

September 28, 2016

Fred Kenney, Ex. Dir.
Vermont Economic Progress Council
VT Agency of Commerce and Community Development
1 National Life Dr., Davis Building, 6th FL
Montpelier, VT 05620-0501

Dear Mr. Kenney:

In response to your inquiry about what assistance is most useful for small businesses at startup and growth phases in Vermont, please see our lists below.

Start-ups

Most Requested:

- Grant to start a business because the individual does not have sufficient personal equity to invest (there is a continuous misunderstanding that the government provides grants to start a business)
- Loan to start a business for working capital, equipment, inventory, leasehold improvements or real property
- Business advising on the practical action steps they need to take to start their business in Vermont such as business structure, registering with the Secretary of State, Tax ID, state or local licenses, labor laws, zoning or environmental permits
- Business advising on buying a business, how to value the business.

Most Needed:

- Business advising on determining the goals of the prospective owner with respect to the new business (the big vision), whether the business idea is viable, whether the individual is well suited to go into the business (prior experience, support of family, personal resources)
- Business plan or business model canvas, projections of the business cash flow
- Capital, usually in the form of owner cash and loans, sufficient to launch and operate the business for at least 6-12 months including working capital, equipment, inventory, leasehold improvements or real property. Larger scale startups and tech startups typically rely on investor equity from individual investors, seed capital funds, venture funds, and the new Vermont Small Business Offering is another needed pathway to small rounds of investment
- Business financial literacy – understanding the importance of bookkeeping/accounting or financial records, tracking the numbers that matter (key performance indicators)
- Business advice on marketing the new business including traditional and digital marketing, website, social media

- Legal, insurance, tax and employment regulations
- Business management training
- Accelerators, co-working spaces, maker spaces, commercial kitchens & co-packing
- Industry and peer mentors
- Pitch opportunities, networking opportunities with entrepreneurial ecosystem
- Innovation, prototyping or technology vetting technical assistance

Existing Businesses

Most Requested:

- Capital to grow the business including loans and equity investment
- Business advising on marketing
- Relief from regulatory burdens of compliance and perceived tax burden

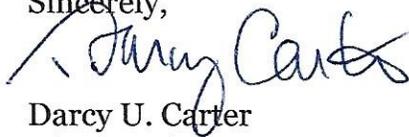
Most Needed:

- Follow on business advising
- Managing by the numbers – understanding and tracking key performance indicators
- Strategic growth planning: identify opportunities, assemble resources for growth and implement plan
- CEO Leadership training
- Growth capital to support expansion of products, space, inventory, markets and additional employees
- Talent acquisition, training, compensation, management, retention/termination and employee regulation compliance
- Sustaining competitive advantage, retaining customers and gaining new customers, marketing and sales strategies
- Managing technology and innovation
- Focus on managing sales growth, efficiency and profitability
- Move from survival to success stage

Please let me know if you need any additional information. We have an SBA Resource Guide for Small Business, Vermont Edition, updated yearly, which contains many of the resources available to Vermont businesses, and is available in hardcopy or at:

https://www.sba.gov/sites/default/files/files/resourceguide_3156.pdf .

Sincerely,



Darcy U. Carter
District Director