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PICTURED ON COVER:  
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Crowning Daughters for Success, Lehigh Acres | Back Home Bakery Cafe, Crestview

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Please Call Again
“We are a very small company that manufactures, sells, and services electrical and non-electrical signs. We are construction-adjacent, and about 75 percent of our customers are small businesses. Our revenue has dropped about 47 percent. We have cut hours for our five employees, but we are still struggling to make payroll.”

Franziska Scone, Spectrum Signs and Graphics — Jacksonville

“We design, engineer, and sell wind musical instruments such as trumpets, saxophones, and flugelhorns. Most music retailers are not open at full capacity, and due to health concerns they can’t allow for customers to try out the instruments. Many musicians will not spend a large amount of money until they can try the instrument. COVID-19 does not allow us to do this, so we’re currently evaluating using ultraviolet light to sanitize the instruments, but there is no official solution in the industry.”

Melvin Quinones, Victory Music Instruments — Port St. Lucie

“We are a party and event rental company, and all of our events were canceled in a 24-hour period...We have exhausted our personal savings, and my husband and I have not taken a paycheck in months. When the PPP money ran out in June, we had to lay off everyone. We are, for the first time ever, on unemployment and food stamps ourselves. We are 58 and 61 years old.”

Richard and Sharon Curlis, RISH, Inc. — Titusville
Message from the CEO

Unprecedented (adjective): “something that has not happened before.”

Arguably, ‘unprecedented’ has been one of the most commonly used words to describe the year 2020. The novel coronavirus pandemic and the resulting economic recession, one of the most active hurricane seasons on record, the civil unrest movement—2020 has dramatically impacted our lives and become a major chapter in history that will be studied for years to come.

As steps were taken to slow the spread of the deadly coronavirus, small businesses across the country suffered. Statewide shelter-in-place mandates and the closure of non-essential businesses crippled small businesses. While the orders have lessened and Congress has passed sweeping legislation to provide emergency relief to businesses nationwide, small businesses are still suffering and, for many, their outlook is bleak.

Forced to, quite literally, innovate or face impending closure, small businesses have proved their resilient and entrepreneurial spirit. Businesses nationwide have pivoted their business models to attract customers, tap into new markets, and stay afloat.

Just as businesses have been forced to change the way they operate, we at the Florida Small Business Development Center (SBDC)

Network—the state’s principal provider of small business assistance—have also evolved to serve the changing needs of small businesses across the state.

Appointments with clients that were traditionally held face-to-face are now being held via conference call, Zoom, and via other web-conferencing platforms. Workshops and training sessions historically held in-person are now being offered on-demand. As small businesses have struggled to stay afloat, the demand for our services has never been greater.

Since March, we have helped small businesses access more than $208.5 million in state and federal disaster assistance, including the Paycheck Protection Program, Economic Injury Disaster Loan, and Florida Small Business Emergency Bridge Loan programs.

Demand for consulting, training, and resources to navigate the pandemic and adapt to doing business in the new normal has skyrocketed:

SBDCs across the state have seen a 129 percent increase in businesses served and a 43.3 percent increase in consulting hours delivered.
You can read more about our efforts to help small businesses recover from the coronavirus in the following pages of this report.

**Outlook for 2021**

As we look to the future, conditions remain uncertain. Though the economy slowly begins to improve and the proverbial “light at the end of the tunnel” becomes closer as the possibility of a vaccine by the end of the year increases, small businesses still face challenges.

To examine the long-term impacts of the coronavirus on small businesses statewide, we recently partnered with the Florida Chamber Foundation and the University of West Florida Haas Center to conduct our Small Business COVID Impact Survey.

Small business owners impacted by the pandemic were encouraged to participate in the survey and share their outlook and experiences, which proved eye-opening. Overwhelmingly, small businesses have experienced a devastating blow due to the coronavirus and a need for additional disaster aid is clear. You can find the preliminary results of our study in the subsequent pages of this report.

We remain committed to helping small businesses recover during these difficult times. While the road ahead is uncertain, thanks to the support of our funding partners and stakeholders, we stand ready for what lies ahead. Those in need continue to turn to the Florida SBDC Network in the best and worst of times. We are grateful to all who help us fulfill this promise.

**A Special Thank You**

This year is my last as CEO of the Florida SBDC Network. I am extremely proud and honored to have led our network over the last ten years and I’m especially proud of the impact we have made in the lives of so many Floridians and our economy.

While we accomplished many milestones during this time, I believe our best days lie ahead. I could not be more confident in the importance and impact of our work, or in my confidence that Cheryl Kirby, our chief operating officer, is the right leader to drive us into our next chapter. I know that she, our executive leadership team, and our talented employees will build on our successes and help our network and small businesses statewide weather the road ahead.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank you for your support during my tenure as CEO. I am extremely proud of what we have accomplished together and I am excited to witness the important work the Florida SBDC Network will achieve in the years ahead.

Michael W. Myhre, CEO
Coronavirus Recovery Efforts

The coronavirus, a respiratory illness originating in the Wuhan province of China, continues its deadly rampage across the globe. To date, the virus has infected more than 30 million people across the globe and, tragically, has taken the lives of nearly one million.

In times like these, the Florida SBDC Network serves as the “first responders” for small businesses. As part of our service offering, we employ consultants who specialize in disaster preparedness and recovery.

When a disaster does occur, the Florida SBDC Network is there to help. Consultants at the Florida SBDC guide applicants to the best resources for them, explain the eligibility criteria of the loans, assist with applications, walk them through the review process, determine how to put the funds to their best use, and ensure they have the right plan to be successful when conditions improve.

On March 17, Governor DeSantis activated the state’s emergency bridge loan program to provide an immediate, interest-free source of capital to help small businesses bridge the gap until long-term resources, such as federal assistance, became available.

The need for this program was staggering—more than 38,000 businesses applied for assistance.

In partnership with the Florida Department of Economic Opportunity and Florida First Capital Finance Corporation, the Florida SBDC Network helped nearly 1,000 small businesses secure $50 million in loans.

On March 27, Congress passed and the President signed the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security Act (CARES Act), which offered relief and emergency capital for small businesses, including the Paycheck Protection Program and Economic Injury Disaster Loan program.

Since March, the network has helped clients secure more than $158 million in federal assistance.

In addition to helping businesses apply for assistance, we have provided virtual assistance to help small businesses pivot and navigate the new normal in light of COVID-19.

Our goal is not just to help small businesses weather the pandemic, but to make them stronger and more resilient moving forward.
**CARES Act**

Recognizing the important role SBDCs nationally play in disaster recovery and the financial strain this virus has placed on service delivery, Congress granted a special, one-time appropriation for SBDCs as part of the CARES Act. The funding allows SBDCs to hire temporary staff to ramp up long-term coronavirus recovery efforts. In times of disaster, SBDCs historically do not receive any supplemental funding for recovery efforts.

As a result, we increased service capacity by 50 percent to help small businesses access the capital and resources they need to weather the long-term impacts of the virus.

These resources also allowed us to conduct a special research study in partnership with the Florida Chamber Foundation and University of West Florida Haas Center on the long-term impacts of the storm.

The preliminary results of the survey offered a glimpse at the bleak conditions small businesses are facing. Since the beginning of the pandemic, 53 percent of respondents reported having to suspend storefront operations due to a government mandate or personal choice. Operations remain suspended for 20 percent of those businesses.

As small businesses across the state look to the future, many of their concerns remain.

**Business Recovery & Innovation Center (BRIC)**

Just as businesses have had to pivot their business models to survive, we have fundamentally changed the way we serve businesses, too. This special appropriation has helped us ensure we have the resources and technology to serve clients in the “new normal,” allowing us to purchase Zoom licenses for our consultants statewide to conduct virtual appointments and host live webinars.

Also, this appropriation will allow us to enhance our website and fund the development of our new Business Recovery and Innovation Center (BRIC).

The BRIC will serve as the centralized resource center for aspiring and existing small businesses in the state. As part of the BRIC, small businesses will have access to on-demand webinars and other resources to start and grow a business.
COVID Stories: Successes and Struggles

We know there’s more to the story. Along with our quantitative research study, we’ve interviewed hundreds of small business owners from across the state. We’ve heard some incredible stories of resilience, and we’ve heard some heartbreaking stories of businesses on the brink of closing. We look forward to sharing these stories with legislators and the public to help them understand the specific needs of businesses, straight from the owners of those businesses.

Wanda Barton

Xtremely Clean Janitorial Service, LLC specializes in commercial office cleaning and post-construction cleaning. When owner Wanda Barton decided to diversify by adding government contracts to her business, she wasn't quite sure how to get started. In 2014, after doing her own research, she started working with certified business consultant Janette Blanco, of the Florida SBDC at Hillsborough County.

Barton started her business with just one employee—herself—and today she has more than 90 employees and has landed approximately 18 recurring government contracts—some worth millions—so far, which she says is her biggest success to date.

Even with all of her success, she still faces challenges. Most recently, the COVID-19 pandemic added a new set of challenges in terms of keeping the business afloat while waiting for the state to reopen. She reached out to Blanco again to get guidance in applying for the Emergency Bridge Loan program and the U.S. Small Business Administration’s Paycheck Protection Program.

Blanco guided Barton through securing a six figure Paycheck Protection Program loan to sustain her staff. “She proactively assisted [me] with getting the disaster assistance that was needed to keep the company sustained in the pandemic,” Barton said. “She was very responsive and alleviated a lot of stress for me as the business owner.”
COVID Story: HalfMoon Empanadas, Miami

Pilar Guzman Zavala

Pilar Guzman Zavala and her husband Juan have owned HalfMoon Empanadas in Miami for 12 years. They have 13 locations and about 100 employees. Only one location with a walkup window was able to stay open when COVID first hit.

Temporarily, Pilar had to close locations and lay off hourly employees. However, with the help of the Florida SBDC at Florida International University, she applied for a $100,000 Emergency Bridge Loan. With that money she was able to bring back 11 managers. She also applied for the SBA’s Paycheck Protection Program and Economic Injury Disaster Loan program.

Closing stores and letting go of her hourly employees, mainly her cashiers, was heartbreaking, she said.

“It brought back a lot of memories when we almost went bankrupt in the early days. But there is nothing good about those negative emotions. It is a time when leaders need to step up. I know my team is looking up to me. If I am stressed and nervous and don’t know what to do, they are going to feel worse. I have to focus on the positive.”

While waiting for the loans to come through, Pilar and Juan and their team got busy and creative, working on their digital marketing presence, including a major rebranding effort they are preparing as well as national expansion plans for doing online sales in airports.

“After this crisis passes, there will be opportunities because this situation reinforces how important it is as a business to be able to deliver your product anywhere,” Pilar said, demonstrating true resilience.
Our Impact

Service Snapshot

12,535
Existing & aspiring business owners consulted

114,064
Consulting hours delivered

Consulting Client Breakdown

5,685 or 45%
Women

1,789 or 14%
Veterans & SCDVs

5,779 or 46%
Minorities

Funding Data

2020 SOURCES OF FUNDS [BUDGET]

$8.6 Million
Federal*

38%

$4.0 Million
State**

42%

$7.7 Million
Local & Private***

20%

Excludes one-time CARES funding*
State funds were awarded beginning January 1, 2020**
Excludes local and private in-kind support***

2020 USES OF STATE FUNDS [BUDGET]*

Personnel (Salaries & Fringe)

89%

Other Costs

11%
### Business & Economic Outcomes

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Value</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sales generated*</td>
<td>$4.4B</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gov’t Contracts acquired**</td>
<td>$496.5M</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Capital accessed**</td>
<td>$255.3M</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jobs Impacted direct, indirect, induced*</td>
<td>37,966</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cost per Job to Florida taxpayers*</td>
<td>$269</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

For every state $1 invested in the Florida SBDC,

- $1 returns $50 to the state in tax revenue.*

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$2.5 Billion **GRP IMPACT*** on Florida’s economy as a result of Florida SBDC services

*2019 Economic Impact Analysis of the Florida SBDC Network by FSU CEFA* | Reported by respondent clients of outcomes resulting from or in part due to assistance received in 2019**
At the Florida SBDC Network, we believe we create unimaginable possibilities for prosperity for small businesses. In turn, we believe we create meaningful economic impact and growth for our state that benefits every Floridian.

We do this by pulling together the intellectual capital, experience, and resources small businesses need to overcome challenges and find success.

From strategic planning to exit planning, our certified, professional business consultants and specialists focus on one thing—creating a better Florida for all by helping businesses grow. And best of all, we provide that consulting at no cost to the small business owner.

Our Staff’s Why

We asked team members why they love working for the Florida SBDC Network:

Ayesha Haider, Consultant for the Florida SBDC at UWF
“I am a firm believer that SME growth and subsequent job creation are key drivers of a healthy economy. I also joined the SBDC because I value the organization’s culture of promoting professional development.”

Carol Minor, Center Director of the Florida SBDC at Hillsborough County
“Helping businesses grow and succeed is my ministry. By helping businesses to grow, I also help them to create jobs. By equipping business owners with knowledge and resources, they are able to provide needed goods and services to our communities. Goods, services, and jobs are the economic development ecosystem that improves and sustains our communities.”

Katie Muldoon, Marketing Coordinator for the Florida SBDC at IRSC
“I’ve always been passionate about getting involved in my community and the lives of those around me. Through my employment with the Florida SBDC I can network with businesses in my area, as well as grow with an organization dedicated to the economic growth and empowerment of the people I have come to know.”

Stephane Konan, Consultant for the Florida SBDC at FAMU
“I want to participate in Tallahassee’s economic development by helping local businesses grow and succeed. Also, I want to assist small business owners in finding solutions to their various issues using both my educational and professional background.”
About the Florida SBDC Network

“The siren call for many entrepreneurs isn’t money, it’s freedom. The freedom to chart your own path, the freedom to build what you want with the people you love.”—Andrew Wilkinson, Founder of MetaLab and Flow

There are a variety of reasons that people become entrepreneurs: to be their own boss, to pursue their passions, financial reasons—the list goes on. Yet, these reasons all have one thing in common: freedom.

For many, having the freedom to pursue their life’s passion and not have anyone standing in their way is invigorating. However, the stress of knowing that, ultimately, being an entrepreneur means taking all the risk and making the difficult decisions that could potentially make or break a business can be crippling.

This is where Small Business Development Centers (SBDCs) help. Established by Congress in 1980, SBDCs foster local, regional, and state economic prosperity by providing small and medium-sized businesses access to professional business consulting, education, and resources to grow and succeed.

The goal of the Florida SBDC Network, and SBDCs nationally, is to help aspiring and existing small businesses—our state’s primary economic and job contributors—mitigate common entrepreneurial pitfalls, thus yielding higher success rates and contributing positive growth for our state’s economy.

Experienced and trusted business experts committed to Florida’s small business success

At the Florida SBDC Network, we’re passionate about helping small businesses achieve their dreams. Our team of professional business consultants, many of whom are former business owners and executives, leverage their world-class expertise to help small businesses in areas including:

- Strategic & Business Plan Development
- Accessing Capital for Business Growth
- Strategic Intelligence & Market Research
- Market & Sales Growth Development
- Exporting & International Trade
- Acquiring Government Contracts
- Financial Literacy & Cash Flow Management
- Business Recovery & Continuation
At the Florida SBDC, we create possibilities for the students of our university and college partners by providing “real-world” experiential learning that fosters career development and the retention of talent in our state.

Learn how we foster learners to earners to job creators and read testimonials from students below:

### Career Opportunities & Internships
Florida SBDCs employ students across various disciplines as interns and employees.

**Brooke Gaskell, UWF ‘20—BA Marketing; Consultant, Florida SBDC at UWF**

“I began as a marketing intern for the Florida SBDC headquarters, learning about the mission, vision, and values of the network. In January 2020, I accepted an intern position with the Florida SBDC at UWF. The regional position broadened my view to our organization tremendously, providing invaluable real-world experience. After I received my bachelor’s degree in marketing with a minor in management, I was offered a full-time position with the Florida SBDC at UWF. The two internship experiences have made me more passionate about small businesses and the work I get to do every day to help them grow and succeed.”

### Applied & Experiential Learning
Florida SBDCs work with faculty to coordinate and oversee student team consulting projects and internships with client businesses to solve real business challenges, including marketing assessments and business/strategic plans.

**Jonathan Diaz, UCF ‘20; Carter Howard, UCF ‘22; and Danielle Mayers, UCF ‘20**

University of Central Florida MBA students Jonathan Diaz, Carter Howard, and Danielle Mayers were awarded top honors by the Small Business Institute (SBI) as part of its prestigious student project competition. The students developed an in-depth sales and marketing strategy for Lost Returns, Inc. of Winter Park, a reverse logistics company specializing in managing lost and found items. Competing with MBA teams from across the country, the team placed second in the Graduate Specialized category.

### Fostering Tomorrow’s Job Creators
Florida SBDCs provide consulting, training, and resources to help aspiring young entrepreneurs—many of whom are students or recent alumni—reach their business goals.

**Santiago Iguaran, USF ‘16—BA Finance; Owner of MYS Selection**

Perfume retailer Santiago Iguaran owns two stores in St. Petersburg’s Tyrone Square Mall. Called MYS Selection, the stores are the only perfume outlets in the mall. Iguaran credits his success to “real-world” knowledge gained from his degree from USF and help from the Florida SBDC at USF when he was ready to expand into the second outlet. Florida SBDC business consultant Brad Owens helped Iguaran work through his ideas and business plan. Classes he took from the Florida SBDC at USF also helped with that plan, along with finances and taxes. He encourages other business owners to take advantage of the resources available at the Florida SBDC. “They’re going to help you grow as a person and expand your business,” he said.
We welcome new clients and the support of stakeholders and friends who believe in our mission as much as we do. For more information, or to follow us on social media and subscribe for news, visit us at www.FloridaSBDC.org.

Legislators

Florida SBDCs help you help your constituent small businesses succeed. Serving tens of thousands of small businesses each year, Florida SBDCs serve on the front lines helping small businesses in communities across the state. Through connecting with your local Florida SBDC, we can help you:

Serve as a small business resource to your constituency

Florida SBDCs can provide success stories, articles, and other content for social media and your newsletter. Add us to your website as a small business resource to offer your constituency training, consulting, and other resources. We also welcome you to contact us for small business data and any questions you may have about resources, programs, and policies.

Secure small business witnesses for hearings and roundtables

Small Businesses

Are you an aspiring or existing small business owner? Connect with your local Florida SBDC for more information on our services and ways you can support your local center and other small businesses in your community:

Schedule a consulting appointment

Visit us online at www.FloridaSBDC.org to complete our online request for consulting form. Once the form is submitted, you will be contacted by the Florida SBDC that serves your area to schedule an appointment.

Attend a workshop

The Florida SBDC Network provides online training and offers hundreds of workshops each year on topics ranging from the basics to advanced business management skills. To learn more, visit us at www.FloridaSBDC.org/get-training.

Participate in surveys

Each year, the Florida SBDC Network conducts a number of surveys on the needs and challenges of small businesses. This information is shared with our stakeholders for future policy-making in support of our state’s small businesses. To learn more, please email Dianne Gross at Dianne.Gross@FloridaSBDC.org.

Write letters to your legislators

Voicing your opinions to lawmakers is one of the most effective actions you can take to help your small business. Your representatives want to hear from you to learn how legislation is affecting your day-to-day operations.

Stakeholders & Partners

Connect with your local Florida SBDC for partnership opportunities to serve small businesses in your community.
Our Network of Partners

9 Regions • 40+ Centers • 50+ Outreach Locations
Headquartered at UWF

Our Success Starts at UWF and Makes Waves Across Florida

Since 1976, the University of West Florida has served as the headquarters for the Florida SBDC Network, a State University System, Board of Governors—designated statewide university center established to pursue, administer, and deliver small business development programs.

Through funding, collaboration, alliances, and teamwork, partners play a significant role in making the work of the Florida SBDC possible. Our network partners with Florida’s state universities, colleges, and other economic development organizations to assist small and medium-sized businesses, regardless of industry or stage of business. The synergistic effect of this partnership has resulted in a long history of positive revenue and economic growth for Florida and invaluable support to more than 1.2 million aspiring and existing small business owners.

We’re proud to be state designated as Florida’s Principal Provider of Business Assistance [Fla. Stat. § 288.001] and the state’s first responder for small businesses [ESF-18].

The Florida SBDC Network is a statewide partnership program nationally accredited by the Association of America’s SBDCs and funded in part by the U.S. Small Business Administration, Defense Logistics Agency, State of Florida, and other private and public partners, with the University of West Florida serving as the network’s headquarters. Florida SBDC services are extended to the public on a nondiscriminatory basis. Language assistance services are available for individuals with limited English proficiency.