

**2012-2014
STRATEGIC PLAN**

for the

**ILLINOIS
SMALL BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT
CENTER NETWORK**



**ILLINOIS DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE AND
ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITY**

VISION and MISSION

The Vision

To be recognized as the leading resource for business growth advancing the Illinois economy.

The Mission

To provide professional guidance for business growth.

HOST ORGANIZATION

Lead Economic Development Agency - The Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity (DCEO) is the lead state agency responsible for improving the competitiveness of Illinois in the global economy resulting in growing, prosperous industries, high quality jobs and world-class communities. DCEO provides information, guidance and advocacy to facilitate and advance the economic development process in partnership with Illinois' communities, businesses, and a vast network of public and private service providers.

The Office of Entrepreneurship, Innovation and Technology at DCEO provides a wide range of services and resources to both prospective and existing business owners. The Illinois Small Business Development Center (SBDC) has been providing professional guidance for business growth to the state's small business sector since 1984. The Illinois SBDC Network operates with funding support from the U.S. Small Business Administration (SBA), state government and other federal agencies, as well as university, community college and non-profit host institutions. It performs its functions through programs and services, which include one on one business advice, training, and other assistance provided directly by its staff and by its Illinois Small Business Development Center Network partners. The partner resources include the Illinois SBDC International Trade Centers; the Illinois SBDC Technology, Innovation and Entrepreneurship specialty services, the Illinois Procurement Technical Assistance Centers; the Business Information Center and the Small Business Environmental Assistance Program.

CLIENTS

Customer Base - The Illinois SBDC Network serves existing small businesses, pre-venture clients, and innovative entrepreneurs with high growth potential. The growth and development of small businesses are critical to the Illinois economy. In general, businesses with up to 500 employees are defined as small businesses according to the guidelines of the U.S. Small Business Administration (SBA). These small businesses comprise more than 98.3% of the estimated 1,006,000 businesses in the state. However, nearly 97% of the employer businesses in Illinois employ less than 100 workers and 85% of the firms in Illinois employ less than 20 people.

Types of Clients - The clients of the Illinois SBDC normally fall within one of the following categories. The SBDC is striving to increase the number of hours of one on one business advice devoted to clients that fall into the last three categories.

- ❑ *Pre-Ventur, Nascent:* Individuals interested in starting a business that are seeking information, business advice and training assistance necessary for their start-up. This includes individuals who are in the concept stage. These clients are interested in basic information concerning business start-up that enables them to assess their interest in and ability to pursue new business start-up. . Target: 45%
- ❑ *Start-up:* Clients seeking assistance and skills to overcome the obstacles faced during the establishment and start up operations of their business. Clients are in the process of starting or acquiring a small business or have already been in operation for up to one year. Target: 20%
- ❑ *Established:* Clients beyond their first year of operation. These are small businesses that need assistance with specific issues or problems. Ongoing success of existing business clients is essential to the economic vitality of the state. Target: 35%
- ❑ *Innovation and Technology Focused w/Rapid Growth Potential:* These clients have the potential for rapid growth or may already be growing at a rapid rate. They may have an innovative product or process that offers a competitive advantage typically involving intellectual property. These clients normally have very strong high growth potential. (Subset of Pre-Venture, Start-Up and Established)

CORE SERVICES

Strategic Business Planning – Guidance and technical support in the core areas of management, financial management, financial analysis, marketing, public relations and information technology.

Business Startup – Services for pre-venture clients which includes a 40 page handbook that contains a list of financial resources, sample business plans and industry specific information.

Business Financing – Assistance with financial strategies, financial analysis and access to available capital, including debt, non-debt and equity financing.

Market Development – Guidance on expanding markets for products or services through government contracting, international trade and the private sector.

Business Management - Services for existing businesses which include business expansion, improved efficiency, business acquisition and business succession.

Innovation and Technology - Specialized services in areas that include equity financing, intellectual property, commercialization and R and D funding targeted to clients that are developing ventures based on intellectual property for innovations and/or new technologies.

Regulatory Compliance – Business advice, training, and information services on environmental requirements of the Clean Air Act of 1990, as well as OSHA, IRS, and other state and federal governmental regulations.

Business Training/Education – A wide range of business education and training programs structured to meet specific needs of the Illinois small business community.

SPECIALIZED SERVICES

The Illinois SBDC provides targeted, specialized services to specific client segments. The specialized services are in the areas of export development and international trade, government contracting assistance and technology, innovation and entrepreneurship.

Additional details regarding specialized services and core competencies are available in the accompanying strategic planning documents.

TARGETED SECTORS

Although Illinois SBDC Network clients represent a broad range of market sectors, Illinois' proactive marketing service delivery efforts are targeted to the following five categories of competitive edge sectors:

- Alternative Energy
- Information Technology/Digital Media
- Food/Agriculture
- Bio/Life Sciences
- Advanced Manufacturing

GUIDING PRINCIPLES

The Illinois SBDC Network defines its mission, develops its services, and manages its operations in accordance with the following values and guiding principles:

RESPONSIVE TO STAKEHOLDERS

- Our services are driven by market demand based upon research, trends, and ongoing response from our clients, partners, and other key stakeholders.

ACCESSIBLE SERVICES

- Our services are delivered through a dynamic, integrated, regional small business assistance delivery system accessible to all segments of the business community throughout the state.

QUALITY PERFORMANCE

- Our services meet the highest standards of integrity, confidentiality, quality and timeliness and are continuously evaluated and improved to increase the value to our key stakeholders.

COLLABORATIVE USE OF RESOURCES

- Our services are maximized through the efficient and effective use of resources and the leveraging of expertise throughout the network through partnerships and technology.

STRATEGIC ENGAGEMENT

- Our ongoing strategic planning process engages all aspects of the the network, drives the exploration of long-term issues, delivers systematic continous improvement and allows for program modifications and enhancements as needed.

STRATEGIC ISSUES

The Illinois SBDC Network partners and stakeholders have identified the following key strategic issues that drive our strategic planning and continuous improvement efforts.

- ❑ **SUSTAINABLE FUNDING:** The demands for services and the costs to operate the Illinois Small Business Development Center (SBDC) network continue to increase. Local, state and federal resources are tightening. The network must ensure sustainable funding is provided to maintain and expand services provided to program clients.
- ❑ **HUMAN CAPITAL:** The Illinois Small Business Development Center (SBDC) Network must continue to attract, retain and educate high quality directors, business advisors and trainers to necessary to support Illinois entrepreneurs and small businesses. The Illinois SBDC Network should ensure that all centers provide the expertise, guidance, access to resources and relationships necessary to support their clients launch, development and growth.
- ❑ **IMAGE IN THE MARKETPLACE:** The Illinois SBDC Network understands the breadth and fragmentation of resources available to small business owners and prospective entrepreneurs. The Network should establish itself as the leading source of assistance for small business and entrepreneurs and must stand out in a dynamic and crowded market place with a strong image, unmistakable message and the ability to provide a clearly defined array of services that can be tailored to meet the needs of a diverse client group.
- ❑ **TECHNOLOGY UTILIZATION:** The Illinois SBDC Network recognizes the positive impact of innovation and technology development on the economic vitality of the state. The Network also recognizes the need to be innovative and to effectively deploy available technology to improve efficiency and effectiveness in targeting and delivering services to clients and help them improve their business operations
- ❑ **COLLABORATION/COORDINATION/PARTNERSHIPS:** The Illinois SBDC Network recognizes the importance of maintaining balance among the vested stakeholder's (Host/State/Federal) priorities. The Network should actively enable collaboration and close communication with network partners, external partners and stakeholders to develop consistent delivery of relevant content and the use of all available resources to meet identified strategic objectives.
- ❑ **MARKET SEGMENTATION AND TARGETING:** The Illinois SBDC Network should stay abreast of changes (e.g. demographic, economic and technological) that impact the existing market place and create new markets. Based on identified trends, the Network should tailor its services, resources and programs in formats appropriate to the target markets identified.
- ❑ **CAPACITY FOR GLOBAL COMPETITIVENESS:** The Illinois SBDC Network recognizes the importance for Illinois firms to be competitive in a global economy. The Network should take a leadership role in educating clients about the impact of globalization in all aspects of their business strategy, operations and growth.

GOALS and OBJECTIVES

GOAL I. ECONOMIC IMPACT - Drive economic impact results to advance the Illinois economy.

OBJECTIVE I.1: Contribute to the growth of small businesses and high growth potential entrepreneurs by focusing on job/business creation/retention through increased business development assistance and specialized services in international trade, technology/innovation and government contracting.

OBJECTIVE I.2: Assist clients in securing needed increased business capital to allow them to develop and grow their businesses.

GOAL II. SERVICE DELIVERY - Provide increased hours of client specific, one on one business advice, training and resources.

OBJECTIVE II.1: Assess client and small business needs to determine business assistance services.

OBJECTIVE II.2: Advance professional development resources utilizing the full capabilities of the Network to ensure the delivery of quality business assistance.

OBJECTIVE II.3: Deliver client-focused, quality business assistance in a timely manner.

OBJECTIVE II.4: Assist Illinois small businesses and entrepreneurs in understanding and complying with government regulations.

GOAL III. POSITIONING - Create and communicate a consistent brand/image that clearly differentiates the purpose, value and expertise of the Network.

OBJECTIVE III.1: Coordinate marketing efforts that will promote small business and entrepreneurship services and/or products to a broad range of markets including pre-venture and existing businesses.

OBJECTIVE III.2: Deliver a consistent message that educates existing small businesses and stakeholders (Host Orgs, Business Orgs, Govt. Agencies, Legislators) about the value of available resources.

GOAL IV. RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT - Identify, develop and leverage the human capital, funding and technological resources needed to deliver client specific services.

OBJECTIVE IV.1: Access alternative funding sources.

OBJECTIVE IV.2: Utilize external experts, tools and resources to enhance the overall success of the network.

GOAL V. COLLABORATION AND PARTNERSHIP - Develop strong partnerships with key stakeholders to promote an entrepreneurial culture in Illinois.

OBJECTIVE V.1: Engage the small business community in the legislative and regulatory process.

OBJECTIVE V.2: Be the leader within state government to advocate for small business.

GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

ECONOMIC IMPACT GOAL

GOAL I: Drive economic impact results to advance the Illinois economy.

OBJECTIVE I.1: Contribute to the growth of small businesses and high growth potential entrepreneurs by focusing on job/business creation/retention through increased business development assistance and specialized services in international trade, technology/innovation and government contracting.

<u>Strategies</u>	<u>Indicators/Results/Timelines</u>	<u>Lead Responsibility</u>
Provide assistance to small businesses that results in access to international trade and government contracting opportunities.	Total Export Sales: Actual CY 2012 - \$250 M CY 2013 - \$275 M CY 2014 - \$300 M	SBDC Operations
	Government Contract Dollars: Actual CY 2012 - \$1.4 B CY 2013 - \$1.45 B CY 2014 - \$1.5 B	SBDC Operations
Provide assistance to entrepreneurs and small businesses that contributes to the creation of new businesses and the expansion of existing firms.	New Businesses: Actual CY12 - 400 CY13 - 450 CY14 - 500	SBDC Operations
	Number of Expansions Actual CY 2012 - 225 CY 2013 - 250 CY 2014 - 275	SBDC Operations
Provide assistance to entrepreneurs and small businesses that contributes to the creation and retention of jobs in Illinois.	Jobs Created: Actual CY 2012 - 6,200 CY 2013 - 6,500 CY 2014 - 6,800	SBDC Operations
	Jobs Retained: Actual CY 2012 - 11,500 CY 2013 - 11,750 CY 2014 - 12,000	SBDC Operations
Assist high growth potential small businesses and entrepreneurs with safeguarding intellectual property.	# of successful intellectual property filings. Actual CY 2012 - 75 CY 2013 - 85 CY 2014 - 95	SBDC Operations

OBJECTIVE I.2: Assist clients in securing needed increased business capital to allow them to develop and grow their businesses.

<u>Strategies</u>	<u>Indicators/Results/Timelines</u>	<u>Lead Responsibility</u>
Assist clients in obtaining business capital (debt and non-debt) to allow them to grow and improve their business..	Financing Secured: Actual (Includes debt and non-debt financing) CY 2012 - \$195 M CY 2013 - \$215 M CY 2014 - \$240 M	SBDC Operations
Assist innovative, high growth potential clients in securing needed non-debt and equity financing.	Equity Financing Secured: Actual CY 2012 - \$85M CY 2013 - \$95M CY 2014 - \$105M	SBDC Operations
	# and dollar value of successful federal funding applications. Actual CY 2012 - \$5.25 M CY 2013 - \$5.75 M CY 2014 - \$6.5 M	SBDC Operations

SERVICE DELIVERY GOAL

GOAL II. Provide increased hours of client specific, one on one, business advice, training and resources.

OBJECTIVE II.1: Assess client and small business needs to determine business assistance services.

<u>Strategies</u>	<u>Indicators/Results/Timelines</u>	<u>Lead Responsibility</u>
Conduct surveys and / or focus groups evaluating SBDC Network services and client needs and satisfaction.	Utilize available resources, such as online needs assessment tools, to help identify and determine what types of business services will be required in the future. Conduct needs assessment surveys and/or focus groups 2 times per year.	SBDC Lead Office Business Information Center Environmental Office
Utilize the state and local SBDC Advisory Boards, other key stakeholders and Center partners to provide guidance and feedback on SBDC operation and services.	Increase the % client satisfaction - Actual CY 2012 = 90% CY 2013 = 91% CY 2014 = 92% Network Coordinators participate in minimum of 2 local Advisory Board activities per year as appropriate. Conduct minimum of 2 State Advisory Board Meetings per year	SBDC Lead Office SBDC Operations

OBJECTIVE II.2: Advance professional development resources utilizing the full capabilities of the Network to ensure the delivery of quality business assistance.

<u>Strategies</u>	<u>Indicators/Results/Timelines</u>	<u>Lead Responsibility</u>
Provide new SBDC Directors and staff with an orientation and ongoing access	New director and DCEO staff orientation within first 30 days of hire. Include host	SBDC Operations

to professional development opportunities.	institution as well. All professional staff complete a minimum of 50 hours of professional development training.	SBDC Operations
Identify professional development needs for staff.	Identify training needs as determined by surveys, program management and input from the IESBGA and network meetings.	SBDC Operations IESBGA
Provide specialized training for Business Advisors to increase programs capacity to assist innovative and technology driven clients.	DCEO and IESBGA identify and/or develop specialized training curriculum and deliver at Network meetings.	SBDC Operations IESBGA

OBJECTIVE II.3: Deliver client-focused, quality business assistance in a timely manner.

<u>Strategies</u>	<u>Indicators/Results/Timelines</u>	<u>Lead Responsibility</u>
Deliver quality core business advice and training. (Including all measures of quality required by funding partners).	Center business advisor performance standards. -Minimum 1,200 hours of business advice for each \$80,000 provided by program. -Center manager- 60% core business advice 40% training/outreach/administration -Business Advisor/Specialist 75% Core Business Advice 25% training/outreach/administration	SBDC Operations
	One on One Hours Actual CY 2012 - 70,000 CY 2013 - 72,000 CY 2014 - 74,000	
	Long Term Clients Actual CY 2012 - 3,000 CY 2013 - 3,050 CY 2014 - 3.100	
	One on One Hours per Client Actual CY 2012 - 7.5 Hours CY 2013 - 7.75 Hours CY 2014 - 8.0 Hours	
Deliver quality one on one business advice and training to innovative and technology based clients with high growth potential.	# of Innovative High Growth Actual Technology Clients: CY 2012 - 500 CY 2013 - 650 CY 2014 - 800	SBDC Operations
Develop and implement a statewide approach to delivering expert services to innovation and technology driven clients with high growth potential.	Integrate Technology, Innovation and Entrepreneurship Speciality services at 10 SBDC locations. Secure "Technology" designation through the ASBDC Accreditation process in 2013.	SBDC Operations

Assess center management processes, identify best practices, deficiencies and assist with corrective actions.

Regular communication with center through:
-Site visits – 2 / year minimum
-Email (Weekly updates)
-Monthly Connection Calls
-Written correspondence
-Phone conversations

SBDC Operations

OBJECTIVE II.4: Assist Illinois small businesses and entrepreneurs in understanding and complying with government regulations.

Strategies

Provide assistance and referrals to clients regarding regulations, compliance issues, requirements, and assistance programs available from the state or federal government.

Develop new resources to expand the ability to deliver compliance assistance information to businesses.

Indicators/Results/Timelines

Respond daily to helpline calls and e-mail requests for compliance assistance and provide information regarding regulatory compliance issues.

Notify small businesses about upcoming enforcement issues, as determined by priorities established by the regulatory agencies.

Meet monthly with key state and federal partners to identify methods for delivering regulatory compliance information to small businesses.

New sources of funding identified and application strategy – on a continuous basis with an annual update.

Lead Responsibility

Environmental Office
Business Information Center

Environmental Office

Resource Development

POSITIONING GOAL

GOAL III: Create and communicate a consistent brand/image that clearly differentiates the purpose, value and expertise of the Network.

OBJECTIVE III.1: Coordinate marketing efforts that will promote small business and entrepreneurship services and/or products to a broad range of markets including pre-venture and existing businesses.

Strategies

Indicators/Results/Timelines

Lead Responsibility

Execute the SBDC marketing plan and branding strategy.	Marketing plan on CenterConnect	SBDC Lead Office
Evaluate key stakeholders and target markets	Work with SBDC Network managers and DCEO marketing plan to identify target markets. Prioritize current list of stakeholders with input from SBDC managers.	SBDC Lead Office
Coordinate the participation of the SBDC at expos, events, and conferences.	As economically feasible, coordinate agreements, develop work schedules, and facilitate materials and/or displays to be used at events. Produce a post-event cost / benefit report to evaluate the value of participation in each event.	SBDC Lead Office SBDC Lead Office Business Information Center Environmental Office

OBJECTIVE III.2: Deliver a consistent message that educates existing small businesses and stakeholders (Host Orgs, Business Orgs, Govt. Agencies, Legislators) about the value of available resources.

<u>Strategies</u>	<u>Indicators/Results/Timelines</u>	<u>Lead Responsibility</u>
Complete press releases, articles, success stories, media advisories, and other tools to promote available small business resources.	Include a Success Story in each Weekly Connection and each monthly Connection. Provide minimum of 1 Success Story per month to DCEO Marketing and SBA Illinois District Office.	Resource Development Resource Development Business Information Center
Publish business information products and tools, including reports, fact sheets, bulletins, etc., for distribution through state associations, partners and media.	Distribute Annual Reports to stakeholders and DCEO Marketing/Communications. Distribute marketing materials to the network, including instructions on use of the logo and marketing guidelines.	SBDC Lead Office
Assure network provides consistent message to policy makers, stakeholders and business organizations.	Post all annual reports, marketing information and other materials on CenterConnect. Ensure that center partners implement a minimum of two stakeholder events per year.	SBDC Operations
Develop promotional materials highlighting the specialized services for innovative high growth and technology driven clients.	Distribute 1 success story/fact sheet per month through PR and marketing channels that focuses on services for high growth potential clients.	SBDC Lead Office

RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT GOAL

GOAL IV: Identify, develop and leverage the human capital, funding and technological resources needed to deliver client specific services.

OBJECTIVE IV.1: Access alternative funding sources.

<u>Strategies</u>	<u>Indicators/Results/Timelines</u>	<u>Lead Responsibility</u>												
Seek new long term funding partners	<p>Fully explore new SBDC funding opportunities such areas as technology, energy efficiency, veteran's assistance and disaster assistance and recovery.</p> <p>Annually create an updated one page ROI fact sheet with economic impact information to use in securing new funding partners.</p> <p>Evaluate potential funding options and present recommendations each quarter</p>	Resource Development												
Investigate and implement new revenue generating opportunities.	<table border="0"> <tr> <td style="text-align: right;">Projected Revenue Generated</td> <td style="text-align: right;">Actual</td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td>CY 2012 - \$25,000</td> <td></td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td>CY 2013 - \$35,000</td> <td></td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td>CY 2014 - \$50,000</td> <td></td> <td></td> </tr> </table>	Projected Revenue Generated	Actual		CY 2012 - \$25,000			CY 2013 - \$35,000			CY 2014 - \$50,000			Resource Development
Projected Revenue Generated	Actual													
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CY 2014 - \$50,000														

OBJECTIVE IV.2: Utilize external experts, tools and resources to enhance the overall success of the network.

<u>Strategies</u>	<u>Indicators/Results/Timelines</u>	<u>Lead Responsibility</u>
<p>Form partnerships with public and private sector entities to meet client needs, including;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Colleges of Business – MBA programs Banking Partnerships SCORE Others <p>Expand Pro-bono services.</p>	<p>Establish partnership opportunities with listed entities. Provide quarterly updates.</p>	Resource Development SBDC Lead Office
<p>Maximize the use of technology through the Network partners including, webinars, Skype, LinkedIn, Face Book, Twitter, webchat and others.</p>	<p>Identify and evaluate uses for available technologies and tools to assist Center Network, including social networks, blogs, video conferencing and other tools.</p>	Resource Development SBDC Lead Office
<p>Identify private sector specialists, resources and expertise to assist innovative and technology driven clients.</p>	<p>Complete quarterly updates for the Directory of Expert Resources</p>	Resource Development SBDC Lead Office

COLLABORATION AND PARTNERSHIP GOAL

GOAL V: Develop strong partnerships with key stakeholders to promote an entrepreneurial culture in Illinois.

OBJECTIVE V.1: Engage the small business community in the legislative and regulatory process.

<u>Strategies</u>	<u>Indicators/Results/Timelines</u>	<u>Lead Responsibility</u>
Monitor legislative and regulatory developments that may adversely affect small businesses.	Federal & state legislation, rules, and regulations will be reviewed on a monthly basis. Monthly meetings/conference calls will be held with federal/state partners to identify upcoming compliance assistance issues that might affect small businesses.	Business Information Center and Environmental Office
Communicate on a timely basis with small business community on proposed rules and legislation.	Monitoring begins in January with introduction of new legislation, continues until all bills are signed or vetoed by November. Notify affected industries/small businesses of proposed rules & legislation through Reg Alert and/or special mailings, as issues are identified. Develop articles for quarterly publication of Clean Air Clips. Post compliance assistance information on the Small Business Office Web site and update as necessary. Weekly Regulatory Alert on-going throughout the year.	Business Information Center and Environmental Office

OBJECTIVE V.2: Be the leader within state government to advocate for small business.

<u>Strategies</u>	<u>Indicators/Results/Timelines</u>	<u>Lead Responsibility</u>
Work with advocacy organizations to identify current concerns.	- Weekly Regulatory Alert - Legislative issue identified on website (current / ongoing)	Business Information Center SBDC Lead Office
Maintain a website which serves as a host for state agencies to post rules and legislation which impact businesses.	www.ilsmallbizadvisor.biz (current / ongoing)	Business Information Center
Promote and recognize the contributions made by small businesses.	Promote National Small Business week in Illinois	SBDC Lead Office Business Information Center Environmental Office
Support local and regional programs such as business plan competitions, entrepreneurship recognition and other initiatives.	Organize annual Small Business and Entrepreneurship Awards recognition program	SBDC Lead Office Resource Development



U.S. Small Business Administration



Your Small Business Resource

The Illinois Small Business Development Center is funded through a cooperative agreement with the U.S. Small Business Administration, the Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity, Universities, Community Colleges, Chambers of Commerce and other business development organizations.