# Chapter 8: Resources

## Business Development Resources

This section includes additional resources you might find useful as you develop your business plan.

* [U.S. Small Business Administration (SBA)](https://www.sba.gov/) (sba.gov)
  + The SBA is a government agency that provides assistance to small businesses. They can provide counseling sessions, loan guarantees, and contracts. We link to different pages on their website throughout this website.
  + The SBA has four main programs. Visit the SBA website to learn more.
    - Access to Capital (Business Financing)
    - Entrepreneurial Development (Education, Information, Technical Assistance and Training)
    - Government Contracting (Federal Procurement)
    - Advocacy (Voice for Small Business)
* [Job Accommodation Network (JAN)](https://askjan.org/info-by-role.cfm) (askjan.org/info-by-role.cfm)
  + JAN offers individualized technical assistance, consulting, and mentoring to people with disabilities who are starting their own businesses. You can contact a consultant with your questions through a link on their website.
* [SCORE](https://www.score.org/) (score.org)
  + SCORE is a free SBA program where volunteers share their management and technical expertise with small business owners who are starting or growing their businesses. You can work with a mentor in person or online. They are a nonprofit dedicated to helping small businesses get off the ground, grow, and achieve their goals.
  + SCORE offers mentoring, free business tools and tips, and inexpensive or free business workshops and webinars.
* [Disabled Businesspersons Association (DBA)](https://disabledbusiness.org/) (disabledbusiness.org)
  + The DBA is a volunteer nonprofit that is staffed by existing and retired business owners with disabilities who share their expertise through educational workshops, on the internet, and through group mentor activities with clients and job counselors. Their specialty is working with those who have severe and catastrophic physical and/or psychological medical challenges.
* [Self-Employment & Entrepreneurship](https://www.dol.gov/odep/topics/SelfEmploymentEntrepreneurship.htm) (dol.gov/agencies/odep/program-areas/employers/self-employment-entrepreneurship)
  + A list of self-employment and entrepreneurship resources provided by the Office of Disability Employment Policy for people with disabilities. Resources include a guide specific to youth entrepreneurship, the Assets for Independence Program, articles about business mentorship, and other business development resources.
* Plan for Achieving Self-Support (PASS), Social Security Administration
  + PASS is a work incentive program that helps people with disabilities start and operate a business. If you qualify, it can be a source of funding, and you can set aside income and/or resources over a specific period of time to fund necessary goods and services to establish a business or to become a partner in an existing business. The Social Security Administration reviews written PASS and business plans before authorizing a PASS.
  + Learn more here:
    - [Spotlight on Plans to Achieve Self Support](https://www.ssa.gov/ssi/spotlights/spot-plans-self-support.htm) (ssa.gov/ssi/spotlights/spot-plans-self-support.htm)
    - [PASS Online](http://www.passonline.org/) (passonline.org)
* [The ABLE Act and Employment](https://leadcenter.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/07/LEAD_ABLE_Policy_Brief.pdf) (leadcenter.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/07/LEAD\_ABLE\_Policy\_Brief.pdf)
  + A policy brief from the National Center on Leadership for the Employment and Economic Advancement of People with Disabilities. It covers how the ABLE Act can be combined with federal benefit services and other federal programs and initiatives to further employment for people with disabilities.
  + For more information on ABLE Accounts and employment, see:
    - [Spotlight On Achieving a Better Life Experience (ABLE) Accounts](https://www.ssa.gov/ssi/spotlights/spot-able.html?tl=0) (ssa.gov/ssi/spotlights/spot-able.html)
    - [The ABLE National Resource Center](http://www.ablenrc.org/) (ablenrc.org)
* [Ag Innovation Challenge](https://www.fb.org/initiative/ag-innovation-challenge) (fb.org/initiative/ag-innovation-challenge)
  + The American Farm Bureau Federation is a nonprofit that works to build rural communities. Visit the website to learn about the Ag Innovation Challenge.
* APEX Accelerators
  + An APEX Accelerator is a government-supported program designed to help businesses, especially small businesses, navigate the complex world of government contracting. Previously known as Procurement Technical Assistance Centers (PTACs), APEX Accelerators provide free or low-cost technical assistance to companies that want to sell their products or services to federal, state, and local governments.
  + For more information on APEX Accelerators, see:
    - [National APEX Accelerator Alliance](https://www.napex.us/) (napex.us)
    - [APEX Accelerators](https://www.apexaccelerators.us) (apexaccelerators.us)
* [Export and Trade Assistance](https://www.sba.gov/local-assistance/export-trade-assistance) (sba.gov/local-assistance/export-trade-assistance)
  + Find local SBA resources for small businesses interested in trading and exporting.

## Funding Resources

This section includes additional resources you might find useful for business start-up funding. This is not meant to be a full list of funding resources. It is just a place to get started as you begin to search for start-up business funding options. Search the internet for things like “small business owner grants” to come up with large lists of funding options to explore. You should also talk to your VR counselor or a Small Business Development Center for information on local funding sources.

If you have bad credit, you might want to read this article from nerdwallet.com: [Best Business Loans for Bad Credit](https://www.nerdwallet.com/best/small-business/bad-credit-business-loans) (nerdwallet.com/best/small-business/bad-credit-business-loans). The article also contains links to other articles about small business loans.

* [SBA Loan Programs](https://www.sba.gov/funding-programs/loans) (sba.gov/funding-programs/loans)
  + SBA does not lend money directly to entrepreneurs to start or grow a business.  Instead, it sets the guidelines for loans made by its partners, including lenders, community development organizations, and micro-lending institutions. SBA guarantees that these loans will be repaid, which eliminates some of the risk to the lending partners.
* USA.gov [How to Start and Fund Your Own Business](https://www.usa.gov/start-business) (usa.gov/start-business)
  + Information and links to different government resources for funding your business.
* US Department of Agriculture Rural Development [Rural Microentrepreneur Assistance Program](https://www.rd.usda.gov/programs-services/rural-microentrepreneur-assistance-program) (rd.usda.gov/programs-services/business-programs/rural-microentrepreneur-assistance-program)
  + Provides microloans to help small businesses in rural areas start up and provides training and technical assistance to microloan borrowers and micro entrepreneurs.
* [Small Business Innovation Research (SBIR) and Small Business Technology Transfer (STTR) Programs](https://www.sbir.gov/) (sbir.gov)
  + The SBIR program funds start-up and development costs for small businesses that are doing Research and Development, which allows small businesses to explore their technological potential, with the goal of commercializing the technology.
  + STTR is similar to SBIR, but it requires small businesses to partner with a nonprofit research institution. The program’s goals are to stimulate technological innovation, foster technology transfer between small businesses and research institutions, and increase private sector commercialization of innovations produced from Research and Development.
  + To learn more, start with the [SBIR/STTR Program Basics Online Tutorial](https://www.sbir.gov/tutorials/program-basics) (sbir.gov/tutorials/program-basics).
* [Accion Opportunity Fund](https://aofund.org/) (aofund.org)
  + Accion is a nonprofit community organization that provides loans to small business owners. They also provide business advice and support through workshops and online resources.

### Other Possible Sources of Financing

* **Family and friends**: Family and friends are the most frequently used source of business financing. Often, family and friends are co-signers for bank loans.
* **Angel investors**: People who invest their own money into a starting business in exchange for ownership equity or convertible debt. They usually want a high return on investment because if the business fails, they will not get any money back. For more information, check out these links:
  + [Angel Investor: Definition and How It Works](https://www.investopedia.com/terms/a/angelinvestor.asp) (investopedia.com/terms/a/angelinvestor.asp)
  + [Getting Started With Angel Investing](https://www.entrepreneur.com/article/52742) (https://entm.ag/10zwpCv)
  + [Angel Investment Network](https://www.angelinvestmentnetwork.us/entrepreneurs-home) (angelinvestmentnetwork.us/entrepreneurs-home) is a place to pitch your business and connect with investors.
* **Crowdfunding**: Crowdfunding is when you raise many small amounts of money from a large number of people. Usually, this is done over the internet through websites like [Kickstarter](https://www.kickstarter.com/) (kickstarter.com) or [GoFundMe](https://www.gofundme.com/) (gofundme.com). You can search the internet for other crowdfunding websites. Make sure you understand how the different sites work. Some of them require that you meet your goal before you get any money, and others will give you whatever amount of money people donate.
* **Peer-to-peer (P2P) lending**: Peer-to-peer lenders are intermediaries between the borrower and the institutional investor, such as a hedge fund or bank.
  + For more information on P2P options, see:
    - [Best Options for Peer-to-Peer Business Lending](https://www.nerdwallet.com/blog/small-business/small-business-loans-peer-to-peer-lending/) (nerdwallet.com/best/small-business/peer-to-peer-business-loans)
    - [Peer-to-Peer Lending](https://www.thehartford.com/business-insurance/strategy/alternative-funding-startup/peer-to-peer-lending) (thehartford.com/business-insurance/strategy/alternative-funding-startup/peer-to-peer-lending)
  + One example of a peer-to-peer lending company is [LendingClub](https://www.lendingclub.com/) (lendingclub.com).

## Veterans

This section contains veteran-specific business development and funding resources. If you have a resource that should be on this list, please contact us at [rtcrural@mso.umt.edu](mailto:rtcrural@mso.umt.edu) and let us know!

* [Office of Veterans Business Development](https://www.sba.gov/about-sba/sba-locations/headquarters-offices/office-veterans-business-development) (sba.gov/about-sba/sba-locations/headquarters-offices/office-veterans-business-development)
  + Provides business development services to transitioning service members, veterans, National Guard & Reserve members, and military spouses who want to start or grow a small business.
* [Veterans Business Outreach Centers (VBOC)](https://www.sba.gov/local-assistance/resource-partners/veterans-business-outreach-centers-vboc) (sba.gov/local-assistance/resource-partners/veterans-business-outreach-centers-vboc)
  + Offers resources to veterans, service members, and military spouses who are interested in starting or growing a small business.
* [11 Essential Resources for Veteran Entrepreneurs](https://www.score.org/resource/article/11-essential-resources-veteran-entrepreneurs) (score.org/resource/article/11-essential-resources-veteran-entrepreneurs)
  + This article from score.org has a great list of resources for veterans who want to start their own business.
* [U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs Veteran Readiness and Employment (VR&E)](https://www.benefits.va.gov/vocrehab/index.asp) (benefits.va.gov/vocrehab/index.asp)
  + Veteran Readiness and Employment (VR&E), formerly known as Vocational Rehabilitation and Employment, services are available to help veterans start their own businesses. To apply for benefits, you need to have an eBenefits account. Visit the [Veteran Readiness and Employment Benefits](https://www.va.gov/careers-employment/vocational-rehabilitation/) (va.gov/careers-employment/vocational-rehabilitation) website to learn more and apply.

## Tribal & Minority

This section contains Native American/Alaska Native, Hispanic, and other minority-specific business development and funding resources. If you have a resource that should be on this list, please contact us at [rtcrural@mso.umt.edu](mailto:rtcrural@mso.umt.edu) and let us know!

* [Resources for Native American Women Business Owners](http://becomingselfmade.com/2016/05/10/business-resources-grants-for-native-american-women/) (becomingselfmade.com/2016/05/10/business-resources-grants-for-native-american-women/)
  + A list of resources on BecomingSelfMade.com specifically for Native American business owners. Some of these resources may also be applicable for other minority groups. The list includes funding, training, and networking resources.
* [Bureau of Indian Affairs Division of Capital Investment](https://www.bia.gov/as-ia/ieed/division-capital-investment) (bia.gov/as-ia/ied/division-capital-investment)
  + The Indian Loan Guaranty, Insurance, and Interest Subsidy Program helps provide financing for tribes and individual Indians. The program helps with loan financing, securing reasonable interest rates, and reduces risk for lenders and borrowers.
* [Aspen Capital Fund](https://aspencapitalfund.com/) (aspencapitalfund.com) (for Hispanic and Minority owned businesses)
  + Aspen Capital Fund provides services to help develop and start a successful business. They have experience with building networks, branding, developing a customer base, marketing, campaign development, and technology.