

Counseling

Experienced business consultants are available by appointment to discuss your business, assist you in developing or refining your business plan, marketing plan, financial management strategies or anything else related to managing your concern.

In addition to the Business Center's Small Business Counselor, Lola Aré, the Service Corps of Retired Executives (SCORE) volunteers are available to meet with you. These individuals are people who either owned their own business or were decision makers prior to retiring. They now provide guidance and counsel to others who are building or growing enterprises.

[Click here if you are interested in meeting with a counselor.](#)

Business Plan Review

Every successful business owner has a business plan. It may be held completely in the mind of the owner or owners, or it may be found scattered on notes, cocktail napkins or any number of notebooks or files somewhere or anywhere. But, the most effective business plans are those that are organized, written and utilized throughout the life of the business.

Each month the Business Center provides a three-hour workshop called [How To Write a Business Plan](#) where the instructor presents an overview of all elements that need to be addressed in the plan. These are held at the Oakland County government campus in Waterford and are limited to the first 20 registrants. The limited enrollment allows ample time for the instructor to answer all questions or concerns related to the planning process.

Business Center staff are expert at business plan development, are available to review your plan and provide suggestions, when appropriate, to improve the plan. If you are interested in this confidential service, please submit a copy of your plan along with a [Request for Business Plan Review](#). Allow at least five working days to allow time for us to read and digest the plan. Once reviewed, we can arrange a time to meet or talk with you to provide comment and suggestions.

Business Basics Workshops

Numerous workshops are provided throughout the year through the Business Center. [How To Start a Business Workshop](#) is offered each month and is designed to answer all the questions you might have if you're thinking about starting your own business. These are intense, three-hour overviews of everything one should consider before opening the door of a new venture. Taught by business development professionals, class size is limited to 20 so that each individual's questions can be addressed.

Presented by Oakland County's Business Center and Market Research Departments, The Entrepreneur's Source and an Oakland County Librarian, the [Pre-Business](#)

[Research](#) workshop will help you locate and utilize research tools for your business. This workshop is free of charge, but pre-registration is required.

Loan Preparation Assistance

A business loan is pretty easy to get, but only when you don't need one. Any other time, be prepared before you go to the bank.

Want to purchase a piece of property or building for your business? The Oakland County Business Finance Corporation (BFC) is expert at the U.S. Small Business Administration's (SBA) 504 Loan process. Designed for acquiring fixed assets, it provides very attractive terms and conditions for the small business community.

The Business Center hosts a [Small Business Loan Workshop](#) each quarter where experts from the United States Small Business Administration, the Service Corps of Retired Executives and the banking industry present details on what is needed to secure a loan for your business.

The Center's business counselor, Lola Aré, can also assist you as you prepare to apply for a loan. [Click here if you are interested in meeting with a counselor.](#)

The following steps are recommended:

Review the credit reports related to your business and those of anyone with 20 percent or more ownership in the business. Review these reports to determine if the information being reported is accurate. If any derogatory information is reported, take steps to correct or explain that information.

- Prepare a personal financial statement (for anyone with 20 percent or more ownership).
- Gather the last three years' tax returns.
- Develop a statement of use of funds and business plan.
- Start talking to lenders.

Marketing Plan Review

Within every successful business plan is an effective marketing plan. It describes the market the business is competing in including, size, demographics, competitive analysis, product, pricing, positioning, etc.

It includes the strategy implemented to grab whatever share of the market the business owner is targeting as well as the tools that are needed to accomplish the goals. These can include trade shows, sales efforts, advertising, public relations, etc.

The Business Center hosts a three-hour workshop called [Sales and Marketing Basics](#) that covers an overview of elements that need to be addressed in the plan. These are held at the Oakland County government campus in Waterford and are limited to the first 20

registrants. The limited enrollment allows ample time for the instructor to answer all questions or concerns related to the planning process.

Business Center staff are expert at marketing plan development, are available to review your plan and provide suggestions, when appropriate, to improve the plan. If you are interested in this confidential service, please submit a copy of your plan along with a [Request for Marketing Plan Review](#).

Demographic Information

[Contact us so that we can determine what type of information you are looking for](#). Upon receipt of your request, one of our consultants will give you a call.

Site Selection Assistance

See [Available Properties](#).

Community Liaison Assistance

We are trained and welcome an opportunity to address any business-related issues you may have with your local community.

Professional Days Services

The Business Center provides a customized service to its business customers. In the event that you have a business-related challenge that goes beyond our staff expertise, we will arrange a confidential, one-on-one meeting between you and a professional in any of the following fields-at no charge to you.

Law
Accounting
QuickBooks
Technology
Marketing
Web site Design or Implementation

[Request for Professional Days Services](#)

Market Research

Market Research available through the Planning & Economic Development Services (PEDS) division includes access to a wide array of data resources and information about Oakland County.

Our research professionals collect data and information, analyze trends, produce reports and publications, and help define the overall direction of economic development materials for Oakland County.

Additionally, we can provide countywide demographic research including age, ethnicity, education, marital status, etc. Our Community Profiles book provides detailed profiles of each of our Oakland County communities.