

Businesses Assistance Programs: Quick Reference Guide

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MyStartup365.com

Online resources, how-to’s, tutorials and interactive tools for current and prospective business owners.

* Entrepreneur Academy
  + 11 courses to teach fundamentals to first timers through videos, workbooks, assignments and quizzes.
* The Small Business Playbook
  + A detailed guide on what it takes to start and own a business in Washington State.
* SizeUp
  + A sophisticated planning and analysis tool to run endless business scenarios in an interactive, virtual environment.
* Restart Academy
  + Videos, workbooks, assignments and resources targeted to business owners who must restart their businesses in wake of the pandemic.
* ScaleUp – contact Liliane.eriksen@commerce.wa.gov
  + A hands-on series designed to help business owners strategically plan and identify new opportunities for growth.
  + Gives you the tools necessary to take your time back, break through the profit plateau, create new sources of revenue, and help you to work on your business rather than in your business.
  + Flexible time commitment. Content is delivered online through the ScaleUp online learning environment, with live training sessions and roundtable discussions and weekly Study Hall mentorship hours. Graduates of the program will also retain continued access to the Alumni resources, which include all of the above and much more.
  + Our trainers are highly qualified and come with years of practical experience building and scaling businesses and helping others do the same.
  + This program is most beneficial for established business owners, with two or more years’ experience owning and operating a small business, and are currently based in Washington state.
  + This program normally costs $1,599, but is currently provided at no cost to Washington State businesses through 2022, thanks to ongoing support from the Washington Department of Commerce.
* Thrive! – Contact susan.nielson@commerce.wa.gov
  + An “economic gardening-style” program providing access to Edward Lowe Foundation experts, analytics and best practices that allow C-suite executives and business owners address internal and external issues impeding growth and expansion. In contrast to traditional business assistance, economic gardening focuses on strategic growth challenges, such as developing new markets, refining business models and gaining access to competitive intelligence.
  + Your part in Thrive! will take about eight hours of  time over the course of four to eight weeks and your involvement is via phone or our secure online portal.
  + **STEP 1: The Needs Assessment Call** - Once you are accepted into the program, a team leader will schedule a 1 to 1 ½ hour Needs Assessment Call with you. The goal is to clarify the challenges your company is facing and identify what’s needed to remove the roadblocks to further growth.
  + **STEP 2: Scope of Work** - Based on the needs assessment, your team leader will formulate a scope of work for you to review. Once you’ve reviewed this, a SWAT Call will be scheduled for you to meet with the Thrive! team.
  + **STEP 3: SWAT Call** -This call is with the selected SWAT Team of experts. The goal is to more fully understand your current business practices and potential areas for growth and to define the specific tasks and deliverables. At this stage in the process, some companies reach a point where they can complete the process on their own. More often, they choose to go through the rest of the Thrive! program which is really the secret to the program’s long history of success.
  + **STEP 4: The Go Ahead** - At the end of the SWAT Call, you can give the team the go-ahead to start work on the agreed upon assignments. They will then perform the necessary research on your behalf. They will work behind the scenes to provide analysis on a range of topics such as core strategy, market dynamics, qualified sales leads, innovation, operations, finance, human resources and temperament. This involves approximately 33 hours of SWAT Team time. An online portal will keep you apprised of their activities and provide you access with all the program’s documentation.
  + **STEP 5: Presentation Calls** - Once all the research is complete, each assigned specialist will meet with you via phone to review their deliverables. You’ll have plenty of time to ask questions, go over the materials and ensure you have a solid understanding of their findings. During the last 15 minutes, you’ll receive a debrief to assess your engagement and overall satisfaction with the Thrive!
  + **Optional Aftercare** -If you wish, you can add an aftercare program to Thrive! At specific intervals in the ensuing months, the team leader will check in with you to see if you’ve been able to act on the intelligence the SWAT team provided, provide additional clarity and answer any questions you have.
* Business Roundtables – Contact susan.nielson@commerce.wa.gov
  + Small business roundtables with C-suite executives to share best practices, discuss pressing issues, seek advice and serve as a networking and support platform.
* [Small Business Flex Fund](https://smallbusinessflexfund.org/) – Contact keith.swenson@commerce.wa.gov
  + Flexible and affordable loans designed to help small businesses and non-profits reopen and rebuild.
  + Provides historically underbanked segments of the business community with access to low-interest loans of up to $150,000.
  + Loans can be used for payroll, rent, utilities, building improvements, marketing, supplies and other business expenses.
  + Supported by a network of trusted Community Development Financial Institutions across the state that specialize in community-based small business lending and support.