



Small Business Development Centers

Helping businesses start, grow, and prosper.

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Duquesne University and Kutztown University SBDCs
Funded Through SBA Growth Fund Accelerator to Serve
Hispanic Business Owners

PHILADELPHIA, Pa. – The Pennsylvania Small Business Development Centers (SBDC) have announced that the Duquesne University SBDC and the Kutztown University SBDC have been selected as two of 50 nationwide winners to receive monetary awards of \$50,000 as part of the U.S. Small Business Administration’s (SBA) Growth Accelerator Fund competition.

Duquesne University SBDC’s program, Neo Lab: Fast Track to Inclusiveness, aims to empower disadvantaged Hispanic business owners through targeted one-on-one consulting with a special focus on technology businesses with growth potential. The Kutztown University SBDC, in partnership with its Latino Business Resource Center (LBRC) and Jump Start Incubator (JSI), will use its funds to target established Latino-owned companies in the food industry who need bilingual consulting in Spanish to scale their business with the formation of the Food Accelerator IDEA (Innovation, Development and Entrepreneurship Accelerator).

“The SBA is empowering accelerators and startups that are on the cutting edge of successful, innovative new endeavors,” said SBA Administrator Maria Contreras-Sweet. “We’ve seen the enormous success of the accelerator model in communities like Silicon Valley. We believe we can export this type of sophisticated support structure across the country to help start-ups become commercially viable and create jobs more quickly,” she added.

“We are extremely pleased that two SBDCs were funded through the SBA’s Growth Accelerator Fund during its inaugural competition,” said Pennsylvania SBDC State Director Christian Conroy. “Latino business owners are the fastest growing demographic of the clients we serve; however they are traditionally underserved due to language and other cultural barriers. Additional resources from the SBA will help the SBDCs focus on this target population which we know is primed for growth and expansion in the coming years,” he concluded.

As part of the program, the Duquesne University and Kutztown University SBDCs will receive a monetary award of \$50,000 from the SBA and will be required to report metrics such as jobs created, funds raised, start-ups launched, and corporate sponsors obtained among other program outcomes. The purpose of the competition was to draw attention and funding to parts of the country where there are gaps in the entrepreneurial ecosystem.

The SBDCs were chosen from more than 800 applications that were reviewed by a panel of seven expert judges in the fields of entrepreneurship, investing and business planning.

(MORE)

SBDC Locations

- Bucknell University
Clarion University
Duquesne University
Gannon University
Indiana University of Pennsylvania
Kutztown University of Pennsylvania
Lehigh University
Lock Haven University
Penn State University
Saint Francis University
Saint Vincent College
Shippensburg University
Temple University
University of Pittsburgh
University of Scranton
The Wharton School, University of Pennsylvania
Widener University
Wilkes University

Project Overview: Duquesne University SBDC – Neo Labs

Neo Labs: Fast Track to Inclusiveness, will be launched with funding from the SBA Growth Accelerator Fund competition and led by the Duquesne University SBDC. Their program seeks to address the cultural and business barriers that disadvantaged Hispanic business owners face such as access to capital, professional networks and native language, among others. Hispanic immigrants are the fastest growing population in southwest Pennsylvania, therefore Neo Labs will aim to deliver tailored, start-up and expansion training to this demographic.

Specific program elements include one-on-one business consulting and mentoring, linking business owners to financing institutions, and connecting program participants to community leaders and additional economic development partners for specialized support. Training in technology including 3D printing, social media, cloud computing, web conferencing, and QuickBooks is also included as part of the program's technology focus.

Project Overview: Kutztown University SBDC – Food Accelerator IDEA

With funding received through the SBA Growth Accelerator Fund competition, the Kutztown University SBDC will launch the Food Manufacturing IDEA (Innovation, Development and Entrepreneurship Accelerator), since through their work, the SBDC has identified that almost 40 percent of the small businesses seen through the SBDC/LBRC are looking to start a food-related business. Currently, there are no bilingual consulting services in the food industry, and the funding received through this competition will help fill this gap.

Specifically, the Food Manufacturing IDEA will serve established businesses and focus on minority or women owned businesses with growth potential. The program will help participants with training in packaging and labeling, package design, product development technology trends, trade show, nutrition, international trade, and wholesale distribution. In addition, partnerships with local supermarkets, financial institutions and other food business experts will be tapped for participation in the program and to help the businesses reach their fullest potential.

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About Pennsylvania Small Business Development Centers (SBDC)

The Pennsylvania SBDC network is the only statewide, nationally accredited program that provides high quality one-on-one consulting, training and information resources to empower new and existing businesses. SBDC consultants work with entrepreneurs in confidential, individualized sessions to help them with a range of business issues including testing a new business proposition, shaping a business plan, investigating funding opportunities, and much more. The SBDC program is a public/private partnership with the U.S. Small Business Administration, the Pennsylvania Department of Community and Economic Development and 18 universities and colleges across the Commonwealth. For more information on the Pennsylvania SBDC services and impact, please visit www.pasbdc.org.