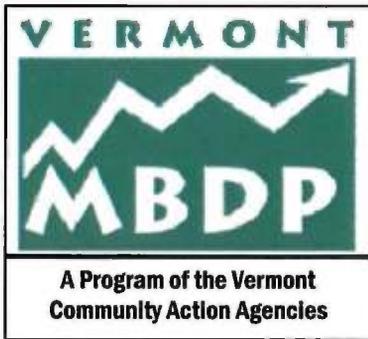


Jennifer Craig



The Micro Business Development Program

The Micro Business Development Program of the Vermont Community Action Agencies provides training and counseling for low to moderate income Vermonters who are planning to start or expand a microenterprise.

A Program of the Vermont Community Action Agencies

Since 1988, MBDP has helped to strengthen the economic self-sufficiency of more than 10,000 Vermonters and the vitality of our communities. We have launched or expanded more than 2,000 Vermont businesses, created thousands of jobs, and helped entrepreneurs leverage more than \$14 million in financing.

Our program works:

With a small investment from the state, our program creates enormous returns for low income Vermonters and our communities. Many of these businesses are the core to Vermont's economic initiatives. They support our economy by collectively coming together to bring about a momentum such as the Food to Plate Initiative, the Working Lands Initiative, and the Creative Economy.

How we are different:

MBDP has state wide counselors that specialize in working with low income Vermonters who have significant barriers such as bad credit, disabilities, and / or very limited income. That is why our successes are so significant. The Micro Business Development Programs throughout the state help to bring positive change to people's lives.

How we make an impact:

In addition to business counseling, MBDP programs throughout the state offer a variety of financial education, credit building, and savings programs. We partner with other organizations to ensure that participants have the resources necessary to become self-sufficient in all aspects of their lives.



Flip the page over to see the great success stories of this past year!

Average Annual Outcomes 2014 -2016

- **145 business starts or expansions**
- **84 new FTE jobs created**
- **\$1,124,414 in business capital accessed**
- **Cost per job = \$3,598 (VT General Fund)**

*"Business ownership is a proven pathway out of poverty, helping to increase income, create wealth, and move people off public assistance."**

SINCE 2010

6,193
LOW INCOME
VERMONTERS
PARTICIPATED IN MBDP

496
NEW BUSINESSES WERE
STARTED

328
BUSINESSES WERE
EXPANDED

613.7
JOBS (FTE) WERE
CREATED AT AN AVERAGE
COST TO THE STATE OF
\$3,598 PER JOB

\$6,893,849
IN CAPITAL WAS
LEVERAGED

**Source: The Vermont Department of Children and Families - Outcomes for 2016. Agency of Human Resources - Department for Children and families*

For more information:

Annette Hoyle; BROCC in SW VT (775-0878); Margaret Ferguson, Capstone in Central VT (477-5214); Kate Larose, CVOEO in NW VT (860-1417); Amy Robinson, NEKCA in NE VT (748-6048); Denise Mason, SEVCA in SE VT (722-4575)

How Are You Supporting the Micro Businesses in Your Community?

Farm to Plate ~ Working Lands Initiative ~ Culinary Tourism ~ Agritourism ~ The Creative Economy ~ Retail
Farmers Markets ~ Manufacturing

Mio in Dorset, VT BROC-Community Action in Southwestern Vermont



Beverly Buber and Leo Ledoux previously owned Mio Bistro in Pawlet, VT. They sought out the services of BROC's Business Counselor, as they needed assistance with a business plan to secure a loan for their new

venture. The owners are looking to enjoy more of life and are downsizing from a restaurant to a high end, farm-to-table food trailer, their first take-out-only food trailer. They have a great reputation in the community, along with a loyal following, including Facebook and their email list of over 400 customers, as well as support from past customers in Dorset who begged them to reopen a restaurant.

Mio provides non-GMO comfort foods including fresh fried clams, lobster rolls, chowders and their very popular pizzas. Options are healthier and a delicious alternative to factory-farmed meat and poultry used at other local restaurants. Customers will enjoy high quality gourmet food without the cost in a typical restaurant.

The food trailer will be parked on Route 30 in Dorset and highly visible to customers due to the large volume of traffic. Their success will be enhanced by lower overhead and their ability to travel to sizable groups of potential customers, such as Farmer's Markets, SolarFest, private catering events and local tourist locations.

Beverly and Leo bring a wealth of knowledge, skills and a good reputation to operate yet another successful restaurant. They have the ability to satisfy every acquired taste.

The owners were able to secure a business loan with the assistance of BROC. They have installed the pizza oven in the food truck and will open in late November.

Bob's Camera & Video in Barre, VT Capstone Community Action



Bob's Camera & Video has been a mainstay on Barre's Main Street and will continue to serve its loyal customers since employee Kaitlyn Mesler bought the business from Bob and Susan Sager in 2015. The Sagers started the camera and photo accessory business in 1986, but were ready to retire and sell the business to someone who had the passion and enthusiasm for the business and customers. Kaitlyn had been hired at Bob's Camera right out of Spaulding High School's Digital Media Arts Vocational program and had been an employee for four years.

"It was a perfect fit for me. I wasn't as excited about going to college as I was about working in the business," Kaitlyn says. She knew how to take care of the retail end of the store; Bob and Susan worked with Kaitlyn to

teach her about operating the business end. Showing her how taken care of cash flow, record keeping, payroll, insurance, advertising, marketing, and all the other needed business details.

Kaitlyn had to come up with a business plan and then secure the financing. "It was a headache-inducing experience," she said. "But now that I have it, I can say it was really all worth it!" The business counselors from Capstone's Micro Business Development Program helped guide Kaitlyn and connected her with other community resources.

Bob's Camera is highly acclaimed for its mix of photo equipment and accessories. Sager is proud that it will continue to be so with Mesler. She is young enough to be very good with computers and social media technology to find anything she needs. It is wonderful to see a young woman purchase an existing business and retain the jobs on Barre's Main St. "It's great to have someone like Kaitlyn coming from the love of photography to be the new owner," Sager said.

Bob's Camera is located at 86 North Main St. in Barre and open Monday-Saturday. Call the store at 476-4342 or visit its website: www.bobscamerashop.com

"Changing One Tire Changed My Life" Southeastern Vermont Community Action



Gary first met Karen Woodcock, SEVCA's Micro Business Technical Assistant & IDA Coordinator when he took a Microbusiness

class while incarcerated at the Southern State Corrections Facility. At the time, he was earning \$4.00/day as Head Chef. He learned about the IDA program and put together a business plan for a tire-changing and balancing business he planned to launch when he was released. He opened his IDA account and saved \$42 per month, starting in prison and continuing after his release. "The only thing I was holding onto was the IDA," he said. "It was a slow process, but I never gave up."

When Gary was released, he was unable to find steady work, and had a long way to go towards his savings goal. One day, he noticed the newspaper carrier's car stuck on the side of the road with a flat and a damaged tire rim, the driver nowhere in sight. He decided to help, so he jacked up the car, removed the damaged tire, and took it back to his home to fix. When he returned, the driver was back, and was pleasantly surprised to find his tire fixed. Within a few weeks, Gary had a temporary job as a result of a recommendation from the carrier, and within a year, it turned into a full-time, higher-paying job with benefits.

Gary reached his IDA savings goal, and received the match funds, which gave him a total of \$3,000 to purchase the equipment he needed to start his business. He plans to keep his full-time job and operate his business on the side. Gary says, "I never thought that changing one tire would change my life." It is clear that his own hard work and dedication, as well as SEVCA's assistance, played a key role in bringing about that change.

Woodhaven Consulting in Troy, VT Northeast Kingdom Community Action



Over the last 6 or 7 years, I have received essential business counseling through NEKCA's Micro Business Development Program. The staff has helped me identify realistic goals, and has given me support and step-by-step guidance toward achieving those goals.

Initial start-up funds came through NEKCA's IDA savings program. MBDP also informed me of other funding sources, which eventually led to a grant to publish my book, *Spiritual Bedrock: Reclaiming Your Inner Connection to Truth*.

Throughout the development of my business, Woodhaven Consulting - which offers individual classes in computer basics and assistive/productivity software, MBDP has provided excellent mentoring and much-needed encouragement. With their assistance, I have gained the skills to create my business cards and websites, and to market my services. I now feel confident in determining appropriate fees, and in my abilities to work with others in a professional way. I am extremely grateful for the guidance I have received from NEKCA's Micro Business Development Program, and I highly recommend continued funding for their outstanding community involvement. *Sylvia Hutchinson*

JZ Carpentry, LLC in Burlington, VT Champlain Valley Office of Economic Opportunity



Johannes Ziegler, owner of JZ Carpentry LLC, began working with Financial Futures' Micro Business Development Program at CVOEO in 2011. Prior to starting, Johannes was employed by a local property maintenance company.

Like so many people, he thought he could earn more money if he started his own business. After starting he soon realized how little he knew about business. Sales were low and he struggled to manage it. Johannes worked with his MBDP Business Coach and other business support providers to improve his organization, systems and marketing.

Committed to his personal and business success Johannes has made incredible strides! "I have consistently doubled my income for the last three years. This year my gross is so far past my wildest expectations of what I thought I could do!" Johannes is now planning to hire two employees and has purchased a home.

"Johannes had the skills, energy and commitment to create a successful business. All he needed was an investment of time, energy and knowledge to help him move forward", says his Business Coach, Simeon Geigel of CVOEO. Johannes is doing so well now he no longer qualifies for MBDP's no-cost business coaching services and his business coach couldn't be happier for him.

The Vermont Individual Development Account program gives low-to-moderate income individuals and families an opportunity to invest in themselves & their communities & move out of poverty.

THE VERMONT IDA PROGRAM

BUY A HOME • CAPITALIZE A BUSINESS • INCREASE EDUCATION OR JOB SKILLS



Thistledown Farm

Penny Jenson's business, "Thistledown Farm" is as charming as it sounds.

Penny and her late husband bought a house that had a run down barn on it, just because it "felt right". Penny has used her location over the years to develop a product line of lavender drawing salves. A drawing salve is a product that is used to rub on minor burns, rashes, slivers, etc. Penny has worked hard perfecting her recipe to include a

special combination of ingredients, which works extremely well.

Even though Penny is a recent IDA participant, she has been a client of NEKCA's Micro Business Development Program for several years. A change in employment has given her the time she has desired to focus full time on her business.

Over the past few months she has made significant forward movement with her marketing materials, social

media, and getting her product into retail stores. She has been working with the counselor to develop the proper labeling and display cases.

Penny has been making steady, consistent deposits into her IDA. She intends to use her funds for inventory and marketing.

Penny is very determined to make her business successful. She is a true example that self-employment requires dedication and self discipline to be successful. Her love for purple is reflected in just about everything she does!



Cumulative Outcomes 1997-2016

Since program inception:

- A total of 912 Vermonters have successfully completed the IDA program, using \$2,503,945 in savings and match funds
- By asset, that works out to:
 - Business—524 people invested \$1,432,785
 - Education—207 people invested \$531,062
 - Homeowners—181 people invested \$540,098

FY 2016 Outcomes

- 51 Vermonters invested \$127,804 in their chosen asset this fiscal year as follows:
 - 25 for Business \$62,507
 - 19 for Education \$44,294
 - 7 for Homes \$21,003

Financial Education is an integral and essential part of the IDA Program. Participants learn about setting financial goals, budgeting, saving, credit building, debt reduction, and planning for future needs such as retirement.

We have seen very positive results in people's financial stability and capability when they are provided with the information, tools and encouragement they need to make sound financial decisions.

Investing in IDAs yields new and more viable businesses, educated and skilled Vermonters, and increased home ownership, thereby stimulating Vermont's economy and strengthening Vermont's communities.

We trust the State will continue their support. We are requesting \$250,000 to provide additional Vermonters the opportunity to improve their financial futures.

This successful program has turned away prospective participants in recent years due to State cutbacks. Please restore the Vermont IDA to its full potential!