

bluepages

CITY RESOURCES FOR SMALL BUSINESS OWNERS

Published by
Small Business Development Program
Economic Growth and Redevelopment Services Office
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www.AustinSmallBiz.org
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small business
DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM
CITY OF AUSTIN





City of Austin

Economic Growth and Redevelopment Services Office

Small Business Development Program

P.O. Box 1088 Austin, TX 78767

March 30, 2012

Dear Entrepreneur:

The City of Austin Small Business Development Program (SBDP) recognizes the importance our local small business community has on our economy. Within the City of Austin, multiple departments offer small business development programs and services. SBDP's mission is to provide capacity building information, tools, and resources. To support this vision, SBDP offers an informative resource guide that will increase your awareness of specific City of Austin benefit offerings designed to help you in the development of your business.

We are pleased to present you with the first edition of *Blue Pages*. This directory is a compilation of twenty-eight programs offered by various City of Austin departments. Programs and services range from industry specific loan programs and rebates, to no-cost development assistance. Our goal for *Blue Pages* is to increase your awareness and use of the programs the City of Austin provides to aid in the development of your business.

In addition to *Blue Pages*, the Small Business Development Program offers no-cost *BizAid Business Orientation* classes; no-cost individualized business coaching; low-cost business education classes; and no-cost use of the Business Solutions Center, a technology resource center. Call 512.974.7800 or visit our website www.AustinSmallBiz.org for information about all our services and resources.

Thank you for being a part of Austin's vibrant and dynamic business community.

Sincerely,

Vicky Valdez
Small Business Administrator
Small Business Development Program
City of Austin
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Austin Energy

Programs:

Austin Energy Green Building

Website: <https://my.austinenergy.com/wps/portal/aegb/aegb/home>

512.482.5300

Email: greenbuilding@austinenergy.com

Small Business Service: Austin Energy Green Building (AEBG) program's experts (mechanical, electrical and architectural engineers, architects, and other code specialists) will partner with your company to establish commercial developments. These experienced professionals guide you through the design and construction process; review, rate, and market your project, as well as provide consultants invested in your success.

AEBG also:

- Helps integrate sustainability goals into your project from day one
- Facilitates an integrated design process
- Shares the latest methods for improving your building's energy and water efficiency
- Identifies available financial incentives for energy and water-efficient technologies

In addition to collaborating with you on commercial developments to build green, Austin Energy can help guide you through developments that require an AEBG rating.

Commercial and Small Business Power Saver Programs

Website: <http://www.austinenergy.com/Energy%20Efficiency/commlIndex.htm>

512.482.5346

Email: conservation@austinenergy.com

Small Business Service: Austin Energy offers businesses up to \$200,000 in rebates per site to help underwrite the cost of energy efficiency improvements that will save money. By investing in energy saving projects, Austin Energy also reduces the need to generate additional power during peak demand periods and delays the need to build additional generation, which keeps electric rates in Austin lower. Small business customers and small 501c3 non-profit organizations are eligible for a 30% bonus on qualifying rebates.

Infrastructure and Property Leasing Program

Website:

<http://www.austinenergy.com/Commercial/Other%20Services/Infrastructure%20Rental/index.htm>

512.972.7626 or 512.322.6396

Email: irprograminfo@austinenergy.com

Small Business Service: Infrastructure Asset Management works with businesses needing access to Austin Energy's and the City of Austin's infrastructure assets to further their business goals. IAM actively researches, monitors, tracks and inventories existing Austin Energy and City of Austin infrastructure and approved properties. These assets are then marketed for lease to appropriate businesses and governmental organizations. IAM continually monitors emerging technologies and industries to partner with Austin Energy and City of Austin assets. Infrastructure Asset Management assists customers through every step of the leasing process. Austin Energy can provide a broad range of assistance and services to help your business achieve its goals.

Services include:

- Site research and inventory review
- Contract development
- Engineering review
- Legal assistance from staff with expertise in telecommunications and high-tech industries
- Construction assistance
- Mapping

Multi-Family Partnership Program

Website: <http://www.austinenergy.com/Commercial/Other%20Services/Multi-Family%20Partnership%20Program/index.htm>

512.494.9400

Email: multifamily.partnership@austinenergy.com

Small Business Service: The Multi-Family Partnership Program (MPP) provides automatic transfer of utility services from vacated rentals to the name of the property owner. Participants can monitor activity for all units in their complex through our secure MPP website.

Small Business Lighting Program

Website:

<http://www.austinenergy.com/Energy%20Efficiency/Programs/Rebates/Commercial/Commercial%20Energy/SmallBusinessCutSheetJune2011.pdf>

512.505.3704

Email: SmlIBP@austinenergy.com

Small Business Service: The Multi-Family Partnership Program (MPP) provides automatic transfer of utility services from vacated rentals to the name of the property owner. Participants can monitor activity for all units in their complex through our secure MPP website.

Development Assistance Center

Program:

Development Assistance Center

Website: <http://www.austintexas.gov/department/development-assistance-center>

512.974.6370

Email: dacinfo@austintexas.gov

Small Business Service: The Development Assistance Center (DAC) serves as the initial interface between the community and the department. Members of the community can come to DAC with questions and receive consulting information. Information distributed by DAC serves as the foundation for both the customer preparing their land development application and the City staff conducting the site review and inspection.

- Development process and regulation consulting
- Records Research Assistance
- Document Sales
- Zoning Verification - (must have County Tax Parcel number)
- Site Plan correction/determination/exemption
- Land status Determination
- Board of Adjustment support
- Temporary Use Permits
- BYOB Venue Permit/Licensing verification
- Sign / banner / billboard review and permitting
- Outdoor amplified sound and outdoor music venue permitting
- Utility consulting
- Water and Wastewater meter sales
- Electrical meter can sales

Economic Growth and Redevelopment Services Office

Programs:

Austin Is IT: Emerging Technology Program

Website: <http://www.austintexas.gov/contact-information/emerging-technologies>

512.974.1357

Email: eve.richter@austintexas.gov

Small Business Service: The Emerging Technologies Program brings technology companies to the region and helps those already here grow through a combination of business consulting, matchmaking & cheerleading. Our goal is jobs and investment in the Austin technology sectors.

Program staff works one-on-one with companies as well as with local partner and community organizations. Services offered to entrepreneurs and businesses include:

- Business Consulting – Have a one-on-one meeting with our staff to get recommendations to help your company grow and thrive.
- Matchmaking – We can help connect you to the contacts and resources you need to be successful.
- Cheerleading – We can help promote your company and its accomplishments through print media, social media, and word-of-mouth.

International Program

Website: <http://www.austintexas.gov/department/international-trade-and-investment-program>

512.974.7833

Email: natalie.betts@austintexas.gov

Small Business Service: The International Economic Development Program is the City of Austin's focal point for international business, trade, educational and cultural activities. The program offers classes on international trade for small and medium-sized businesses, organizes international trade delegation visits, and facilitates international business dialogue and partnerships. The program also educates the community about the benefits of international expansion for our local economy.

Next Level Program

Website: <http://www.austintexas.gov/department/next-level-program>

512.974.7833

Email: Janet.Seibert@austintexas.gov

Small Business Service: The Cultural Arts Division offers Take it to the Next Level to build the business capacity of the creative sector; provide professional development; highlight current discussions from the field; and grow jobs, wealth and the economic impact of the creative economy.

Small Business Development Program

Website: <http://www.austintexas.gov/department/small-business-development-program>

512.974.7800

Email: sbdp.news@austintexas.gov

Small Business Service: The mission of the Small Business Development Program (SBDP) is to foster job creation and support the growth of new and existing businesses by providing capacity building information, tools, and resources. We provide counseling and assistance to small businesses. Our focus is to develop and empower small businesses in order to strengthen their business capability and survivability.

At the Small Business Development Program, our main objective is to provide assistance and business solutions to emerging small businesses. To achieve this goal, we make our own resources available to small business owners, as well as provide points of contact to outside resources beyond the scope of what we do at SBDP.

Neighborhood Housing and Community Development

Programs:

Community Preservation and Revitalization

Website: <http://www.austintexas.gov/department/small-business-assistance>

512.974.3114

Email: hernando.hernandez@austintexas.gov

Small Business Service: The Community Preservation and Revitalization (CPandR) program provides loans to businesses inside the CPandR zone in East Austin. Existing businesses, start-ups and non-profits that are located or plan to locate inside the CPandR zone are eligible for the program.

A brochure may be found at:

<http://www.ci.austin.tx.us/housing/downloads/CP&R%20brochure%20010809.pdf>

Façade Improvement Program

Website: <http://www.austintexas.gov/department/facade-improvement>

512.974.3863

Email: N/A

Small Business Service: The Façade Improvement Program provides a matching grant to eligible business owners with commercial buildings located in the designated East Austin program corridors seeking to improve, renovate, or restore commercial building façades. FIP assists with improving and enhancing the visual quality of commercial buildings and is part of the City's ongoing revitalization efforts. Eligible activities include but are not limited to: structural improvements to building façade, exterior electrical and lighting improvements, permanent landscaping, and installation, repair or replacement of canopies, window awnings, as well as, a number of other exterior façade improvements.

A brochure may be found at:

http://www.ci.austin.tx.us/ahfc/downloads/facade_improvement_brochure_2010.pdf

Purchasing Office

Program:

Vendor Self Service

Website: https://www.ci.austin.tx.us/financeonline/vendor_connection/index.cfm

512.974.2500

Email: N/A

Small Business Service: The Vendor Connection Website allows vendors to view detailed information about current City business opportunities, create subscriber accounts to subscribe to specific solicitations, and download solicitation documents. Vendor Connection contains a brief but helpful tutorial that explains how to navigate the website and use its features. To access Vendor Connection

https://www.austintexas.gov/financeonline/vendor_connection/index.cfm

Small and Minority Business Resources Department

Programs:

Bonding

Website: <http://www.austintexas.gov/department/bonding>

512.974.7733

Email: luke.luper@austintexas.gov

In order to help vendors overcome the challenges that can be associated with bonding, the Small & Minority Business Resources Department provides a Bonding Financial Consultant at no cost. The Bonding Consultant meets one-on-one with business owners to educate and assist them with their bonding needs. To be eligible for these services companies need only be a City of Austin Small & Minority Business Resources certified MBE, WBE, or DBE or in process of applying for certification. Consulting services are provided at no cost.

Disadvantaged Business Certification

Website: <http://www.austintexas.gov/department/certification-disadvantaged-business-enterprise-dbe>

512.974.7600

Email: dsmbr@austintexas.gov

Small Business Service: The City of Austin is a member of the Texas Unified Certification Program which certifies Disadvantaged Business Enterprises for participation in Department of Transportation federal contracting projects across the State of Texas in compliance with Code of Federal Regulations (49 CFR 26 and 23).

Minority/Women Business Enterprise Certification

Website: <http://www.austintexas.gov/department/small-and-minority-business>

512.974.7600

Email: dsmbr@austintexas.gov

Small Business Service: The purpose of the Small & Minority Business Resources Department is to administer the minority-owned and women-owned business enterprises (MBE/WBE) Procurement Program as established by City Council in 1987.

The City's MBE/WBE program is intended to:

- Promote and encourage MBEs and WBEs to participate in business opportunities with the City of Austin;
- Afford MBEs and WBEs an equal opportunity to compete for work on City contracts; and
- Encourage bidders to provide subcontracting opportunities to certified MBEs and WBEs by soliciting firms for subcontracting opportunities.

Plan Room

Website: [http://www.austintexas.gov/department/Small & Minority Business Resources-plan-room](http://www.austintexas.gov/department/Small%20&%20Minority%20Business%20Resources-plan-room)

Email: dsmbr@austintexas.gov

512.974.7745

The Small & Minority Business Resources Department Plan Room provides no-cost electronic access to the McGraw Hill Dodge system of drawings and construction specifications for projects in 100 counties in south and central Texas. The Small & Minority Business Resources Department also has hard copy plans and specifications from local, private, and public sector jobs, which may be viewed on-site or copied for a nominal fee. Get started by contacting Hemant Motwani to schedule the one-hour orientation session in order to learn how to operate the online service. Contact Hemant Motwani at 512.974.7745 for more information.

Small Business Development Program

Programs:

BizAid Business Orientation

Website: <http://www.austintexas.gov/department/bizaid>

512.974.7800

Email: joy.miller@austintexas.gov

Small Business Service: The Small Business Development Program's (SBDP) *BizAid Business Orientation* provides a general overview to opening a new small business or expanding an existing business. This course provides information on where entrepreneurs can find assistance at the idea, start-up, and existing stages of their business development. The orientation also covers key questions to ask yourself when starting or expanding a business and furnishes you with the information necessary to take the next step. There is no cost to attend. Through the *BizAid* program, you may schedule no-cost and confidential one-on-one small business development counseling and technical assistance. Register for upcoming classes at www.austinsmallbiz.com.

BizOpen Orientation

Website: <http://www.austintexas.gov/department/bizopen>

512.974.7800

Email: randi.jenkins@austintexas.gov

Small Business Service: The *BizOpen* Orientation provides an overview of the steps in the City of Austin's development process. The objective is to help you identify which processes are relevant to your business location development, and how to navigate the steps in a timely and efficient manner. Topics covered: development assessment (including land use, zoning and site plan review), building plan review permits, inspections, and certificate of occupancy.

Business Education Classes

Website: <http://www.austintexas.gov/department/bizaid>

512.974.7800

Email: sbdp.news@ci.austin.tx.us

Small Business Service: SBDP is committed to strengthening business owners through education. The Professional Development Center at The University of Texas at Austin delivers classes on starting a business, marketing, managing money, managing people, and business taxes. Each topic area includes component classes that teach specific skills. Completion of any six classes qualifies you for a Small Business Success Skills Certificate. For information on upcoming classes, visit SBDP Calendar of events at www.austinsmallbiz.com.

Business Solutions Center

Website: <http://www.austintexas.gov/department/business-solutions-center>

512.974.7786

Email: tj.owens@austintexas.gov

Small Business Service: The Business Solution Center is a no-cost small business research and technology center dedicated to helping small business owners identify solutions to their small business questions. Small business owners are provided no-cost access to a variety of research-based software programs and databases that aid in the business development process. Topics and Databases include population and geographical demographics, marketing opportunities, real estate research, business plan writing and a business database of over 1,500 small business documents. These services are delivered via a high-speed internet connection and current Microsoft and business software programs. Access to printers and fax machines is also available with nominal printing/faxing fees. These services are delivered via a T-1 internet connection and current Microsoft Office Suite software and provides hardware technology. In addition, our knowledgeable staff will assist small business owners with the navigation of our software and technology resources.

Explore Local Austin

Website: <http://www.austintexas.gov/department/explore-local-discover-austin>

512.974.7748

Email: preston.stewart@austintexas.gov

Small Business Service: The Small Business Development Program created ExploreLocalAustin.org to help Austin citizens and visitors discover locally-owned, small businesses. This online, interactive map allows potential customers to search for nearby businesses matching their needs. ExploreLocalAustin.org is a tool for promoting the idea of shopping locally, and serves as a community resource for finding local Austin small businesses. Sign-up is free and easy with no cost and no obligation.

Technical Assistance

Website: <http://www.austintexas.gov/department/bizaid>

512.974.7800

Email: sbdp.news@ci.austin.tx.us

Small Business Service: As an integral component of the BizAid program, the City of Austin provides free one-on-one coaching to those who have completed the *BizAid Business Orientation* class. BizAid Business coaches can help you write a business plan, develop a marketing plan, assess your financial readiness and much more. Find detailed information on our BizAid Business Coaching services by attending a *BizAid Business Orientation* class taught by SBDP. These classes are offered every Tuesday from 9 a.m. to 10:30 a.m. and occasionally in the evening. Register for a class at www.austinsmallbiz.com.

Austin Water Utility

Programs:

Commercial Irrigation Evaluations

Website: <http://www.austintexas.gov/department/commercial-irrigation-evaluations-and-rebates>

512.974.2199

Email: watercon@austintexas.gov

Small Business Service: Austin Water Utility (AWU) offers no-cost irrigation system evaluations to help commercial properties determine efficient watering schedules for their landscapes and identify existing equipment problems. Commercial customers receiving irrigation evaluations may also be eligible for rebates when making recommended upgrades to existing systems.

To request an evaluation, go to: http://www.ci.austin.tx.us/watercon/irrigation_audit.cfm

To apply for an irrigation rebate, go to:
http://www.ci.austin.tx.us/water/conservation/downloads/irrigationrebate_comm2.pdf

Commercial Process Water Evaluations

Website: <http://www.austintexas.gov/department/commercial-process-water-evaluation>

512.974.3514

Email: watercon@austintexas.gov

Small Business Service: As a no-cost service to AWU commercial customers, Water Conservation auditors are available to evaluate all aspects of your water consumption to determine how your company uses water. Auditors will suggest opportunities for reducing water consumption and discuss your eligibility for special commercial process rebates.

Commercial WashWise Rebate

Website: <http://www.austintexas.gov/department/washwise-rebate-program-0>

512.974.2199

Email: watercon@austintexas.gov

Small Business Service: Commercial properties may be eligible for rebates of up to \$250 per washing machine when installing water and energy efficient coin-operated machines. Rebates will not be given for machines that replace existing front-load washers or to new construction. Eligible washer models can be found here <http://www.cee1.org/com/cwsh/cwshspec.pdf> .

To apply for the rebate, complete and submit the form found at:

<http://www.ci.austin.tx.us/water/conservation/downloads/cwasherapp.pdf>

Note: Purchase and install washer after you have received your Letter of Intent from AWU Water Conservation.

Rainwater Harvesting Rebate Program

Website: <http://www.austintexas.gov/department/rainwater-harvesting-rebates>

512.974.2199

Email: watercon@austintexas.gov

Small Business Service: Rebates of \$0.50 per gallon of capacity for non-pressurized rainwater harvesting systems (i.e. rain barrels) and \$1.00 per gallon of capacity for pressurized rainwater harvesting systems (i.e. large cisterns with a pump) are available for qualifying purchases. Rebates are limited to no more than half the project cost with a lifetime maximum rebate of \$5,000. Customers installing rainwater harvesting systems with 500 gallons or more of capacity must submit their applications for pre-approval prior to purchasing or installing any system components. Click the link for most current rebate application: http://www.austintexas.gov/sites/default/files/files/Water/RebateApplications/rainh2o_rebate.pdf.

Special Commercial Process Rebates

Website: <http://www.austintexas.gov/department/commercial-process-water-evaluation>
512.974.3514

Email: watercon@austintexas.gov

Small Business Service: Water Conservation offers rebates of up to \$100,000 to industrial, commercial, and institutional customers for installing new equipment and processes that conserve water at existing facilities. Some projects may also qualify for property or sales tax exemptions or other incentives. Examples of eligible upgrades include:

- Capturing on-site sources of water such as air conditioner condensation, rainwater or foundation (French) drain water to use for landscape irrigation or cooling tower makeup;
- Reuse of high quality rinse water; and
- Installing water saving equipment or processes.

All projects must be approved prior to purchasing or installing any equipment. Projects will not be approved retroactively and program requirements are subject to change. Please contact Austin Water Utility for current program requirements.

Rather than using an application provided by your vendor, please make sure to download an updated version of the rebate application from our website at:
<http://www.austintexas.gov/sites/default/files/files/Water/Conservation/icispecialapp.pdf>.