



FAQs for Business Assistance & Training

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Business Assistance and Training

Pathway Women's Business Center has put together the following list of resources to help you take advantage of the several free counseling and training programs that are available to assist you in starting and growing your business. From low cost business training and free mentoring, selling to government, finding access to capital and expanding your business internationally, these partners can help get you started.

Online Classes

Are there on-line classes available to expose me to current best practices in managing small businesses?

- SBA's Small Business Online Training Network (SBTN) is a virtual campus complete with free on-line courses, workshops, podcasts, learning tools and business-readiness assessments. SBTN includes more than 30 free online courses and workshops, templates and samples to get your business planning underway, an online library of podcasts, business publications, templates and articles, and access to SBA business contacts. SBTN can be accessed at <http://www.sba.gov/sba-learning-center>.
- SCORE also offers a wide range of online classes and webinars, which can be accessed at <http://www.score.org/onlineworkshops/tab-a>. SCORE
- Tennessee Small Business Development Centers (TSBDCs) offer an online curriculum of Small Business Survival Training seminars, as well as in person seminars of topics of general interest throughout Tennessee. The online seminars and schedule of in person seminars can be accessed at <https://www.tsbdc.org/>.
- The IRS offers The Virtual Small Business Workshop to help small business owners understand and fulfill federal tax obligations. This workshop can be accessed at <http://www.tax.gov/SmallBusinessTaxpayer/virtualworkshop>.

What resources are available to help me to improve my manufacturing business' competitiveness and profitability? ?

- The Tennessee Manufacturing Extension Program (TMEP) assists businesses with new production techniques and practices, among other services. TMEP is a branch of the University of Tennessee Center for Industrial Services (UT-CIS). UT-CIS serves Tennessee businesses out of six offices spread across the state. You can learn more about UT-CIS at <https://cis.tennessee.edu/>.

What other resources are available to assist early-stage companies in Tennessee?

- There are 12 business incubators spread out across Tennessee. These incubators offer an array of business support resources and services primarily to early-stage entrepreneurial companies, including



office space, business counseling and training classes. You can find the incubator closest to you at <http://www.nbia.org/>.

- There are also 9 business accelerators in Tennessee established to raise Tennessee's profile in innovation-based economic development and drive growth in the creation of knowledge-based jobs. These 9 accelerators provide mentoring, education and training, strategic and technical support, and assistance identifying sources of capital to promising early-stage companies in these industry clusters: **automotive; chemicals and plastics; transportation, logistics and distribution services; business services; health care; advanced manufacturing; energy technologies; and entertainment.** You can learn more about this program at <http://www.tn.gov/ecd/Jobs4TN.html> and at <http://launchtn.org/>.

Government Contracting

Where can I get information about/ help with doing business with Federal, state and local governments?

- The SBA *Small Business Resource* <http://www.smallbusiness3.com/pdf/english/tennessee.pdf> includes a section entitled *Contracting—Applying for Government Contracts*, which summarizes the Federal government “set asides” available to small businesses. It also discusses the assistance that the SBA provides to small businesses.
- The Center for Industrial Services (CIS) ,an agency of the University Of Tennessee (UT) Institute of Public Service , provides assistance, at no or nominal cost, to businesses in marketing products and services to the federal government and its prime contractors. <https://cis.tennessee.edu>
- The Governor’s Office of Diversity Business Enterprise (Go-DBE) helps minority, women, service-disabled and small businesses wishing to do business with the state of Tennessee. <http://tn.gov/businessopp/>
- The Tennessee Department of Transportation provides assistance to disadvantaged business enterprises through their Civil Rights Office Small Business Development Program. <http://www.tdot.state.tn.us/civil-rights/smallbusiness/default.htm>
- Many of the larger cities in Tennessee have vendor programs with staff to provide assistance to small, minority-and women-owned businesses, including Nashville, Memphis, Knoxville, and Chattanooga. <http://tn.gov/local/>