

Government Loan Programs Provide Help for Business Growth and Job Creation

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**Mid-Willamette Valley
Council of Governments**

Do the initials “SBA”, “USDA”, “EDA”, “RLF”, “CRF” or “OBDD” mean anything to you? Hint: they all stand for government agencies or programs that provide financing to small businesses. But be forewarned – don’t try to navigate the bureaucratic maze of regulations and procedures that these programs require without help.

Fortunately, there is a local place you can go for this help. Since 1989, the **Mid-Willamette Valley Council of Governments** has provided access to all of the major government loan programs from one location. The COG is a public agency owned by the local governments in Marion, Polk and Yamhill Counties. It employs two full time loan officers (both former bankers) who specialize in the use of public sector lending resources and they regularly work with area banks and small businesses to make sure that these public resources can be tapped into for local business expansions and start-ups.

The mission of this program is to support local business growth and job creation.

The COG serves as the local agent for a number of federal and state loan programs including the federal **Small Business Administration**, a **U. S. Department of Agriculture** program for businesses in rural communities, the Minnesota-based non-profit **Community Reinvestment Fund** that offers the federal **New Markets Tax Credit Program** and the programs of the **Business Oregon**. The COG can also originate loans for several local governments in the area that have established local loan funds and it manages a three-county revolving loan fund from which loans can be directly extended for business projects that meet certain economic development criteria. This revolving loan fund has been capitalized over the years with federal and state grants and contributions from area local governments.

All of these programs have different requirements and restrictions and each offers certain kinds of advantages. The agency’s loan officers are there to help businesses and their bankers sort through the red tape and use the program that works best for the borrower.



Robert and Kerri Tucker, owners of metal fabricating company MAK Metals, in their new facility in Dallas. The building and equipment used financing from both the SBA and the regional Revolving Loan Fund packaged by loan officers at the Mid-Willamette Valley Council of Governments.

According to **John Safstrom**, Manager of the Small Business Loan Program for the COG, businesses should keep two things in mind before they start the loan application process:

1. Even though these loans are from government agencies, borrowers must still meet normal credit standards.
2. Normally, a government loan can’t be for more than 50% of a project, so a business must come up with the remainder from a bank loan, equity or other private source of capital. The government loan can usually subordinate its collateral position to the private sources, however, this can make a project more attractive to a bank or other private lender.

To get started, **call John or David Dahlin at 503-588-6177** for an appointment. To save time for everyone, bring the following things to your initial appointment: business financial statements for three years, projected income statement for two years, a breakdown of the intended use of the loan proceeds, and a personal financial statement and resume.

There is no charge or obligation for this assistance unless a loan is actually made. Then, a fee is typically assessed on the borrower at the loan closing.

For more information call 503-588-6177 or visit www.mwvcog.org.

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Building Opportunities for Oregon Small Business Today (BOOST) Fund

The Oregon State Legislature created BOOST during its special session earlier this year when it passed **House Bill 3698** sponsored by House Majority Leader **Rep. Mary Nolan** of Portland. The program, administered by the **Oregon Business Development Department** (Business Oregon), is designed to promote better access to working capital that results in immediate job growth and job retention. Business Oregon will provide small businesses with both loans for businesses seeking permanent working capital, and grants for businesses that can create new, permanent full-time jobs here in Oregon.

Business Oregon officials began accepting applications for BOOST funding May 28th, in conjunction with the end of the 90-day implementation period prescribed in the legislation.

The BOOST loan program is a revolving loan fund that provides up to \$150,000 in fixed-rate financing for up to four years for small businesses with fewer than 100 employees in need of operating capital. Loan proceeds may be used to support daily operations such as rent or mortgage payments, utilities, marketing expenses and certain fixed assets including equipment. Participants must be a traded-sector business in manufacturing, processing or distribution. Loans must be secured with collateral.

Business Oregon has officially launched the BOOST program. **Building Opportunities for Oregon Small Business Today Fund** to offer more financial resources to help Oregon small businesses access much needed capital.

The BOOST grant program will award and make grants as an incentive to Oregon businesses that create new, full-time jobs in Oregon. Businesses with 100 or fewer employees must create and retain new full-time jobs for a period of at least 6 months; must be a traded-sector business in manufacturing, processing or distribution; and must demonstrate that comparable wages are provided to their employees. Up to \$2,500 may be awarded to an applicant for each full-time job created and retained, with an annual maximum of \$50,000 per applicant in a calendar year.

“Business Oregon’s number one priority is to do everything possible to help existing Oregon businesses retain their current workforce and to create new job opportunities for Oregonians,” said **Tim McCabe**, director of Business Oregon. “With the BOOST program, the Legislature has given us a very important tool we can use to help Oregon small businesses throughout the state.”

For more information on BOOST and the resources available for Oregon businesses please visit www.oregon4biz.com/Business-financing-resources/Oregon-Finance-Programs/BOOST-Fund/.

Visit www.oregon4biz.com for more information on doing business in Oregon.



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Building a Safety Plan

Melanie Mesaros
Public Information Officer
Oregon Occupational Safety and Health



If a company waits until an accident occurs in the workplace, it waited too long to start focusing on safety and health.

“Before a company has an accident, there are a lot of indicators that lead up to it,” said **Roy Kroker**, Oregon OSHA’s consultation program manager. “A proactive approach will help prevent accidents.”

Oregon OSHA is the state agency that enforces workplace safety and health rules. Kroker heads the consultation arm, which works with employers at their request to improve their workplace safety and health programs. He said putting safety in the spotlight begins with management.

“Managing safety and health is no different than establishing a business plan, which should include research into the safety and health aspects of an industry,” he said.

Kroker recommends searching for industry-specific hazards on the web. While the internet may provide some answers, identifying all the potential hazards employees are exposed to isn’t always that simple. He said when conducting a walk-through, where hazards are identified throughout the business, employers should consider bringing in some outside help.

“Talk to your workers’ compensation carrier, association group, a mentor company or call Oregon OSHA for a free, confidential consultation,” Kroker said. “Those folks may see things you aren’t trained to look for.”

Once workplace hazards are found, the next step is to identify controls to either eliminate or mitigate the risks to employees.

“That will require training and clearly communicating with employees what your expectations are and holding them accountable,” he said.

Employee involvement is also a key aspect of a successful safety and health program. To be in compliance with Oregon OSHA’s rule, employers in Oregon must have a safety committee or hold safety meetings, depending on the employer’s size and type of work.

“The goal of the safety committee should include a discussion of hazards associated with their work environment and practices.” Kroker said. “That provides an opportunity for workers and managers to also discuss solutions. This open conversation typically results in employee buy-in.”

To request an Oregon OSHA consultation at your business, call 503-373-7819 or visit www.oroSHA.org.

Upcoming SEDCOR Member Events & Seminars



Portland General Electric

Class Schedule Expands for Free Seminars for Commercial and Industrial Customers

PGE has seen a big jump in attendance at their free energy-efficiency class series. Responding to high interest in energy education, PGE is introducing several new business classes on topics including refrigeration, water efficiency and creating energy champions. You can see the lineup for upcoming classes, download the Monthly Update (PDF) of upcoming classes, or view full class descriptions in the month-by-month calendar.

September 7th
New Trends in Lighting

October 7th - Salem
A Smart Grid Perspective of Energy Efficiency, Renewables & Demand Response

For a complete schedule of upcoming seminars visit PortlandGeneral.com/Classes. If you’d like to receive e-mail notices of new class offerings, e-mail PGE.Seminars@pge.com.

July 8th - 11th - Oregon State Fairgrounds
The Marion County Fair Farm & Family Fun
Visit www.co.marion.or.us/FAIR

July 16th - at Volcanoes Stadium
Striking Out Meth In Marion County
Call 503-588-5212

July 16-18th - Keizer
Good Vibrations Road Show
www.road-shows.com

July 29 - August 1
Dallas Summerfest 2010 - Thar Be Pirates!
Visit www.dallasoregon.org

August 7th - Keizer Renaissance Inn
Garten’s 40th Anniversary Soiree & Celebration
Call 503-581-4472 ext. 3117

September 17th - Chemeketa CB&I
Reducing Opportunities for Fraud
Presented by Moss-Adams LLP
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