

Strategic Plan FY2016-2020

Background:

The Idaho Small Business Development Center (Idaho SBDC) was established in 1986 as part of a nationwide network created to improve for the success of small businesses. The U. S. Small Business Administration, the State of Idaho, the hosting institutes of higher education, and private donations fund the organization.

The Idaho SBDC network includes business consultants, trainers, support staff and volunteers that operate from the state's colleges and universities. Boise State University's College of Business and Economics serves as the main host with administrative responsibility for directing the type and quality of services across the state. Six Regional offices are funded under sub-contracts with their host institutions. The locations result in 90% of Idaho's businesses being within a 1 hour drive:

- ① North Idaho College - Coeur d'Alene
- ② Lewis-Clark State College - Lewiston
- ② Boise State University – Boise and Nampa
- ④ College of Southern Idaho - Twin Falls
- ⑤ Idaho State University - Pocatello
- ⑥ Idaho State University - Idaho Falls



Services include confidential one-on-one consulting and focused training. Staff members are very involved in the business and economic development efforts in their areas and; therefore, are positioned to respond rapidly to the changing business environment.

Mission:

To enhance the success of small businesses in Idaho by providing high-quality consulting and training, leveraging the resources of colleges and universities.

Vision:

Idaho SBDC clients are recognized as consistently outperforming their peers.

Tag Line:

directions. solutions. impact.

Operating Principles:

Service is the primary product of the Idaho SBDC. Creating and maintaining a high standard of service requires a commitment to four principles:

1. Focus on the Client: The very future of the Idaho SBDC program depends on creating satisfied clients. To this end, each client contact must be considered an opportunity to focus on client needs and desires. Responding quickly with individual attention to specific and carefully identified client needs, then seeking critical evaluation of performance are standard processes followed with each client and training attendee.

2. **Devotion to Quality:** Providing consulting and training through a quality process and constantly seeking ways to improve that process are necessary to providing exceptional service. Fostering teamwork, eliminating physical and organizational barriers that separate people, establishing long-term relationships with partners and encouraging all to participate in quality improvement are some of the actions that demonstrate devotion to quality.
3. **Concentration on Innovation:** To innovate is to improve through change. Staff members constantly seek ways to improve methods and processes and assume a leadership role in trying new approaches to serve clients. Regular performance reviews, participation in related organizations, and attending professional development workshops are some of the ways that innovation is supported.
4. **Commitment to Integrity:** The Center values integrity and will conduct all of our services in an ethical and consistent manner. We will do our best to provide honest advice to our clients with our primary motivation to be the success of the business. In return, we also expect our clients to be straight forward and share all information necessary to assist them in their business.

Priorities:

The Idaho SBDC will focus on the following priorities:

1. **Maximum client impact** – While the SBDC provides services to all for-profit small businesses, it is clear that a small percentage of businesses will contribute the majority of the impact. Improving the ability to identify impact clients, develop services to assist them, and create long-term connections will increase the effectiveness of the Idaho SBDC.
2. **Strong brand recognition** – The Idaho SBDC remains unknown to a large number of businesses and entrepreneurs, as well as stakeholders. A consistent message and image to convey the SBDC value in conjunction with systematic marketing are necessary to raise the awareness of the SBDC value to both potential clients and stakeholders.
3. **Increased resources** – Federal funding remained level from 1998 until 2007 resulting in a very lean operating budget and loss of several positions. A slight increase was received for 2008 however; funding was again reduced from the state and host institutions during the recession. In addition, funding was cut in 2012 due to the recession. Additional resources – both cash and in-kind – are necessary to have an impact on a greater portion of small businesses and entrepreneurs.
4. **Organizational excellence** – The Idaho SBDC is in the top 10% of SBDCs on all impact measures, is consistently one of the top 5 states on the Chrisman impact survey, and received accreditation in 2009 with no conditions. The organization must continually improve to maintain this excellence.

Market Segments:

The small business market served by the Idaho SBDC can be divided into four key segments. With limited resources and the knowledge that in-depth, on-going consulting gives greater returns, the focus is on Segment 3 – high impact clients. The Idaho SBDC Marketing Plan contains additional information on state demographics and how these segments fit into the overall plan.

Segment 1:

Pre-venture – These potential clients are not yet in business. They will be assessed for the level of effort already put into the venture. Entrepreneurs who have not moved beyond the idea stage will be directed to a variety of resources to help them evaluate the feasibility of their idea. They will need to take further steps before scheduling an appointment with a consultant. These pre-venture clients will be less than 40% of the total clients and will receive 25% or less of consulting services. A small segment of these clients will be designated as high impact potential clients (Segment 3) and/or export/tech clients (segment 4).

Segment 2:

Established businesses – This segment has already established a business. A consultant will meet with them to evaluate their needs and formulate a plan to work together. The majority of businesses in this category will have 20 employees or less. Over 60% of Idaho SBDC clients and over 75% of consulting time will be spent on clients in this category. This segment will also contain some businesses that will be designated as high impact potential (segment 3) and/or export/tech clients (segment 4).

Segment 3:

Impact clients – This segment is composed of businesses with the potential to grow sales and jobs. It is further divided into those with expected short-term impact and those that are considered long-term growth clients. These businesses will receive focused long-term services and coaching and be tracked separately in the MIS system with a goal of spending at least 40% of time on these clients.

Segment 4:

Export and Technology clients – Focus is on these segments because exporting brings wealth into the state and technology companies tend to create higher paying jobs. Cross network teams have been created to assist these clients. Export companies are typically existing businesses while tech companies can occur in either pre-venture or existing business segments.

Segment 5:

Rural businesses – Ensuring that the Idaho SBDC serves all counties in Idaho is important for local and regional economies. In conjunction with local economic development initiatives, the Idaho SBDC provides consulting, coaching and training to help small businesses in rural areas operate efficiently and effectively in a changing economy.

Success:

Success is defined as a client achieving the best possible outcome given their abilities and resources. Success does not necessarily mean that the business will start or that there will be increases in capital, sales, and jobs. For some clients, the best possible outcome is to decide not to open a business which has a high likelihood of failure. Preserving capital can be success in some situations. There may also be circumstances that cause a client to choose to limit the growth of their business. It is important to recognize the clients' goals, help them understand their potential, and then jointly identify success.

Allocation of Resources:

The Idaho SBDC shifts resources as appropriate to achieve the goals of the Strategic Plan. Lean budgets have prompted shifting financial resources from operating to personnel to assure that Idaho small businesses receive the same level of service. Currently, the operating budget for the Idaho SBDC is at what is considered a floor for supporting existing personnel and offices. The annual budget for the Idaho SBDC is distributed as follows:

- ♦ Personnel = 71% of total budget, 90% excluding indirect costs
- ♦ Operating (travel, supplies, etc.) = 8% of total budget, 10% excluding indirect costs
- ♦ Indirect costs = 21%

Increases in funding will be directed toward client assistance. Reduction in funding will favor minor reductions in employee hours versus eliminating positions.

In addition to financial constraints, the *Operations Manual* sets a policy for allocation of time as 60% consulting, 20% training, and 20% administrative. Milestones for each center and minimum hours for consultants and regional directors are based on the time allocation. To maintain service at the existing level, operate within the financial constraints, and meet the time allocation policy, the Idaho SBDC focuses on shifting personnel resources to achieve strategic plan goals. For example, to shift the focus to high impact clients, requests for assistance from pre-venture businesses are shifted to training and web resources to free up consulting time. The SBDC will continue to use this model for distribution of resources to achieve the strategic plan goals as long as a constraint remains on operating resources.

Needs:

In the statewide needs assessment process – the areas were identified as top client needs and will be incorporated into trainings and professional development.

- Access to capital
- Marketing
- Health care insurance
- Business model
- Mobile apps and tools

SWOT

INTERNAL	EXTERNAL
Strengths <ul style="list-style-type: none">• No-cost• Staff – expertise, passion, and professional development system• Public and private partnerships and networks• Systems for high performance• Leadership at all levels	Opportunities <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Changes in the economy• Strategic partners – leveraging resources• Entrepreneurial culture• Increase in angel investors• New business trends• Baby boomers
Weaknesses <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Market position – penetration of established small business market, brand, awareness beyond startup assistance (attraction of high growth companies)• Sharing tools and resources at state and national levels• Large geographical area to cover	Threats <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Economy – especially in rural areas, hard for businesses to succeed and hard for businesses in all area to find funding• Past funding reductions at state and federal level• Competitors

Goals and Objectives:

Maximum Client Impact

Goal 1: Maintain Idaho SBDC client sales and employment growth at 8 times the growth of the average Idaho small business.

Objective 1.1: Integrate the Business Model Canvas approach into the network.

Performance Measure: Incorporate into professional development conference and present at national association meeting.

Benchmark: All staff are proficient in using the approach by 2019.

Objective 1.2: Develop long-term relationships with growth and impact clients.

Performance Measure: Percent of impact clients

Benchmark: 50% impact clients by 2019.

Objective 1.3: Expand expertise available to clients through cross-network consulting, adding programs, using tools, and increasing partnerships.

Performance Measure: Integrate the PTAC program, increase cross-network consulting and identify new tools.

Benchmark: Accepted PTAC proposal, 10% hours of cross-network consulting/region, # of tools used, # new partnerships created.

Strong Brand Recognition

Goal 2: Increase brand awareness with stakeholders and the target market.

Objective 2.1: Increase website usage by 20% by 2014 including search engine optimization.

Performance Measure: Continually refresh website.

Benchmark: Increase website usage by 20% by December 2016.

Objective 2.2: Maintain strong community engagement through presentations, newsletters, articles, press releases, Chambers, etc.

Performance Measure: client referrals

Benchmark: Increase referrals from community partners.

Objective 2.3: Create a marketing plan.

Performance Measure: Marketing Plan

Benchmark: Complete Marketing Plan by Dec. 2015

Increase Resources

Goal 3: Increase funding to the Idaho SBDC by \$300,000 and student/volunteer resources to 6,000 hours.

Objective 3.1: Bring additional resources to clients through partnerships, students, and volunteers.

Performance Measure: hours of consulting from non-SBDC staff

Benchmark: 20% of hours

Objective 3.2: Develop specialized training such as around the Business Model Canvas approach.

Performance Measure: new workshops generating additional revenue

Benchmark: a new workshop/year to 2019

Objective 3.3: Seek additional state funding increase for FY16.

Performance Measure: Line item request

Benchmark: \$300,000 funding for 100 jobs, \$2,000,000 in client capital

Objective 3.4: Seek additional grants (FAST, ITD, etc.), sponsorships, etc. for increased funding in focused areas.

Performance Measure: funds received

Benchmark: \$200,000 in funds each year

Organizational Excellence

Goal 4: The percentage of Idaho SBDC clients' impact to the total national impact is greater than Idaho's percentage of SBA funding.

Objective 4.1: Integrate the highest standards and systems into day-to-day operating practices to achieve excellence on all reviews and meet goals.

Performance Measure: Achieve highest rating and/or meet goals for SBA exam, program reviews, Accreditation, SBA goals, etc.

Benchmark: Highest rating

Objective 4.2: Update the Professional Development Certification process and institute online tracking.

Performance Measure: Completion of update

Benchmark: Online tracking system for professional development by June 2015

Objective 4.3: Update new employee orientation process.

Performance Measure: Completion of update

Benchmark: Completion by December 2015

Objective 4.4: Add an export certified consultant to the network.

Performance Measure: Completion of hire

Benchmark: total of 2 export certified consultants by Dec. 2019

External Factors

The items below are external factors that significantly impact the Idaho SBDCs ability to provide our services and are outside of our control.

1. **Economy.** The general state of the economy in Idaho and across the nation has a huge impact on the Idaho SBDC's ability to create impact through our assistance to entrepreneurs. The Idaho SBDC has observed that businesses that use our services do much better in poor economic times than the average business in Idaho. The recent economic downturn has highlighted how challenging it is to grow sales, increase jobs, raise capital, and start a new business.
2. **Funding.** Funding from federal, university and state sources directly impact the resources available to the Idaho SBDC. Without the financial resources available to hire and retain the right people and provide them with the tools they need (phone, computers, professional development, etc), it will be challenging to serve Idaho's entrepreneurs effectively.

**Idaho Small Business Development Center
Program Performance Measures/Benchmarks**

Supplemental to Strategic Plan 2014

Performance Measure	Description/Benchmark*	CY2014
Consulting Hours	The total number of hours of consulting and preparation time; Goal is 16,000	22,042
Average Hours Per Client	Goal is 8.5	14
% hours for Impact Clients	Goal is 40%	48%
# of tech companies	Goal is 100	110
Student/volunteer hours	Goal is 6,000	10,731
Number of Client with 5 hours or more of contact and preparation time	Goal is 506	503
Business Starts	Goal is 72	96
Jobs Created	Goal is 500	717
Sales Growth	Growth in sales year to year. Goal is \$25,000,000	\$70,891,048
Capital Raised	Capital raised in the current year. Goal is \$25,000,000	\$32,301,697
ROI (Return on Investment)	The cost of the Idaho SBDC versus the increase in taxes collected due to business growth by SBDC clients. Goal is 3.0	4:1
Customer Satisfaction	Percentage of above average and excellent rating, Goal is 90%	99%

*The benchmarks (goals) are developed with data from other SBDCs, the SBA, and from our accrediting organization.