
Resources for Business

10/7/2017

Accelerating Appalachia

www.acceleratingappalachia.org

Accelerating Appalachia is the first of its kind nature-based business accelerator, connecting innovative businesses, investors and mentors aligned with people, place and prosperity. We attract and scale high-impact, seed-stage businesses in the following sectors: sustainable food; farming; clean energy; forests; fiber/textiles; green building; craft brewing/distilling; nutraceuticals/integrative medicine; other innovative triple bottom-line businesses with special consideration for innovators and entrepreneurs from marginalized populations.

Contact: Sara Day Evans

saraday@acceleratingappalachia.org

Asheville SCORE www.ashevillescore.org

Our team of successful executives and small business owners offers mentoring and education services at no cost to entrepreneurs, and business owners who want to start a business or grow an existing

one in Asheville with branch offices in Boone (High Country) and Waynesville (Haywood County). See our upcoming workshops and seminars on our website or Facebook page. You can register for an education program or sign up for an appointment on our website. We sponsor a Women's Business Roundtable that meets regularly at A-B Tech's Small Business Center. To join the mailing list, email roundtables@ashevillescore.org. For active businesses at least two years old, we can assemble a Business Advisory Team with 2-4 mentors to work with the owner to review strategy, manage growth, assess financial practices and other business issues. If you are interested in learning more about a BAT for your business, email BAT@ashevillescore.org.

Blue Ridge Food Ventures

www.BlueRidgeFoodVentures.org

BLUE RIDGE FOOD VENTURES is an 11,000-square-foot shared-use kitchen and

natural products manufacturing facility that offers support in product development, guidance through the maze of government regulations, equipment for bottling and packaging, advice on marketing and label design, and much more.

Contact: Michael McDonald, Client Services Manager 828-348-0130
email: michael@blueridgefoodventures.org

Blue Ridge Naturally

www.BlueRidgeNaturally.org

Blue Ridge Naturally™ highlights the superiority of botanical raw materials and quality natural products from the Blue Ridge Mountains region of North Carolina and the Southern Appalachians. The Blue Ridge Naturally™ seal lets customers know that ingredients have been reviewed, are traceable, safely made/grown, and tested, if necessary. As a program of the North Carolina Natural Products Association, Blue

Ridge Naturally™ supports local companies crafting high quality natural products and develops the WNC natural products industry through cooperative marketing, events, and buying opportunities.

Contact: Jennifer Flynn

seal@blueridgenaturally.org

Appalachian Sustainable Agriculture Project
www.asapconnections.org

ASAP's mission is to help local farms thrive, link farmers to markets and supporters, and build healthy communities through connections to local food. ASAP (Appalachian Sustainable Agriculture Project) is a nonprofit that works to accomplish our mission by: providing marketing support and training to area farmers; connecting area chef and wholesale buyers with the farmers who suit their needs; spearheading a Local Food Campaign, which includes our Local Food Guide, local food bumper sticker (have one on your car?); certifying and promoting local products grown/raised in the Southern Appalachians as Appalachian Grown and more; running our [Growing Minds Farm to School Program](#), which focuses on reconnecting

children with where their food comes from; organizing Asheville City Market and coordinating the Mountain Tailgate Market Association. If you're a farmer looking to connect with ASAP's services (business planning, marketing, farm assessments, market connections); if you're a buyer looking to find sources of specific local food products in our region; if you're a farmers' market manager/supporter looking for marketing assistance; for assistance navigating our Local Food Guide or Wholesale Local Food Guide to find food and farm products in our region; to become a Local Food Guide distribution location, contact us!

Contact: Molly Nicholie, Program Director, Local Food Campaign,
molly@asapconnections.org 828.236.1282
[306 West Haywood St.](http://306WestHaywoodSt.com)
[Asheville, NC 28801](http://AshevilleNC28801.com)

Asheville Buncombe County NAACP

facebook.com/buncombecountynaacp/

Founded Feb. 12, 1909, the NAACP is the nation's oldest, largest and most widely recognized grassroots-based civil rights organization. It was founded by a diverse group of prominent activist both female and male, black and white.

Our local Branch of NAACP was founded shortly after that of the national organization. Our primary focus and work is racial and social justice and equity through voter education and engagement, voter registration, Get Out The Vote, advocacy for children of color attending public schools,

living wages, and criminal justice reform. Our membership meets the second Tuesday of the month at Hill Street Baptist Church, 135 Hill Street, Asheville 28801. Membership is one of the primary ways we help support our State Conference of NAACP fight the many court battles: gerrymandering, VOTER ID, LGBTQ rights, criminal justice and more. Interested in becoming a member?

Contact:

4ward2getherCall2Action@gmail.com

Asheville-Buncombe Technical College
Small Business Center and Incubator
www.abtech.edu/sbc

Looking to launch an entrepreneurial venture or grow a small business? The A-B Tech Small Business Center (SBC) is part of the statewide Small Business Center Network (SBCN), a community college funded initiative with a vision to foster and support entrepreneurship, small business, and economic development in local communities across the state. Business Incubation is a dynamic process of entrepreneurial development designed to increase business success through consultation services, coaching, access to shared resources, and either office, wet lab or manufacturing facilities.

Contact: Duane Adams 828.398.7951

duanecadams@abtech.edu

Jill Sparks 828.398.7949

jillmspark@abtech.edu

Asheville Downtown Association

www.ashevilledowntown.org

The mission of the ADA is to be a leader and advocate for the vitality of downtown, and to promote and support Downtown Asheville as the center of commerce, culture, government and leisure. With more than 300 business, nonprofit and residential members, the Asheville Downtown Association is committed to the preservation and improvement of the central business district. The association annually produces Downtown After 5, the Independence Day Celebration, the Asheville Holiday Parade and the Pritchard Park Summer Series.

Contact: Meghan Rogers

Meghan@ashevilledowntown.org 828.251.9973

Asheville Area Chamber of Commerce

www.ashevillechamber.org

At the Asheville Chamber, we believe that business – YOUR business – is about more than the bottom line. It's about the opportunity to build your business, to develop the economy, to build the future we want for ourselves and our families and neighbors in Asheville. By coming together as the larger business community, the Asheville Chamber helps you meet the needs of your business and build a stronger community. Asheville Chamber membership offers you visibility for your business, access to resources and professional development, savings on common business expenses and opportunities to build your network. Join us in serving as the catalyst for strengthening the local economy; the convener and cultivator of leaders and influencers who represent business and the community's best

interests; and the champion for a thriving community. Whether you're looking to pave a path as a business leader or enhance the community, being part of the Asheville Area Chamber will help your business connect, engage and thrive.

Contact: Amy Jackson, Director of Membership Engagement
ajackson@ashevillechamber.org
828.258.6107

Venture Asheville, the entrepreneurship initiative of the EDC and Chamber of Commerce, catalyzes the local entrepreneurial ecosystem. Venture Asheville works specifically with high-growth, early-stage ventures to help entrepreneurs get access to talent, mentors, startup funding and other resources.

Asheville Angels is a member-based angel investor network that finds and funds startups and early-stage companies in Asheville and across the Southeast. The group was formed in October, 2014 and currently consists of over 30 investors who meet monthly to hear and review pitches from young, innovative, high-growth companies.

Contact: Josh Dorfman:
jdorfman@ashevillechamber.org
828.258.6137

Asheville Grown Business Alliance

www.ashevillegrown.com

[Asheville Grown](http://www.ashevillegrown.com) is committed to strengthening our local economy through businesses that value the people in our

community, the health of our environment and the power of collaboration. Our mission is to grow a resilient local economy and thriving community, champion the unique character of our region and advocate for prosperity for all. Membership is free and targeted to locally owned, independent businesses. Each year we produce the Go Local Card, a fundraiser for our public schools. The Mountain Xpress publishes and distributes 45,000 copies of our annual print directory highlighting over 450 partner businesses. Your business will also get a listing on our website:

www.ashevillegrown.com.

For those who wish to invest money directly into our local economy, be sure to visit [Self Help Credit Union](#) and invest in their Go Local CD, a partnership with Asheville Grown that lends directly to local businesses.

Contact: Franzi Charen
franzi@ashevillegrown.com

BioNetwork

www.ncbionetwork.org

BioNetwork provides high-quality economic and workforce development for the biotechnology and life science industries across North Carolina through education, training, and laboratory resources.

Contact: 828-782-2328
asheville@ncbionetwork.org

Carolina Small Business Development Fund
www.carolinasmallbusiness.org

Previously known as The Support Center, Carolina Small Business Development Fund

is a nonprofit and certified CDFI with a mission to foster economic development in underserved communities by providing capital, business services, and policy research to support small businesses. Because those who go into business for themselves, should never be left by themselves. Since 2010, CSBDF has invested more than \$39.6 million through 556 loans to small businesses across North Carolina helping to create or retain more than 1,775 jobs.

Contact: Roxanne Bailey-Reed, Field Operations Director, 919-803-1437, ex 403 reed@carolinasmallbusiness.org
Hablamos Español.

Cenzontle

Cenzontle is a worker-owned cooperative that provides interpretation, translation, and consulting services. Cenzontle is dedicated to creating multilingual spaces that foster language justice.

Contact: 828-490-7643,
cenzonelejc@gmail.com

City of Asheville – Minority Business Program
Community & Economic Development
www.asheville.gov

The City of Asheville Community and Economic Development Department engages with small businesses through business development grants, assistance with public contracting, marketing through public event coordination, strategic use of City-owned land, and training workshops. The

Department is currently working with a consultant on a small business incentives review which will provide “best practice” recommendations on financing tools, housing data, and redevelopment subsidies available to the City of Asheville.

The City of Asheville Community and Economic Development Department is located on the 5th floor of City Hall, 70 Court Plaza, Asheville NC 28801.

Contact: Sam Powers, Director for Community and Economic Development, 828-259-5433
sampowers@asheville.gov

[For current bid opportunities, go to www.asheville.gov/Departments/Purchasing](http://www.asheville.gov/Departments/Purchasing)

City of Asheville Youth Leadership Academy (CAYLA)
www.asheville.gov/departments/community/community_development/youth_leadership.htm

Now celebrating its 10th anniversary year, the City of Asheville Youth Leadership Academy (CAYLA) has a proven track record of positive outcomes for local high school students (100 percent college acceptance, 80 percent college retention/graduation, more than \$1.5 million in merit scholarships awarded). In addition to leadership development and college readiness activities throughout the year, CAYLA provides its students with meaningful and positive employment opportunities during the summer. CAYLA offers an exciting opportunity for students to earn a paycheck and, at the same time,

gain quality work experience. The program intentionally creates a learning atmosphere that helps young people discover and explore their talents while contributing to the well-being of their community.

CAYLA is able to provide these opportunities through partnerships with a growing list of nonprofits, community organizations and government offices. At these work sites, the program introduces youth to professional mentors in a wide variety of career fields. CAYLA students then spend summer Fridays together and participate in interactive workshops related to teamwork, self-awareness, professionalism, managing money, and other topics. These workshops are vital to each student's work readiness training, and also cultivate strong feelings of belonging and peer support. CAYLA applications are available online each spring.

Contact: Prog. Dir. Erika Germer: 828-271-6116 egermer@asheville.gov.

Date My City

www.datemycity.net/

Date My City is a catalyst and engine of cultural regeneration in black and brown communities in Asheville, building viable and sustainable social, political and economic power! Our focus is on creating vibrant, convivial experiences that also educate, inspiring self-directed action and a collective cultural revolution. Date My City is led by Sheneika E. Smith. Smith has over 15 years experience in event planning for nonprofits, church organizations and small businesses.

Contact: Sheneika Smith
queendom.enterprise@gmail.com

Eagle Market Streets Development Corporation – Block by Block
www.eaglemarketsts.net

Guided by our mission, EMSDC's vision is to bring the opportunity for economic and social independence to the low-to-moderate-income community.

"Transforming Individuals into Assets: Investing in Sustainable Personal, Economic, and Community Development." We focus on property development, economic business and workforce development. Block-by-Block Industries is a custom sewing operation housed in the EMSDC's facility at 70 S. Market Street in Asheville.

Contact: Stephanie Swepson Twitty, CEO, 828-281-1227
stephanie@eaglemarketsts.net

Economic Development Partnership of North Carolina
www.thrivenc.com

Thrivenc.com is your connection to the Economic Development Partnership of North Carolina (EDPNC), a nonprofit corporation designed to foster collaboration between public and private entities. Focused on customer service, the partnership helps businesses make the most of everything North Carolina has to offer. The EDPNC works to help executives and site selectors expand or relocate existing operations, provides business

support to existing North Carolina companies, and helps new businesses get started. We also assist in pursuing international trade opportunities; promoting tourism, film and sports; and helping firms gain access to research, technology and academic resources. Headquartered in Cary, NC and founded in 2014, our focus is creating jobs in North Carolina by connecting businesses with the resources they need to be competitive and successful.

Contact: Holly Yanker, Senior Small Business Team Counselor, 800-228-8443

holly.yanker@edpnc.com

Green Opportunities
www.greenopportunities.org

Green Opportunities offers job training programs in the culinary arts and construction trades to unemployed and under-employed residents of Asheville and Buncombe County, ages 16 and older. In addition to training, Green Opportunities provides our students with wrap-around support services, high school equivalency classes, life skills training, counseling, and job placement assistance.

Employment Partnerships: GO partners with local businesses to employ members of our trained, screened and dependable workforce. Employment partners can support our work by hosting an apprentice, hiring a graduate, or contracting with GO's temp-to-perm employment service, GO Staffing.

Contact: Aisha Adams, 828-398-4159, ex. 116
aadams@greenopportunities.org,

Catering: Hire GO's Southside Kitchen social enterprise to cater your meeting or special event. Southside Kitchen creates employment opportunities for graduates of GO's Kitchen Ready program. View our complete catering menu and submit your catering inquiries at www.greenopportunities.org. Contact: Katie Latino, 828-398-4158, ex. 115
catering@greenopportunities.org

Just Economics of WNC (JE)
www.justeconomicswnc.org

JE is a regional, membership organization based in Asheville, NC. Our mission is to educate, advocate, and organize for a just and sustainable economy that works for all in WNC. Currently we have three primary areas of work:

Policy Advocacy - 2/3 of our policy advocacy work is done locally (City, County) and about 1/3 is statewide through coalition work. Our People's Voice on Transportation Equality - a campaign to improve the bus system; and our work on affordable housing through the coalition work of the Success Equation-a project of Children First/CIS of Buncombe County are two examples.

Living Wage Certification Program - identifies and promotes local employers that pay a Living Wage. From origins in Buncombe and Transylvania counties, we now have employers in multiple counties in WNC. The aim is to reward existing Living Wage Certified employers, to provide them with tools and incentives to increase workers' wages up to a living wage, to

connect consumers to employers that pay a living wage, and to promote a just and sustainable local economy. Becoming certified is a great way for employers to set themselves apart in our community, to promote that they acknowledge the value of their employees, and to be rewarded by local, and visiting consumers, who understand the value of a living wage.

Grassroots Leadership Development - includes our aim to have a membership that reflects the diversity of our community, with an intentional focus on leadership from low-wage workers and others most affected by the issues we work on. JE is dedicated to educating students, people of faith, policy-makers, business owners, and the general community about issues facing the working poor in our region. Voices for Economic Justice is an 8-week workshop series that incorporates popular economics education and community organizing skill-building, with the aim to build leadership among low-wage workers and low-income persons. Additionally, JE's Working Poor Simulation is an experiential learning tool that exposes participants to the real life struggles of the working poor in our community.

Contact: 828-505-7466
info@justeconomicswnc.org

Land of Sky Regional Council
www.landofsky.org

Land of Sky is a multi-county, local government, planning and development organization. We provide technical assistance to local governments and administer projects and programs which benefit our region's citizens. The [Department of Economic & Community](#)

[Development](#) conducts planning, economic, and community development services for our local governments and communities. Contact: Erica Anderson, 828-251-6622
erica@landofsky.org

Waste Reduction Partners
www.wastereductionpartners.org

Waste Reduction Partners provides client-focused and results-oriented technical assistance to help North Carolina businesses and institutions be more efficient, economically competitive and environmentally sustainable. The WRP team conducts on-site assessments and provides consulting services for energy and water efficiency, waste reduction, pollution prevention, operating efficiency improvements and cost effectiveness. WRP services are grant sponsored or supported through technical service contracts. Services are provided to clients at no- or reduced-cost. All services are non-regulatory and confidential. [WRP is a program of the Land of Sky Regional Council and works in partnership with NC Department of Environmental Quality.](#)

Contact: [Terry Albrecht](#), WRP Director, 828-271-7475 Tabrecht@wrpnc.org or "Initiate a Project" on the WRP website.

Mountain Area Workforce Development Board
www.mountainareaworks.org
www.mountainareacareers.org

The MAWDB coordinates and funds career development, skills training and job search assistance services through the NCWorks

Career Center system in Buncombe, Henderson, Madison and Transylvania Counties. Business Services include customized job listing services; applicant recruitment, screening, assessments and referrals; assistance with customized training plans for future new hires; and registered access to the NCWorks Online Virtual Recruiter.

Contact: Nathan Ramsey, Director, 828-251-6622
Nathan@landofsky.org

Lenoir-Rhyne University Asheville
www.lr.edu/asheville

Lenoir-Rhyne University's MBA in Nonprofit Management program integrates and enhances the core of a traditional MBA and expands the curriculum to focus on several issues central to nonprofit management and operations. Students can also choose a Social Entrepreneurship track that combines solid business principles, entrepreneurial innovation, and passion to empower graduates to improve the world. Other MBA tracks include Business Analytics and Information Technology, Healthcare Administration, and Innovation and Change Management. All tracks are available face-to-face or via distance education.

Contact: Kohl Friery, 828-407-4270
kohl.friery@lr.edu

Minority Enterprise Development Week Committee
wncmedweek.org/contact

Since 1983, Western North Carolina has celebrated minority entrepreneurship in the region as part of the national Minority Enterprise Development (MED) Week initiative. Our mission is to provide the best leadership and direction for the promotion, establishment and development of minority businesses in Western North Carolina through education, communication and advocacy.

Contact: James Lee, 828-407-0856
jameslee3@me.com

Mountain Bizworks
www.mountainbizworks.org

For 27 years, Mountain BizWorks has been making business loans ranging from \$1,000 to \$250,000 to small businesses in Western North Carolina who may have trouble securing funding from banks and other traditional sources. We consider non-traditional collateral, offer flexibility in the loan structure, and loan decisions and relationships are managed locally. We also work to ensure our clients' success by offering highly customized, peer-to-peer business coaching by a network of local, successful business owners. This innovative blend of lending and learning helps entrepreneurs overcome obstacles, grow strategically, and create jobs.

For Lending: Contact: Christopher Murrey
christopher@mountainbizworks.org
828-747-1979

For Learning Contact: Jill Kichefski

Jill@mountainbizworks.org 828-253-2834 x10

En Español: También tenemos personal que hablan español para ayudar a nuestros clientes latinos. Para hablar con alguien acerca de nuestros servicios en español, por favor llame al [828-253-2834](tel:828-253-2834).

NC Biotechnology Center
www.ncbiotech.org

The NCBC works to connect companies and university researchers; the funders and the small companies; the job seekers and job providers. We provide funding when few others do. We keep an eye on emerging biotech sectors. And we make sure North Carolina leads the way. We're a private, non-profit with headquarters in Research Triangle Park and offices in Asheville, Charlotte, Winston-Salem, Greenville and Wilmington. The General Assembly funds us to grow this industry statewide.

Contact: Jonathan Snover
jonathan_snover@ncbiotech.org, 828-290-1432

NCIF www.ncifund.org

Natural Capital Investment Fund finances and advises entrepreneurs in underserved communities throughout central Appalachia and the Southeast who create jobs by growing environmentally responsible businesses and providing vital community services. By providing loans and business coaching for small to mid-sized businesses who can't access traditional financing, we

are helping to build thriving communities and diverse economies. NCIF focuses on enterprises that increase local tourism or address energy and water conservation, food and wood production, recycling and waste elimination, or supply chain sustainability because they produce jobs while having a positive environmental impact. However, we are open to innovative business ideas that promote similar outcomes.

Contact: Erika McGilley, 828-702-7412

emcgilley@conservationfund.org

Neighborhood Economics
Rosa Lee Harden & Kevin Jones
www.neighborhoodeconomics.org

Community wealth creation through entrepreneurship in marginalized neighborhoods:
Neighborhood Economics believes in entrepreneurship as the path to wealth for marginalized communities, providing friends and family funding for entrepreneurs who don't have a rich aunt.

Because of an innovative financing created in collaboration with Self-Help Credit Union, Neighborhood Economics allows the average person to invest risk-free and bring substantive change to under-invested communities.
Contact: www.neighborhoodeconomics.org

OnTrack Financial Education & Counseling
www.ontrackwnc.org

Because OnTrack WNC deals with personal budgets and credit, we are the go-to resource for small business owners who want to evaluate their household expenses to get a realistic picture of how much money needs to be coming from the business to support the living expenses of the individual or family. For some people who are overwhelmed with credit card debt our Debt Management Plan offers a way to pay down debt with consolidated payments, lower interest and eliminate late fees. In addition, we are the local credit experts and offer credit report review appointments and group education classes with tips for understanding and improving credit reports and scores.

Call to schedule an appointment 828-255-5166 or visit www.ontrackwnc.org .

*Rural Support Partners
www.ruralsupportpartners.com*

Rural Support Partners (RSP) is a social enterprise working across the rural Southeast to strengthen anchor organizations, develop collective impact networks, and help move sustainable economic development efforts to scale. Our approach is based in a strong commitment to rural communities and aims to build increased organizational effectiveness, improved strategies, and deepened impact.

We provide a variety of services to help leaders, organizations, and networks achieve better results. Our work helps to align and support the movement of diverse actors working for a more community-based regional economy.

*Contact: Andrew Crosson, 828-691-1365
andrew@ruralsupportpartners.com*

*Self-Help Credit Union
www.self-help.org
Self-Help Credit Union is a nonprofit community development lender, a CDFI, offering fair home and business loans, and a retail financial institution, whose mission is to help individuals and families build and protect wealth through ownership, especially people of color, rural inhabitants, women, and low-income communities. Self-Help offers checking, savings and money market accounts, certificates of deposit (including specialty ones: “Women and Children,” “Green,” and “Go Local” C.D.s), personal loans, credit building loans, and other products which pay back into the communities of our members. Self-Help’s lending programs are open to any borrower. We have special expertise in lending to green businesses, child cares, non-profits, and charter schools. Job creation is an important aspect. To become a member of Self-Help Credit Union, stop by one of our WNC branches listed on our website. And ask about our new DACA loans for dreamers, with 0% interest and zero fees!*

Contact: Jane Hatley, 828-239-9231, ex 3473 jane@self-help.org

*Sequoyah Fund
www.sequoyahfund.org*

Sequoyah Fund is a Native CDFI (Community Development Financial Institution) serving the Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians and the seven far-western counties of NC with start-up loans of \$1,000 to \$50,000 and business growth and expansion loans up to \$100,000. Sequoyah Fund specializes in serving the unique needs of small businesses unable to obtain credit from traditional lenders, including non-traditional or specialized collateral, flexible loan terms, and ongoing coaching and business support. Sequoyah Fund offers a wide range of business training and personal development opportunities for youth and adults. Sequoyah Fund also owns and distributes the REAL Entrepreneurship® curriculum used to teach entrepreneurship skills in schools, community colleges, universities, community development organizations, chambers of commerce, trade and professional associations, and other settings.

*Contact: Russ Seagle, Executive Director, 828-359-5003
russseagle@sequoyahfund.org*

*Slow Money North Carolina
www.slowmoneync.org*

Founded in 2010, Slow Money NC catalyzes community financing for local, sustainable farmers and food entrepreneurs

in North Carolina. Slow Money NC is not a lending institution. Rather, it's a network that encourages face-to-face meetings between people in need of small loans with those who are looking to help. The loans themselves are peer-to-peer, in the form of promissory notes (occasionally secured with collateral). Slow Money NC offers networking opportunities in which loan seekers can explain their needs to prospective lenders. Once a relationship is established, a simple peer-to-peer loan takes place. Although lenders want information about the business plans, credit checks are not required. The loans are made at very modest rates of interest—typically 2 to 4 percent.

SOIL NC Fund - operated by Slow Money NC, this is a 0% revolving loan fund for small farm enterprises, created by charitable donations. Links to donate, and applications for SOIL NC Fund loans can be found at www.slowmoneync.org/soil.

Contact: Carol Peppe Hewitt , 919-656-8889

carol@slowmoneync.org

Small Business and Technology Development Center (SBTDC) at Western Carolina University: www.sbtdc.org

Our team of experienced business professionals is here to help your small or mid-size business: make better, more informed decisions by helping you access sources of capital and financing; evaluate and improve your financial performance; obtain quality business and market information; improve leadership skills and

employee performance; and plan for a better future. Specialty Services Include: International Business Counseling; Government Procurement; and Technology & Commercialization
The SBTDC Cullowhee office serves the counties of Cherokee, Clay, Graham, Jackson, Macon and Swain. The SBTDC Asheville office serves; Buncombe, Haywood, Henderson, Madison, McDowell, Polk, Rutherford and Transylvania counties. Contact: Sandra Dennison 828.251.6025 ext24
ssdennison@wcu.edu or sdennison@sbtdc.org

Small Town Ventures
www.SmallTownVentures.com

Small Town Ventures specializes in the advancement of leadership, entrepreneurship and innovation within WNC communities. We offer complimentary introductory consultations with a member of our team to help identify how our company can support in the growth of your small business. As professionals in the community and economic development space, we help business clients launch ambitious and complex projects which require strategic partnerships with government agencies, non-profits, educational institutions and other area companies.

Contact: Emily Breedlove: 828-347-6240
Emily@SmallTownVentures.com

[Spark Tank](#)

The Spark Tank Mission is to enhance the support that business service providers in WNC give entrepreneurs and, through collaboration, develop partnerships that support those who seek tools, resources, and capital.

Spark Tank is a collaborative group of service providers in Western North Carolina who aim to advance a cohesive, inclusive, and efficient means of fostering entrepreneurship. This is accomplished by supporting and encouraging collaboration among those agencies who have the overarching goal of providing business development services to small businesses. Spark Tank acts as a central reserve of exchange for business development service providers. The diversity that exists within the Spark Tank membership gives it the ability to provide clients with valuable information on a variety of issues. This information is shared with clients through Catapult.

Catapult is a form of interactive programming utilized by Spark Tank members and clients to provide comprehensive group counseling in a one stop shop format. Catapult is the front door for any entrepreneur or business owner who wants to connect with Spark Tank members. Entrepreneurs and business owners are able to present their business models and receive feedback from a number of different service providers who may have specific knowledge or expertise in their area of concern.

Contact: Duane Adams at (828) 398-7951 or Sandra Dennison at (828) 251-6026 ext 24.

State of North Carolina VendorLink System
www.ips.state.nc.us/vendor/VendorPubMain.aspx

The North Carolina Natural Products Association
www.nc-naturalproducts.org

The North Carolina Natural Products Association (NCNPA) was formed in 2002 as a 501c(3) non-profit organization dedicated to conserving, cultivating, sustainably harvesting, and processing NC-grown medicinal plants. NCNPA's mission is to establish NC as a key global supplier of premium-quality raw materials and plant-based value-added products such as natural medicines, organic products, functional foods, and personal care products. We provide education to individuals, agencies and organizations about the NC natural products industry, promote NC- grown and manufactured natural products, and connect farmers to industry to explore opportunities and value chain development. We encourage conservation and stewardship of North Carolina's botanical resources, while promoting NC as one of the leading producers of safe, natural therapeutic products and services. We also monitor and disseminate information to our supporters on regulatory measures and opportunities pertaining to the natural products industry.

Contact: ncnpaboard@gmail.com

Western Women's Business Center
www.carolinasmallbusiness.org

The mission of the Western Women's Business Center is to provide high quality technical assistance and programs that reduce barriers and serve as a catalyst to the success of entrepreneurs, particularly women who are socially and economically disadvantaged, in the Western region of North Carolina. The WWBC's services include business plan development, one-one-one counseling, marketing and accounting workshops. The WWBC is a program of Carolina Small Business Development Fund. For more information, visit www.carolinasmallbusiness.org.

Hablamos Español.

Contact: [Sharon Oxendine](mailto:Sharon.Oxendine@carolinasmallbusiness.org), WWBC Director, 828-633-5065
soxendine@carolinasmallbusiness.org

UNC Asheville Family Business Forum
www.unca.edu/fbf/

UNC Asheville Family Business Forum was established in 2001 to provide education to family businesses so they continue to thrive from generation of entrepreneurs to the next. This is accomplished through seminars from respected authorities on issues that are vital to the success of privately held and family owned businesses: working with your spouse, changes in tax laws, family dynamics, and retaining key non-family talent. Programs

are open to both members and non-members for a fee.

Contact: Cindy Clarke
cclarke@unca.edu
828.232.5091/cell 828.273.6223

U.S. Small Business Administration (SBA)
www.sba.gov/nc

The SBA is a federal agency that assists small business owners with 1) financial assistance, through its loan guaranty and other programs; 2) government procurement certification to enable small firms to access federal contracting opportunities; and 3) and counseling/training, offered online, in person and through various resource partners.

Contact: 704.344.6563 NC@sba.gov

U.S. Department of Agriculture
<http://www.rd.usda.gov/programs-services/all-programs>

The website above gives a list of all USDA small business programs, including direct loans, grants, and loan guarantee programs. Counties Served: Alleghany, Ashe, Avery, Buncombe, Caldwell, Cherokee, Clay, Graham, Haywood, Henderson, Jackson, Macon, Madison, Mitchell, Swain, Transylvania, Watauga, Wilkes, Yancey.

For additional state offices:
<http://www.rd.usda.gov/contact-us/state-offices/nc>

Contact: for the Asheville Area Office: Pam
Hysong, 828-254-0916, ex. 5

pam.hysong@nc.usda.gov

