



Louisiana Small Business Development Center

#8 Plan cycle - 8

Plan cycle 2023/2024

7/1/23 - 6/30/24

Introduction

The mission of the Louisiana Small Business Development Center network is to facilitate the formation and growth of small businesses through individual consulting services, entrepreneurial training programs, and business information resources to develop and diversify the Louisiana economy. The Louisiana Small Business Development Center mission is one of the programs offered by McNeese State University in support of entrepreneurship and small business development. Louisiana Small Business Development Center services are specifically designed to meet the needs of regional economic development (small business development, support for entrepreneurs, problem-solving). Louisiana Small Business Development Center stakeholders include clients, funding partners, and Louisiana and federal legislators.

Performance Objective 1 Facilitate the formation and growth of small businesses through counseling services for entrepreneurs in the five parishes of Allen, Beauregard, Calcasieu, Cameron, and Jeff Davis.

1 Assessment and Benchmark

Benchmark: Counsel at least 67 long-term counseling clients. These are clients with whom we have had five or more hours of preparation and contact counseling time this federal fiscal year.

Prior to 2023-2024, the benchmark was to counsel at least 67 long-term clients.

Prior to 2021-2022, the benchmark was to counsel at least 50 long-term clients.

1.1 Data

2019-2020:

Through July 8, 2020, the Center has counseled 33 clients in this category. We estimate the final figure to be approximately 44.

2020-2021:

Through July 15, 2021, the Center has counseled 28 clients in this category. We estimate the final figure to be approximately 40.

2021-2022:

Through June 20, 2022, the Center has counseled 46 long term clients. The current goal for 2022 is 52 and our goal year will be through December 2022. The fiscal year was changed to a calendar year for 2022. We anticipate that we will meet this goal and exceed it by 5 for a total of 57.

2022-2023:

The current goal for FY2023 is to counsel 52 long term clients. Our programmatic year is October 1, 2022 through September 30, 2023. As of July 14, 2023 the center has counseled 53 clients. We have already exceeded our goal for the year.

The mission of the LSBDC is to help entrepreneurs through consultation and training to increase the economic growth of SWLA. Our numbers reflect that we are following our mission.

2023-2024:

The goal for FY2024 is to counsel 67 long term (LT) clients. Our programmatic year is October 1, 2023 through September 30, 2024. As of July 9, 2024 the center has counseled 59 LT clients. We are on track to meet or exceed this goal.

1.1.1 Analysis of Data and Plan for Continuous Improvement

2019-2020:

We continue to develop relationships with clients in the SWLA region, giving us the opportunity to work with them long-term. This benchmark is sent under our contract to operate the Louisiana Small Business Development Center at McNeese. It is a portion of the statewide co-negotiated with the U.S. Small Business Administration. This is an important goal because it reflects long-term relationships with business owners; long-term relationships are statistically more likely to boost economic performance of the businesses.

To continue to meet this goal, we review reports of clients who are near to fitting this category and make sure that we continue to work with them; this additional counseling gets the client over the threshold for this measure.

2020-2021:

We continue to strive to develop long term relationships with clients. This past year has been difficult to attain this goal. Most clients that we were counseling were to assist them with disaster loans. This started in March 2020 for COVID and continued with Hurricanes Laura, Delta, the February 2021 winter storm and the May 2021 flooding. These clients we counseled usually less than 5 hours.

Our network has focused on clients that were in need of disaster assistance. With the disasters in our past

we can focus back on reviewing reports to help us attain those long term clients.

The Center will continue to monitor reports that reflect clients that we are close to the 5 hour mark. By monitoring this report we can reach out to clients that are close to the benchmark, and assist them. This will help us attain this goal.

2021-2022:

The Center has worked to develop long term relationships with clients. We consistently monitor reports to see those clients that are getting close to long-term status (5+ hours of counseling). The Center then focuses on those clients. Statistics reflect those clients that develop long-term relationships with business consultants and take advantage of the mentorship are more apt for their business to have a long and successful longevity.

2022-2023:

The center exceeded the goal in quarter 3.

2023-2024:

This benchmark is set under our contract to operate the Louisiana Small Business Development Center at McNeese. It is a portion of the statewide co-negotiated with the U.S. Small Business Administration. This is an important goal because it reflects long-term relationships with business owners; long-term relationships are statistically more likely to boost economic performance of the businesses.

This benchmark should be met by September 30, 2024.

2 Assessment and Benchmark

Benchmark: Counsel at least 219 total clients each fiscal year.

Prior to 2023-2024, the benchmark was to counsel 210 total clients each fiscal year.

Prior to 2021-2022, the benchmark was to counsel at least 275 total clients each fiscal year.

2.1 Data

2019-2020:

Through July 8, 2020, the Center has counseled 334 clients in this category. We estimate the final figure to be approximately 445.

2020-2021:

Through July 15, 2021, the Center has counseled 284 clients in this category. We estimate the final figure to be approximately 440.

2021-2022:

Through June 20, 2022, the Center has surpassed the goal of 210 by 104 clients. We estimate that the final figure will be approximately 374. This number may be much more, but the Center is down to one business consultant. This will negatively impact the total numbers.

2022-2023:

FY2023 the goal is to counsel 219 distinct clients. As of July 14, 2023, the center has counseled 332 which is 151.6% of its goal.

2023-2024:

FY2024 the goal is to counsel 219 distinct clients. As of July 9, 2024, the center has counseled 408 which is 186.3% of its goal. This number will continue to grow as we have 3 months left in FY24.

2.1.1 Analysis of Data and Plan for Continuous Improvement

2018-2019:

2019-2020:

The LSBDC team continues its marketing efforts to make our community aware of the Louisiana Small

Business Development Center services. The Center Director has appeared on KPLC-TV several times in fiscal year 2019-2020. The Center Director writes a column in the business section of the American Press once each month; the column assists in building awareness of the Louisiana Small Business Development Center at McNeese and the services and workshops it provides. The center continues to work hand-in-hand with local organizations to reach potential clients. The Office of Public Relations produces news releases to publicize Center events. The Center continues to utilize email marketing to communicate with contacts and social media to share up-to-date information with the community about Louisiana Small Business Development Center services and events.

The Office of Public Relations puts the LSBDC on their publicity schedule for an appearance on KPLC and with KBYS each quarter. The LSBDC staff includes an individual who is responsible for social media marketing; she reviews engagement by viewers and works to improve this measure. She is also a member of a statewide LSBDC team that develops marketing tools. The LSBDC will continue to take advantage of previous efforts for marketing, as well.

2020-2021:

The LSBDC has been and will continue to market through social media and deliver relevant and pertinent information. Based on data collected from social media analytics, we are improving our reach. We have also improved our training content to deliver more relevant and valuable material.

2021-2022:

Since 2019 the Center had an experienced and knowledgeable marketing person, but in May 2022 this person left for another position. Since she came to work at the Center, the Center has seen impressive numbers from its social media analytics. The Center is without a marketing person at the time, but plans on using a marketing student to assist and hopefully bring the numbers back. We will continue to improve our training content and deliver valuable material to Southwest Louisiana small businesses.

2022-2023:

The LSBDC has been and will continue to market through social media and deliver relevant and pertinent information. Based on data collected from social media analytics, we are improving our reach. We have also improved our training content to deliver more relevant and valuable material. The center has also been consistent with marketing in rural parishes. The business consultant goes weekly to visit bankers, economic development centers and also offers weekly training.

2023-2024:

The LSBDC has always done weekly outreach in our 5-parish area. The current business consultant is doing an excellent job in making small businesses, chambers, economic development centers and city officials aware of who the LSBDC is, and what the center can offer small businesses. He is also holding monthly trainings in Beauregard and Jefferson Davis Parish. This center will continue our efforts in letting the region know of the services that the LSBDC has to offer.

Performance Objective 2 Facilitate the formation and growth of small businesses by providing training to entrepreneurs.

1 Assessment and Benchmark

Benchmark: Have at least 337 attendees at training events each fiscal year.

Prior to 2023-2024, the benchmark was to have at least 323 attendees at training events each fiscal year.

1.1 Data

2019-2020:

Through July 8, 2020, the Center has recorded 206 attendees at its training events. We estimate final figures to be approximately 270 attendees.

2020-2021:

Through July 15, 2021, the Center has recorded 599 attendees at its 23 events. We estimate final figures to be approximately 640.

2021-2022:

Through June 20, 2022, the Center has recorded 222 attendees and 20 events held. The Center is without a training coordinator but should obtain the goal of 323. To obtain this goal we will need to have approximately 17 attendees each month attend our training events.

2022-2023:

Through July 14, 2023, the Center has recorded 131 attendees and 20 events held. The goal is 303 attendees and 24 events held. The Center was without a marketing and training coordinator until April of 2023. Also, there was a new business consultant hired in October 2022. Training was put on the back burner while the center director was training the consultant and looking for a marketing and training person.

2023-2024:

Through July 9th the center has held 24 events (benchmark is 26) and have had 158 attendees.

1.1.1 Analysis of Data and Plan for Continuous Improvement

2019-2020:

The use of social media and email marketing continues to improve attendance at workshops; we will continue to use these avenues to increase the number of entrepreneurs who attend our events and webinars. We are working with additional groups such as Lake Charles North Redevelopment Authority and SWLA Alliance to increase our reach and to work collaboratively.

Of special interest:

We continue to offer specialized training to small business owners and potential entrepreneurs, primarily via webinar format. We hope to resume in-person learning when appropriate, and will continue to offer relevant material. The necessary transition to providing online services has allowed us to continue addressing our clients needs, and we plan to provide ongoing training for the entrepreneurs in our community.

We have provided multiple workshops on how businesses can survive the COVID-19 crisis and how to avail themselves of disaster relief programs. We will continue to provide these relevant training opportunities to our clients, as well as specific training on financial practices for small business.

To improve for the future, we are reviewing workshops presented by other SBDCs across the state and country and developing a list of presenters who can provide information that business owners need to survive the pandemic.

2020-2021:

Our plan for this year was to improve the content that we offered in training. Based on our numbers, it has proven successful. The numbers have improved because of content and also the use of online training. It has made it much easier for attendees to attend.

Our attendee numbers are also higher this year because of the disaster presentations that we have offered. But our numbers were higher prior to offering the disaster training. We feel that our numbers will be higher than previous years, but less than this year.

We will continue to offer specialized training to small business owners and potential entrepreneurs, primarily via webinar format. We hope to resume in-person learning when appropriate, and will continue to offer relevant material. Once it is safe, we will provide a mixture of in-person and online training to continue addressing our client needs.

2021-2022:

Training is a very important goal for our Center. We have been offering specialized training that has been well received by our attendees. As mentioned previously, our marketing/training person is no longer with us. We expect to reach our goal of 323 attendees, but not surpass it like we did last year (surpassed by over 30%).

2022-2023:

We will meet the training events held by September 30th. We are only short 4 events and we have 2 and half months remaining in our fiscal year to obtain. The goal for attendees is 303, and we are short 172. To achieve this goal we would need to have 69 attendees each month through September. We will be able to increase our total number but we will not achieve the 303 goal. Next year we should be able to achieve our goal now that we have a business consultant and marketing and training person.

2023-2024:

The center will probably not meet this goal this year. The center has been without a marketing/training person since December 2023. June 6, 2024 a new person was hired to assist with training and marketing. This will help to get our center's attendee numbers up, but probably will not meet the goal with only 3 months left. Next year, we should meet the goal with the assistance of a marketing person.

Performance Objective 3 Perform outreach to communities in the parishes of Allen, Beauregard, Calcasieu, Cameron, and Jeff Davis to support the growth and success of small businesses.

1 Assessment and Benchmark

Benchmark: Staff members from the Louisiana Small Business Development Center will visit other communities besides Lake Charles in the five-parish area covered by the Center (Allen, Beauregard, Calcasieu, Cameron, and Jeff Davis) at least 27 times each fiscal year.

1.1 Data

2019-2020:

The Center's Business Consultant continued to travel at least three days each month, usually 4, to visit towns other than Lake Charles in the five-parish area before the COVID-19 crisis. She met clients and visited banks and economic development entities. Moving forward, the hope is to return to this method. However, virtual contact will be the primary source of communication with rural areas for the time being.

2020-2021:

The Center has a weekly outreach program to travel to the 5 parish areas reaching out to local business owners, chambers, economic development resources and bankers. The Business Consultant travels to specific areas depending on the week of the month. Her mission is to communicate what the Center has to offer and see if there are any businesses that need assistance. She also sets appointments and meets with clients in their respective community.

2021-2022:

The Center does not have an exact number of visits for outreach but being conservative the number would be around 30. The Center's weekly outreach program to travel to the 5 parishes (Allen, Beauregard, Calcasieu, Cameron and Jefferson Davis) has been very successful. The Business Consultant has made new contacts and built relationships in the various parishes. She has communicated effectively what our Center has to offer small businesses. This business consultant resigned for another position, so until another business consultant is hired there will not be weekly community outreach. The Center Director will continue to market the Center as she can.

2022-2023:

The Center does weekly outreach to meet with clients, bankers, city officials, partners and business owners. The Business Consultant has gone out and has identified new clients and new partners. As of July 14, 2023 the business consultant has gone out 37 weeks so far this FY. As of the writing of this report, we have exceeded this goal by 10 and will estimate that the total for the year will be around 47.

2023-2024:

The Center does weekly outreach to meet with clients, bankers, city officials, partners and business owners. The Business Consultant has gone out and has identified new clients and new partners. As of July 9, 2024 the business consultant has gone out 39 weeks so far this FY. As of the writing of this report, we have exceeded this goal by 12 and will estimate that the total for the year will be around 50.

1.1.1 Analysis of Data and Plan for Continuous Improvement

2019-2020:

The center will resume scheduling workshops in communities outside of Lake Charles, when appropriate and according to health and safety recommendations. Training currently being provided online in webinar format that can be accessed by clients in any area of the state. The Center's Business Consultant will resume scheduling travel at least three days each month to visit towns other than Lake Charles in the five-parish area, when appropriate and according to health and safety recommendations. The Consultant will meet clients and visit bankers, city officials, and economic development representatives as well as accountants and others who work with small businesses.

2020-2021:

Because of the pandemic this objective has been hard to achieve. To continue to reach the communities in these parishes the Business Consultant has communicated via Zoom meetings, phone calls and emails. Once it is safe to continue with in-person outreach she will resume normal outreach process.

2021-2022

The Center resumed weekly outreach at the beginning of 2022 to meet with clients, bankers, city officials, partners and business owners. The prior 2 years this was difficult due to the pandemic. The Business Consultant has gone out and has identified new clients and new partners. As of June 3rd, the consultant left her position for another job. Once a new consultant is hired, they will have to be trained for several months before being able to get out and continue the Center's community outreach.

2022-2023:

The center has met this goal and will continue community outreach.

2023-2024:

This goal has been met, and the center will continue the weekly outreach in the 5-parish region.

Performance Objective 4 Work with local bankers to improve availability of capital to entrepreneurs by providing information to bankers about the needs of the entrepreneurial community.

1 Assessment and Benchmark

Benchmark: Communicate with at least 20 representatives of at least 15 banks each fiscal year.

1.1 Data

2019-2020:

The Business Consultant visited bankers at least three days each month before COVID-19. During this economic challenge, the team at Louisiana Small Business Development Center has been in contact with several bankers to stay up-to-date with relief efforts and opportunities for business owners. Several bankers have relied upon the LSBDC consultants as a resource to help their customers navigate financial difficulties caused by the pandemic.

2020-2021:

The Center has a weekly outreach plan for the Business Consultant to reach out to bankers in the 5 parishes. She informs them of what the Center has to offer and to keep them abreast of current opportunities.

Since COVID the Business Consultant hasn't been outreaching much in-person. Rather she has been using virtual meetings, emails and phone calls to keep in touch with the community representatives.

In times that it was safe she reached out to bankers in-person to remind them of the services we offered and to keep them up to date on new programs.

2021-2022:

The business consultants communicated with 28 representatives and 17 banks in 2021-2022. The Center's business consultant has gone out at least three days each month and talked with bankers and advising them of the services that the center offers. The Center has seen an increase in the number of bank referrals that it has received.

2022-2023:

The business consultants communicated with 29 lenders and 37 representatives in 2022-2023. The Center's business consultant has gone out at least three days each month and talked with bankers and advising them of the services that the center offers. The Center has seen an increase in the number of bank referrals that it has received, since there has been consistent outreach to the 5 parish area.

2023-2024:

The business consultant has been very diligent in contacting bankers, city officials and visiting small businesses. Consultant has made contact with over 40 lenders as of July 9, 2024.

1.1.1 Analysis of Data and Plan for Continuous Improvement

2019-2020:

The Business Consultant will resume visiting banks when visiting local communities, as appropriate and according to health and safety recommendations. A line of communication will remain open, during and following this economic challenge.

2020-2021:

The pandemic has prevented the Center from achieving a lot of its goals. Once it's safe for us to reinstate the Business Consultant will resume her in person outreach. Until then, our Center will continue to reach out by virtual meetings, phone calls, and emails.

It's very important to our Center to maintain relationships with bankers in our region.

2021-2022:

The Center will continue to market the center through weekly outreach. The business consultant has been very diligent in contacting bankers, city officials and visiting small businesses in the 5 parishes that we service.

2022-2023:

The Center will continue to market the center through weekly outreach in the 5-parish region that it serves. The business consultant has been very diligent in contacting bankers, city officials and visiting small businesses. Consultant has made contact with over 29 lenders as of July 14, 2023.

2023-2024:

The Center continues to market its services through weekly outreach in the 5-parish region.