUB Office)

N.C. Department of Administration, 1336 Mail Service Center, Raleigh, North Carolina 27699-1336

(919) 807-2330 / www.doa.state.nc.us/hub

The HUB Office's mission is to promote economic opportunities for historically underutilized businesses in state government contracting and procurement that will foster their growth and profitability. The office has five core areas: Certification, Outreach, Training, Program Compliance, and Construction Compliance and Outreach. The HUB Office manages the Statewide Uniform Certification Program (SWUC) and provides certification for historically underutilized businesses. The state's Vendor Link database system allows state purchasing officials, capital project coordinators, prime contractors and the general public to search for vendors and HUB firms listed in the vendor directory. The office also develops and administers HUB rules and statutes in an effort to ensure full and equal access to state procurement and contracting opportunities for historically underutilized businesses.

Office of Economic Development, City of Asheville

P. O. Box 7148, Asheville, NC 28802 / www.ashevillenc.gov/mbp

Economic Development (828) 259-5433 / Downtown Urban Planning (828) 232-4502

Minority Business Program (828-232-4566 / Real Estate Management (828) 259-5729

"The focus of the City of Asheville, Office of Economic Development, is to promote the City's economic development policies through linked and collaborative initiatives that leverage resources to create a vibrant and robust Asheville economy."

The City of Asheville's Office of Economic Development (OED) has focused our organization and strategy to promote "link and leverage" approaches to meet city strategic goals and achieve regional economic development success. OED staff encourages the formation of quick teams to identify and begin moving on initiatives that further Council and regional goals. We work with numerous organizations to build quality, connected places to attract and retain our people, jobs, investment, and innovative businesses.

Key Partnerships: Carolina West, Advantage West, Asheville HUB, UNC Asheville, Land-of-Sky Regional Council, City of Asheville Community Development Block Grant Program, Asheville-Buncombe Economic Development Coalition

Strategic Initiatives: Downtown Master Plan, River District Brownfields Initiative, City of Asheville Land & Asset Management, Urban Progress Zones designation, Riverfront Redevelopment Coordination, Southern Conference Tournament Host, WNC Passenger Rail/Multimodal Initiative, Minority Business Program

Community Support: CAYLA - City of Asheville Youth Leadership Academy, Progressive Minority Business Alliance, WNC Minority Enterprise Development (MED) Week, Inc., Building Lifelong Opportunities, Community and Knowledge (BLOCK) Academy

OnTrack Financial Education & Counseling

50 S. French Broad Ave, Asheville NC 28801
(828) 255-5166 / www.ontrackwnc.org

Since 1975, OnTrack Financial Education & Counseling has been Western North Carolina's trusted non-profit source helping people manage their money and credit better. Annually, we help over 10,000 community members address their personal financial concerns and goals through individual counseling appointments, group education classes, and debt repayment plans.

Financial Counseling Services include: Budget Counseling, Credit Review, Foreclosure Prevention, Debt Management, Reverse Mortgage Counseling, Bankruptcy Counseling, Student Loan Counseling, and Next Step Budgeting. Financial Education Classes cover the full range of financial topics including, but not limited to: Managing Your Money, Understanding Your Credit, and Homebuyer Education. In addition, OnTrack also offers several integrated programs. These include: The Women's Financial Empowerment Center, The Tenant Services Program, Silver Dollars Financial Program for seniors, Foreclosure Prevention Loan Program for the unemployed, Employer-Assisted Housing (for employees of Mission Hospitals and The Biltmore Company) and Free Tax Preparation for low-income earners.

Self Help Credit Union

34 Wall St., Suite 704 Asheville NC 28801
(828) 253-5251 / self-help.org

Self-Help's mission is to create and protect ownership and economic opportunity for people of color, women, rural residents, and low-wealth families and communities.

We make loans, develop real estate, and fight predatory lending -- so more people can achieve the financial security and sense of possibility that are at the heart of the American dream.

We continue to believe that the best way to strengthen families and communities is through ownership -- sustainable ownership. With the help of depositors, supporters, and visionary partners, we work every day, one loan at a time, to invest in the futures of families and enterprises that are often overlooked by mainstream lenders.

Small Business & Technology Development Center (SBTDC) at WCU

46 Haywood St, Suite 212 Asheville, NC 28801-3312
Asheville -- (828) 251-6025 / Cullowhee (828) 227-3459 / www.sbtcd.org

Our nine business professionals can help you and your small to mid-sized enterprise with a variety of business needs. Serving the 14 western counties of North Carolina from two convenient locations -- Western Carolina University and downtown Asheville, our confidential services are designed to address both your immediate and pressing concerns, but also work with you on an on-going basis to identify and address underlying issues and growth opportunities. Together, we select the right tools-- financial analysis, market studies, focus groups, strategic needs assessments, government procurement assistance, and/or strategic planning retreats, to name a few -- to meet your needs and goals. If your business is engaged in scientific R&D, we can assist with applications for SBIR and STTR grants.

As a program of the University of North Carolina system, the SBTDC leverages the assets of area Universities to benefit your business. Last year, 50 students from WCU and Montreat completed applied learning projects designed to assist companies and provide a hands-on learning experience for students. Across North Carolina, the SBTDC has 18 offices available to serve small to mid-sized companies like yours, each affiliated with a local University campus.

Southwestern Community College Small Business Center

447 College Drive, Sylva NC 28779

(828) 488-6413 / www.southwesterncc.edu/swain/small-bus-ctr

The Small Business Center (SBC) supports the development of new businesses and the growth of existing businesses by being a community-based provider of training, counseling, and resource information. The SBC can provide free, confidential counseling services on an as-needed basis, serving as a sounding board for ideas and concerns you might have about your business. Our professional staff will help you find solutions to your challenging business questions, no matter how simple or complicated. For more information on services provided by the SBC at Southwestern Community College, as well as offices across the state, visit the Small Business Center Network website at www.sbcn.nc.gov.

Technology Commercialization Center

1465 Sand Hill Rd, Candler NC 28715

(Located in the A-B Tech Center for Business and Technology Incubation on the Enka campus)

(828) 254-1921 ext. 5856 / spoland@abtech.edu / www.abtech.edu/sbc/tcc

The Technology Commercialization Center (TCC) implements a business development program for technology based companies that guides the management team in the deployment of a fundable and sustainable business. Coaching, training, and mentoring are provided with the purpose of client development in proven business practices and preparation for investor funding, should that be needed.

There is no charge for the TCC base program for A-B Tech incubator residents, those pursuing resident or affiliated status, or those companies located in Buncombe county. A comprehensive entrepreneurial management development training program complements the stage-based coaching and mentoring services.

We have worked with more than 60 companies in the past 2 years. We work with the management teams of these companies on day-to-day operational issues as well as strategic plans, business plans, partnerships, and mergers and acquisitions. We conduct monthly management training sessions that discuss general management issues common to all companies. We also bring local senior executives together monthly to review and provide guidance to client companies from mentors that have been successful running their own businesses.

Four of our clients have received loans for the Advantage West Advantage Opportunity Fund, four have presented to the Inception Micro Angel Fund, an early stage angel investment network in western North Carolina. Our client companies have earned over \$3,500,000 in revenue, have created or sustained more than 89 jobs in the local communities, and have raised over \$800,000 in investments.

The Arts 2 People Artist Resource Center

39 S. Market St Suite D, Asheville NC 28801

(828) 505-3883 / info@arts2people.org / www.ashevillearc.com

The Arts 2 People Artist Resource Center is a computer lab and classroom space where Arts 2 People offers business management classes tailored specifically to the needs of creative entrepreneurs. Curriculum focuses on the business of the arts, assisting entrepreneurs in areas such as sales, marketing, financial management, social media, software skills, portfolio prep, event planning, and more. Access to the internet, software and peripherals are available through the member center. Professional services brokerage, such as coaching and mentoring, are also available.

U.S. Small Business Administration

29 Haywood Street

Asheville NC 28801

(828) 225-1844 Michael.arriola@sba.gov

The U.S. Small Business Administration was formed over 50 years ago to help Americans start, develop and grow small businesses. An independent federal agency, the SBA accomplishes this through:

- Small business loan guaranty programs
- Federal contracting programs to enable small firms to gain access to federal procurement opportunities
- Counseling and training programs through sponsored or funded resources such as SCORE, the Small Business & Technology Development Center network, the Women's Business Center at Mountain BizWorks, and an array of online tools; and Advocacy on Capitol Hill, in which the SBA serves as the voice for small business in our nation's capitol.

The SBA's one-person satellite office has been situated in Asheville since February 2004. Mike Arriola is Senior Area Manager in Asheville and staffs the one-person office which serves the 22 counties of western NC. As an SBA officer, Mike's objective is to further the SBA's mission of helping small businesses start, develop and grow by:

- Increasing SBA loans to startups and existing small businesses in the region, working with lenders and loan applicants on SBA loan options and applications;
- Outreach throughout western North Carolina to engage the public about available SBA programs and services for their business use; Assistance with other SBA programs, including federal government contracting, surety bonding, and others.

MedWeek Committee of WNC, Inc.

Our Mission

To provide the best leadership and direction for the promotion, establishment and development of minority businesses in Western North Carolina through education, communication and advocacy.

History of MED Week

Since 1982, the U.S. President has proclaimed a National MED Week observance to recognize the outstanding achievements of minority businesses and to honor those corporations and financial institutions that support minority business development. The national MED Week conference is held in Washington, DC each year and is the largest federally sponsored conference for minority entrepreneurs.

Western North Carolina has a long history of celebrating, educating and supporting minority entrepreneurs through regional MED Week events. Previous events have included awards banquets, networking events and a variety of workshops on marketing, starting a business, financing and doing business with the government. For more information, see our website: www.wncmedweek.org

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The 2011 MED Week Committee gratefully acknowledges the support of our sponsors for this event:

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