



## Illinois SBDC Network Overview

In partnership with the U. S. Small Business Administration, the U. S. Department of Defense, colleges, universities and local economic development organizations, the Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity's (DCEO) Illinois Small Business Development Center (SBDC) Network provides prospective and existing business owners with a variety of business resource programs.

**Illinois Small Business Development Centers (SBDC)** provide businesses with management, marketing and financial counseling in order to help them succeed. The Centers assist in the development of business and marketing plans, along with improving business ownership skills, financial analysis of businesses, accessing specialized services including export and government marketing and other business management needs. Several of the Illinois SBDCs also provide specialized **Technology, Innovation and Entrepreneurship Services (TIES)** to help small firms and entrepreneurs in the areas of technology commercialization and innovation.

**Illinois SBDC International Trade Centers (ITC)** provide existing business owners with professional advice and resources to enter the global marketplace. The Centers help identify specific foreign markets in which a company's product or service would have the greatest demand, provide guidance in meeting U. S. government export criteria and foreign government requirements, and assist in obtaining licenses, copyrights and patents.

**Illinois Procurement Technical Assistance Centers (PTAC)** assist existing business owners in doing business with the federal, state and local governments. The Centers provide general procurement counseling, access to bid specifications, assistance in identifying government markets, help in reviewing bid packages and also provide information about contract administration and other contracting assistance services.

**First Stop Business Information Center** is a single statewide resource for individuals and business to obtain comprehensive regulatory and permitting information through a toll-free helpline (800/252-2923). Center staff provides professional guidance to entrepreneurs by linking them to state and local resources.

**Regulatory Flexibility Program** examines proposed rules and regulations affecting the small business community and through impact analyses recommends ways of making the rules more flexible, cost effective or less restrictive for small business. Helping Illinois' small businesses bring their concerns to the rulemaking process and requiring agencies to consider the prospective impact of proposed regulation on small entities is the role of the First Stop BIC's Office of Regulatory Flexibility. The Office of Regulatory Flexibility continues to advocate against the disproportionate burden of regulations on small businesses.

**Small Business Environmental Assistance Program (SBEAP)** provides free confidential information and services to small business to help them understand their environmental obligations. Services include a toll-free helpline (800/252-3998), compliance assistance workshops, newsletters, publications, a directory of environmental consultants and links to federal, state and other environmental resources.

**Small Business Incubators** were developed to provide businesses with sheltered environments during their early stages of development. Incubators provide shared services including clerical and technical assistance, as well as sharing business necessities such as office machines, communications equipment and conference rooms.

Any prospective or existing Illinois business owner may take advantage of the services available through the Illinois SBDC Network. Additional information about the Network and other assistance programs is available by calling the First Stop Business Information Center at **800/252-2923**; TDD 800/785-605 or going to [www.ilsbdc.biz](http://www.ilsbdc.biz).

**800-252-2923 - [www.ilsbdc.biz](http://www.ilsbdc.biz)**





## ILLINOIS SBDC NETWORK RESOURCES

The Illinois SBDC provides numerous resources and tools to support the service centers, center directors, business advisors and trainers in the Illinois SBDC Network. Several of the existing resources and tools are described below.

### Network-Wide Resources

#### Neoserra

Neoserra (formerly WebCATS) is a web-based client activity tracking system. Its sophisticated CRM database allows the Illinois SBDC Network to track client information, consultation services, training programs and client performance and successes. Neoserra also tracks business advisor activity, professional development, outreach efforts and center performance. Serving all of our partner organizations, Neoserra tracks all of the activity and impact of the Illinois SBDC Network programs.

#### CenterConnect

CenterConnect is a resource that is available for all members of the Illinois SBDC Network to access current information about operational issues of the Illinois SBDC. This site allows centers to access forms, policy information, operations manual, performance information, Weekly Connection emails and updates from the DCEO Lead Center. This resource makes information more readily available saving center and staff time and improves accessibility to critical documents. The response from centers regarding this tool continues to be extremely positive.

#### Global Classroom

Global Classroom is a cloud-based Online Course Delivery Platform that includes a Learning Management System (LMS), social media platform, e-Course publishing center and thousands of courses supporting entrepreneurship and small business. All members of the Illinois SBDC Network have access to the eLearning Center.

#### Knowledgebase Technology

First Stop's KnowledgeBase System (KBS) is a comprehensive database of more than 500 business related questions and answers. This system allows entrepreneurs and small business owners to access the same business permit, license, certification and assistance program information as our call center but on a self-serve basis and in real-time via the "Search for Answers" link on: [www.ilsbdc.biz](http://www.ilsbdc.biz).

#### First Stop Partner Locator

The First Stop Partner locator connects inquirers to their nearest Illinois SBDC Network member after they enter a city name or zip code.

### Illinois SBDC Specific Resources

#### GrowthWheel

GrowthWheel is a visual toolbox for decision-making and action planning for start-up and growth companies. GrowthWheel helps entrepreneurs build their businesses through a simple action-oriented process that provides a 360 degree view of the business and stays true to the way entrepreneurs think and work. The Illinois SBDC Network has over 70 business advisors and center directors trained and certified in the use of the GrowthWheel tool.

### **Client Assessment Tool**

The Client Assessment System was developed as a consulting strategy to engage existing businesses to participate in an ongoing and enduring relationship with the SBDC. The assessment is functionally based. It is designed to evaluate how effective a Client is in performing typical business functions (8 functions are offered: Marketing, Sales, Operations, Financials, Customer Services, Administrative and IT Support, Human Resources, and Strategic Thinking)

### **IBISWorld Industry Research**

As the world's largest independent publisher of U.S. industry research, IBISWorld's team of expert analysts covers 700 different market segments. Each industry report is presented in an objective, easy to understand format, providing hard-to-find answers to top market research questions. Each market report is available online in HTML and PDF format. Industry Reports are used for understanding market size, competitors, drafting business plans, pitch books, benchmarking, forecasting, business valuations, litigation support, due diligence and more. They are also ideal for finance professionals, management consultants, business brokers, entrepreneurs, libraries; anyone in need of industry research. All Illinois SBDCs now have access to IBISWorld.

### **ProfitCents**

ProfitCents is a powerful internet-based tool that allows a business to turn complex financial data into actionable intelligence that empowers owners to make better financial decisions. This financial analysis tool is produced by Sageworks. The Illinois SBDC provides access to this tool for each of the Illinois SBDC directors and business advisors. Ongoing training on how to use the software is provided during quarterly webinars.

### **ProfitMastery**

The ProfitMastery financial management and analysis online program is now available to all Illinois SBDCs and their clients. Profit Mastery is a financial performance system that will provide the differentiating point in the market that can catalyze a company's success. The system delivers tools and resources help guide owners to improve business performance in a constantly changing economy — and to assist them in overcoming what is consistently the greatest knowledge gap for business owners: finance. The real outcomes are centered around business performance, business development, and retention. Online training is available to update Illinois SBDC Directors and Business Advisors on how to best use this program to assist clients.

### **ReferenceUSA – OneSource**

ReferenceUSA, a service of Infogroup is an internet-based reference service founded in 1992. The site was designed for use as a reference and research tool. ReferenceUSA offers a wide range of database products, available in print, CD-ROM or via the Internet. These products include State Business-to-Business Marketing Directories, The American Big Businesses Directories, The American Big Businesses Directory and CD-Rom, The American Manufacturers Directory and CD-ROM, The American Business Disc, and Powerfinder.

### **SBDCNet**

SBDCNet provides small business research services to the entire 1,100+ member SBDC Network of Small Business Development Centers located in all 50 states, Guam and Puerto Rico. In partnership with your SBDC, we can produce a broad range of financial, market and demographic research reports customized to your client's industry and geographic location. In addition to supporting small business entrepreneurs, SBDCNet now offers an array of products and services to support small to mid-size community development.

### **Small Business Spoken Here -eTraining**

Small Business Spoken Here, eTraining is designed for SBDC Clients to supplement and reinforce the in-person conversations with SBDC Advisors, but they provide relevant information that benefits all small business owners! Two eLearning series are available: The Start Strong Series includes: Are You Ready?, Starting Your Business, Building Your Business Team, and Business Planning Made Easy. The Grow Strong Series includes Strategic Planning

for Small Business, Cash Flow, Marketing for Success, and Maximize Your Relationships. The Small Business Spoken Here training series is being moved onto the Global Classroom eLearning Center.

### **Illinois SBDC International Trade Center Specific Resources**

#### **Datamyne**

From import-export trends, to the tally of cargos for individual shippers or consignees, right down to the details of each trade transaction – you are just clicks away from information you can use to evaluate new markets, identify prospective customers, monitor long-distance business arrangements, locate new suppliers, and track your competition.

#### **EuroMonitor International**

EuroMonitor International (E.I.) is the world's leading provider for global business intelligence and strategic market analysis. E.I. has extensive experience in publishing international market reports to support strategic planning for today's increasingly international business environment.

#### **Kompass**

Kompass is a comprehensive B2B database, with more than 4 million international and domestic companies listed, which link buyers and sellers worldwide. Promote your activities on Kompass and reach domestic and international buyers searching for your specific products or services.

#### **Trade Leads**

For Illinois SBDC International Trade Centers, the Trade Leads Program is a Neoserra add-on component that gives ITCs the tools you need to provide clients with relevant trade leads by developing a profile of the client using relevant key words and codes in order provide the client with timely, targeted international trade leads.

### **Illinois Small Business Development Center TIES Resources**

#### **Acclaim IP**

Acclaim IP is a patent search and analysis software that is used by analysts, market researchers, attorneys, and patent owners. It is an extremely fast patent search tool that allows users to identify and review specific intellectual property, map the related IP industry, identify competitors, identify potential development partners and potential purchasers of said IP for the US and other global jurisdictions. Numerous search functions allow the user to identify like technologies in a given market as well as identify specific patents quickly and without the confusion of USPTO.gov.

#### **Foresight T2+2**

The T2+2<sup>®</sup> Web Platform from Foresight Technology provides a comprehensive information resource that empowers SBDC staff when evaluating the market potential of a technology through access to:

- A suite of databases including: market data, royalty rate data (including license agreements), as well as Foresight Technology's own knowledge bank of 4,000 technology market reports; many of these reports include interviews with experts, end users and commercialization partners.
- The Pipeline Partners<sup>®</sup> database of potential commercialization partners ("warm leads") who are actively seeking specific technologies.

Unlike other database subscriptions, T2+2<sup>®</sup> also provides a variety of training modules, personalized support, webinars, and a number of custom reports (market overviews and royalty rate reports).

## Illinois Procurement Technical Assistance Center Resources

### **Bid Match**

For Procurement Technical Assistance Centers, the Automated Bid Match Program is a Neoserra add-on component that gives the PTACs the tools needed to provide clients with upcoming bid opportunities by developing a profile of the client using relevant key words and codes in order provide the client with timely, targeted local, state and federal contracting bid leads.

### **Fedmine**

FEDMINE is an advanced database driven web application that leverages the power of the internet for aggregating data from disparate but authoritative federal government sources and maximizing it for relevancy through smart use of the latest technology. By filtering out confusing information and applying proven industry knowledge, FEDMINE minimizes the information overload that typically affects most organizations in today's fast paced business environment by providing real time information that is easily recognizable as pertinent.

### **Proxity**

In the world of logistics Proxity provides integration of data used by individuals and organizations. Companies requiring logistics information on parts and services used by the Government and its suppliers; providing referenced links to regulatory information such as Government and Industry standards and specifications mandated by the Government and cited in solicitations and Mil Specs. This integrated approach allows data to be used in an organized connect the dots fashion including fulfilling the contractors' needs to obtain data on daily procurement opportunities published by the U.S. Government as well as State and local Governments.