



EMDC EASTERN MAINE
DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION

SMALL BUSINESS RESOURCE GUIDE

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Eastern Maine Development Corporation
40 Harlow Street
Bangor, ME 04401
(207) 942-6389
business@emdc.org
www.emdc.org

A Free Guide for Business Startups, Already Existing Businesses,
and Entrepreneurs Throughout Maine

A Message from the CEO

Dear Friends,

Since 1967 Eastern Maine Development Corporation (EMDC) has been a strong supporter of small business development throughout the region and the state. As a private, nonprofit organization, we provide small business programs and work with other local, state, and federal agencies to ensure entrepreneurial development.

This guide helps entrepreneurs and small business owners better understand the free resources that are freely available to help with small business startup, growth, and sustainability.

Regardless of your experience, industry, or the stage of your business, many programs, resources, and organizations are engineered to help you succeed. Quite frankly, there are a lot of fantastic, free resources that exist for small businesses to take advantage of. We've compiled this guide to help make finding those resources less confusing and less cumbersome.

EMDC helps businesses, communities, and individuals reach their long-term goals. If you have any questions, concerns, or would like to speak to someone about your business, please don't hesitate to reach out to our community & business services team. We're here to help you succeed!

All the best, Lee

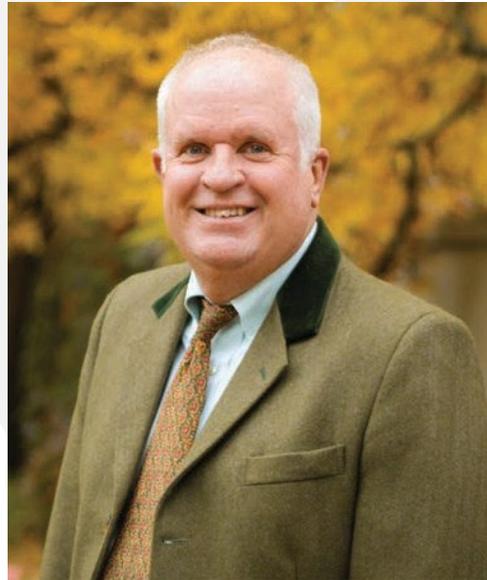


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Templates, Tools, & Startup Checklists

BUSINESS PLANS

A formal, written business plan can be seen as the foundation for your business. It can increase the odds that your business startup will succeed and often times is required by lending agencies to secure financing for a business. A business plan typically describes the nature of a business, background information that's relevant to the business, financial projections, and strategies that will enable the business to be successful.

A business plan has no set number of pages, but it should be long enough to adequately describe the business. There are a number of business plan templates that exist on the internet. Here's some free templates that will help you with starting your own:

- SCORE Business Plan - https://s3.amazonaws.com/mentoring.redesign/s3fs-public/SCORE-Deluxe-Startup-Business-Plan-Template_1.docx
- SBA Business Plan - <https://www.sba.gov/business-guide/plan-your-business/write-your-business-plan>
- SBDC Business Plan - <https://www.mainesbdc.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/12/Maine-SBDC-Business-Plan-Guide.pdf>

MARKETING PLANS

A marketing plan is usually part of an overall business plan. It's a comprehensive document that explains a business's advertising and marketing efforts. A marketing plan should include historical data, predictions, and strategies that will ensure a company's overall success in selling products and/or services. Below are some templates that can assist you with putting together your own marketing plan:

- SCORE Marketing Plan - <https://s3.amazonaws.com/mentoring.redesign/s3fs-public/Small%20Business%20Marketing%20Plan.docx>
- SBDC Marketing Plan - <https://www.mainesbdc.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/08/sample-marketing-plan-2015.pdf>
- SBA Marketing Plan - <https://www.sba.gov/sites/default/files/2017-07/Sample%20Marketing%20Plan%20%28for%20508%20remediation%29.pdf>

FINANCIAL PLANS

Arguably this is the most important part of a written business plan. If you're applying for a loan, your lender will be looking for this information to make their decision. This section of a business plan shows your business's actual (or anticipated) revenues and expenses. There are some financial templates that should be included with your business plan, including: a cash flow statement, balance sheet, profit/loss statement (P&L), schedule of liabilities, and a break-even analysis. Below is a list of websites where you can obtain already developed financial statement templates:

- SBDC Financial Plans - <https://www.mainesbdc.org/resources/tools-templates/>
- SCORE Financial Plans - <https://www.score.org/resource/business-planning-financial-statements-template-gallery>
- Microsoft Office Financial Templates - <https://templates.office.com/en-us/Search/results?query=financial+statement>

Business Legal Assistance & Business Structures

The business legal structure you choose influences everything from day-to-day operations to taxes to how much your assets are at risk. Therefore, you should select a business structure that gives you the right balance of protection and benefits. ***IMPORTANT NOTE: EMDC does not provide legal assistance – Please contact an attorney to help you decide which legal structure is best for you*** Below are some resources that will help you decide and differentiate the various legal structures that exist for businesses:

- SBA Business Structures - <https://www.sba.gov/business-guide/launch-your-business/choose-business-structure>
- SCORE Legal Structure - <https://www.score.org/search/site/legal%20structure>
- IRS Business Structures - <https://www.irs.gov/businesses/small-businesses-self-employed/business-structures>

There are also accredited law firms and lawyers in the area that volunteer their time to assist small businesses with basic legal concerns. Below are links to 2 such programs:

- Maine Volunteer Lawyers - <https://www.vlp.org/>
- Rudman Winchell Legal Lounge - <https://www.rudmanwinchell.com/legal-lounge/>

New Business Startup & Incubator Programs

Many local organizations, programs, and leaders in the area support small business startups, growth, and acceleration. Whether you're looking to network with other like-minded people, in need of coaching, are looking for small startup funding opportunities, or looking to learn more about entrepreneurship, then these programs are right for you:

- Big Gig - <https://www.bigbig.org/>
- Top Gun (Maine Center for Entrepreneurs) - <https://www.mced.biz/top-gun/>
- New Ventures - <https://newventuresmaine.org/programs/start-a-business/>
- Maine Stream Finance - <https://www.mainestreamfinance.org/business/business-classes/>
- Greenlight Maine - <https://greenlightmaine.com/>
- Foster Center for Student Innovation - <https://umaine.edu/innovation/create-communicate-commercialize/on-campus-services/business-incubator/>
- Upstart Maine - <https://www.upstartcentermaine.com/incubator>
- Maine Mentor Network - <https://www.mced.biz/mmn-mentors/>
- Union River Center for Innovation - <https://unionriverinnovation.com/>

Licenses & Permits

Don't know what business licenses or permits you should get for your business? Want to know how to incorporate in Maine? Do you know where to obtain corporate forms? No worries, because the State of Maine has that information available on its website. Click the links below for more details:

- Maine Business Answer - <https://apps.web.maine.gov/cgi/online/businessanswers/index.pl>
- Maine.gov Corporate Resources - <https://www.maine.gov/portal/business/corporate.html>

- Maine.gov Forming a Corporation - <https://www.maine.gov/sos/cec/corp/incorporating.html>

Textbook Information

Entrepreneurs wear a lot of hats when it comes to running a business. As a result, there's a lot of information out there that's available to help entrepreneurs learn more about marketing, accounting, social media, finance, human resources, etc. Below is a list of websites where you can download textbook documents and read them at no cost:

Open Textbook Libraries

- University of Minnesota - <https://open.umn.edu/opentextbooks/>
- RICE University - <https://openstax.org/subjects/business>
- Saylor Academy - <https://www.saylor.org/books/#acc>
- BC Campus - <https://open.bccampus.ca/browse-our-collection/find-open-textbooks/>

Market Research

Gathering information about target markets and understanding who your customers will be can sometimes be challenging. However, performing market research can help a business design and sell better products/services, improve customer experience, and help you make better-informed decisions about your business. Below are some links to helpful tools/resources that assist with market research:

- Maine State Library System - <https://login.wv-o-ursus-proxy13.ursus.maine.edu/login?url=https://www.referenceusa.com> (*You will need a Maine State Library card to access. If you don't have one, you can register for one for free at: <https://www.maine.gov/msl/services/libcard.htm>*)
- SBDC National Information Clearinghouse - <https://www.sbdnet.org/>
- Maine & Co. Support - <https://maineco.org/about-us/>
- Bureau of Labor Statistics - <https://stats.bls.gov/>
- Maine Site Selector Tool - <https://www.selectmainesites.com/>
- Maine DOT Traffic Counts - <https://www.maine.gov/mdot/traffic/counts/>

Workshops, Webinars, Trainings, and Events

The world of business is perpetually changing and evolving. Keeping up to date with new developments in the industry can be one of the most challenging aspects of starting and operating a business. Because of this, some wonderful nonprofits offer workshops, webinars, and often free events that small business owners/entrepreneurs can take advantage of:

- SCORE Workshops - <https://bangor.score.org/>
- New Ventures Classes - <https://newventuresmaine.org/class-schedules/>
- Maine Stream Finance Classes - <https://www.mainestreamfinance.org/business/business-classes/>
- SBDC Workshops - <https://mainesbdc.centerdynamics.com/events.aspx?days=90&layout=4>
- Maine PTAC Events - <https://www.maineptac.org/events/>

- Eastern Maine Development Corporation Events - <https://www.emdc.org/connect/events/>
- Maine SBDC Workshops - <https://www.mainesbdc.org/workshops/>
- SBA Learning Center - <https://www.sba.gov/learning-center>
- SBDC Training - <https://sbdctraining.org/>

Government Contracting

Did you know the United States is the #1 purchaser of goods and services throughout the world? It's true! If you're interested in selling your company's products and/or services to local, state, or federal governments, this program is for you! Maine PTAC (short for Procurement Technical Assistance Centers) is a free, statewide program that helps small businesses with government contracting. Learn more about PTAC & government contracting by clicking the links below:

- Maine PTAC at EMDC - <https://www.maineptac.org/>
- Training Resources at U.S. General Services Administration - <https://www.gsa.gov/small-business/small-business-resources/training-resources>

Commercial Lending & Funding Opportunities

Obtaining business financing can be a daunting process, but many lending agencies can assist with commercial financing needs throughout the state. Whether you're looking for working capital, looking to purchase new machinery/buildings, interested in obtaining a line of credit, or have other financing needs, the below links can help you find a financing agency that can assist you:

- EMDC Lending - <https://www.emdc.org/services/lending/>
- Maine Lenders List - <https://www.sba.gov/offices/district/me/augusta/resources/maine-lenders-list>
- Maine Stream Finance - <https://www.mainestreamfinance.org/business/business-lending/>
- Four Directions Maine - <http://www.fourdirectionsmaine.org/lending/>
- TLP Financial Services - <http://tplfinancialservices.me/>
- Maine Angels (Investing) <https://www.maineangels.org/>
- Finance Authority of Maine - <https://www.famemaine.com/>
- Maine Venture Fund - <https://www.maineventurefund.com/>
- Slow Money Maine - <https://slowmoneymaine.com/>
- USDA Rural Development - <https://www.rd.usda.gov/>
- Kick Starter - <https://www.kickstarter.com/>
- Go Fund Me - <https://www.gofundme.com/>

Women and/or Minority-Owned Business Programs

Maine provides many programs specific to women & minority-owned businesses who're small business owners. If you're a woman or minority-owned business interested in working as a contractor with the Maine Department of Transportation or the Federal Government, then certification programs are engineered to ensure your success. There are also local organizations that promote the racial, cultural, and ethnic diversity in the region. Below are some links to organizations and programs that support women and minority-owned businesses.

- Maine DBE Program - <https://www.maine.gov/mdot/civilrights/dbe/> & <https://www.mainedbe.com/>

- SBA Government Contracting Site - <https://www.sba.gov/federal-contracting/contracting-assistance-programs>
- Four Directions - <http://www.fourdirectionsmaine.org/>
- Immigrant Welcome Center - www.welcomeimmigrant.org
- Women Standing Together - <https://www.womenstandingtogether.org/>
- Maine Multicultural Center - <https://mainemulticulturalcenter.org/>
- Maine Women's Network - <https://www.mainewomensnetwork.com/>
- Black Owned Maine - <https://www.blackownedmaine.com/>
- Score Hispanic Entrepreneurs - <https://www.score.org/hispanic-owned-business>

Veteran Business Resources

There are several excellent programs throughout the state and the nation that assist veterans looking to enter the world of business ownership. If you're a veteran and looking for funding, training, contracting opportunities, or other information relating to business ownership, then check out the links below:

- U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs Office of Small & Disadvantaged Business Utilization - <https://www.va.gov/osdbu/>
- SBA Veteran Outreach Business Center - <https://www.sba.gov/page/veterans-business-outreach-center-vboc-program>
- SBA Government Contracting - <https://www.sba.gov/federal-contracting/contracting-assistance-programs/service-disabled-veteran-owned-small-businesses-program>
- United Farmer Veterans of Maine - <https://www.ufvme.us/>

Workforce & Workforce Development

Are you looking to hire more employees? Are you curious about training programs and have a hard time filling positions for your company? If you answered yes, then fear not! There are plenty of resources available to assist you with your workforce & hiring needs:

- Eastern Maine Development Corporation - <https://www.emdc.org/workforce/>
- Economic Research Institute - <https://www.erieri.com/dlc>
- Maine DOL General Website - <https://www.maine.gov/labor/>
- Maine.gov Career Center - <http://www.mainecareercenter.gov/>
- Project Login - <https://www.projectlogin.com/techhire-maine/about>
- O'Net Online - <https://www.onetonline.org/>
- Maine.gov Center for Workforce Research and Information - <https://www.maine.gov/labor/cwri/>
- Maine Job Link - <https://joblink.maine.gov/>
- Eastern Maine Community College Workforce Development <https://www.emcc.edu/workforce-development/>

Business Software Tools

There are many creative software tools available for small businesses to utilize. Technology can be a great tool and asset when implemented correctly. Below are some recommended software programs that small businesses can utilize to remain productive, stay organized, and maintain contact with their client base:

- Hubspot - <https://www.hubspot.com/>
- Doodle - <https://doodle.com/en/>
- Mail Chimp - <https://mailchimp.com>
- Constant Contact - <https://constantcontact.com>
- Trello - <https://trello.com>
- Slack - <https://slack.com>
- Alternative To - <https://alternativeto.net>
- Wordpress - <https://wordpress.com/>

Business Taxes & Government Resources

There's a lot of helpful information available by the state and the federal government to ensure small business success. However, learning and understanding business taxes, safety/hiring laws, trademark/patent protection, energy-efficient upgrades, or other business concerns can be complicated and confusing. The below websites can assist you with these kinds of business concerns:

- Maine Revenue Services - <https://www.maine.gov/revenue>
- Social Security Administration - <https://www.ssa.gov/site/menu/en/>
- U.S. Census Bureau - <https://www.census.gov/>
- U.S. Patent and Trademark Office - <https://www.uspto.gov/>
- Occupational Safety and Health Administration - <https://www.osha.gov/>
- U.S. Department of Agriculture - <https://www.usda.gov/>
- Efficiency Maine - <https://www.efficiencymaine.com/>
- Maine.gov Business Portal - <https://www.maine.gov/portal/business/>
- Small Business Administration - <https://www.sba.gov/>
- Maine.gov Employee Rights and Services - <https://www.maine.gov/portal/employment/rights.html>
- Department of Labor Workers' Compensation - <https://www.dol.gov/general/topic/workcomp>

Municipal & Chamber of Commerce's Contact Information

Local chambers of commerce and municipalities can be extremely helpful when starting and supporting small business development. Below are links that can connect you with local resources:

- Maine Municipal Association Directory of Chambers - <https://memun.org/Training-Resources/Local-Government/Municipal-Websites>
- Bangor Region Chamber - <https://www.bangorregion.com/news/>
- Piscataquis Chamber - <https://www.piscataquischamber.com/>
- Ellsworth Area Chamber - <https://www.ellsworthmaine.gov/business/ellsworth-area-chamber-commerce/>
- Belfast Chamber - <https://www.belfastmaine.org/>

Small Business Support Organizations

There are so many small business support organizations in the state it's not funny! Some provide unique services dedicated to those looking to accomplish a specific goal or task. Other

organizations cater to specific business industries, and others cater to all industry types. Below is a list of the state's most important organizations for entrepreneurial and small business development, growth, sustainability, and acceleration.

- Startup Maine - <https://www.startupmaine.org>
- Maine SBA - <https://www.sba.gov/offices/district/me/augusta>
- USA.gov Small Business - <https://www.usa.gov/business?source=busa>
- UMaine Advanced Manufacturing Center - <https://www.umaine.edu/amc>
- CEI Maine - <https://www.ceimaine.org/>
- Foster Center for Student Innovation at Umaine - <https://umaine.edu/innovation/>
- Thomas College Business Innovation - <https://www.thomas.edu/haibi/>
- Maine Accelerates Growth - <http://maineacceleratesgrowth.com/>
- Maine Aquaculture Innovation Center - <https://www.maineaquaculture.org/>
- Maine Center for Entrepreneurs - <https://www.mced.biz/>
- Maine Development Foundation - <https://www.mdf.org/>
- Maine International Trade Center - <https://www.mitc.com/>
- Maine Manufacturing Extension Partnership - <https://www.mainemep.org/>
- Maine Community Colleges Workforce Training - <https://www.mccs.me.edu/workforce-training/train-my-workforce/maine-quality-centers/>
- Small Business Development Center - <https://www.mainesbdc.org/>
- Manufacturers Association of Maine - <https://mainemfg.com/>
- New Ventures (Entrepreneurial) - <https://newventuresmaine.org/>
- SCORE Maine - <https://www.scoremaine.org/>
- Scratch Pad Accelerator - <https://www.scratchpadaccelerator.com/>
- Startup Space Resource Compass - <https://startupSPACE.app/maine-resource-compass/recovery>
- Maine Stream Finance - <https://www.mainestreamfinance.org/>
- Four Directions Maine - <http://www.fourdirectionsmaine.org/>
- Maine Made - <https://www.mainemade.com/>
- Cooperative Development Institute - <https://cdi.coop/>
- Island Institute - <https://www.islandinstitute.org/>
- Maine Tourism - <https://www.mainetourism.com/>
- Better Business Bureau - <https://www.bbb.org/>
- Business Resource Partners Greater Bangor - <https://www.facebook.com/BRPforGreaterBangor>

Nonprofit Support Organizations

Looking to start a nonprofit? Wondering what funding is available for nonprofits? Want to know more about the resources that can assist you with starting/operating your nonprofit? Check out the links below:

- Maine Association of Nonprofits - <https://www.nonprofitmaine.org/>
- Maine.gov Non-Profits - <https://www.maine.gov/msl/libs/admin/nonprofits.htm>
- State Non-Profit Resources - <https://www.maine.gov/sos/cec/corp/nonprofitresources.html>
- Libra Foundation - <https://librafoundation.org/>
- Maine Philanthropy Center - <https://www.maine philanthropy.org/>
- Maine Community Foundation - <http://www.maine cf.org/>
- Grants.gov - <https://www.grants.gov/>

State & Regional Economic Development

The State of Maine has several Economic Development Districts (EDDs). Some organizations assist with regional/economic development. Check out the links below for more details about each:

- Eastern Maine Development Corporation - <https://www.emdc.org>
- Androscoggin Valley Council of Governments - <https://www.avcog.org>
- Greater Portland Council of Governments - <https://www.gpcog.org>
- Kennebec Valley Council of Governments - <https://www.kvcog.org/>
- Lincoln County Regional Planning Commission - <https://www.lcrpc.org/>
- Maine Rural Development Authority - <https://www.mainerda.org>
- Midcoast Council of Governments - <https://www.midcoastcog.com/>
- Midcoast Regional Redevelopment Authority - <http://mrra.us/>
- Northern Maine Development Commission - <https://www.nmdc.org>
- Piscataquis County Economic Development Council - <https://pcedc.org/>
- Sunrise County Economic Council - <https://www.sunrisecounty.org>
- Southern Maine Planning and Development Commission - <https://smpdc.org/>
- Maine Department of Economic and Community Development
<https://www.maine.gov/decd>

Farming & Food-Based Businesses

Agritourism, farmers' markets, farms, breweries, distilleries, creameries, wineries, sugar shacks, and other food and or beverage-based businesses are vital to Maine's economy and identity. Below are some resources for farming & food-based businesses:

- UMaine Cooperative Extension - <https://extension.umaine.edu/>
- Get Real Maine - <https://www.getrealmaine.com/>
- Maine Farmland Trust - <https://www.maineFarmlandtrust.org/>
- Maine Farmers Market - <http://www.maineFarmersmarkets.org/>
- Maine DACF Farmer Resources - <https://www.maine.gov/dacf/ard/resources/index.shtml>