



FREE COUNSELING AND ADVICE EVERY STARTUP AND GROWING BUSINESS NEEDS TO SUCCEED

Business counseling fees can be extremely expensive and not knowing where to turn for business advice can be a significant waste of valuable time. That is why there are 80 Business Information Centers (BICs) in the United States and over 1,100 Small Business Development Centers (SBDCs). Not only do they provide small business owners with free counseling, but they also have an extensive reference library of books, publications, and video tapes. Small Business Development centers and Business Information Centers help with start-up business planning or assist in expanding an existing business.

BICs are partnered with the Service Corps of Retired Executives (SCORE) to provide businesses with free business counseling. Retired business men and women volunteer their expertise and experience to assist with any issues that may be confronting your business. These men and women can also assist you in developing a customized business plan for your specific business needs. There are over 10,500 SCORE volunteers in 389 chapter locations who assist small businesses across the country. SCORE also provides an online counseling initiative for businesses. More information on this can be obtained at the SBA.gov website.

Business Information Centers are constantly adding new resources to serve the needs in their local business community. Some BICs, such as the Sacramento Business Information Centers, offer bookkeeping, tax planning, budgeting, business financing and loan information, developing business plans, legal information, management skills, and marketing techniques to name a few of the areas BICs specialize in. The majority of all major cities provide BICs.

The Small Business Development centers are a training resource which is a cooperative effort of the private sector, the educational community and federal, state and local governments. It is the Small Business Administration's (SBA's) largest resource partner and an initiative that enhances economic development by providing small businesses with management and technical assistance. There are more than 1,100 SBDC lead and service centers located around the country. To locate the nearest development center to you visit the following page created by the Small Business Administration (SBA): <http://www.sba.gov/sbdc/sbdcnear.html>.

The SBDCs, SCORE, and the Women's Business Center all fit into the SBA's Office of Entrepreneurial Development.

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