

State and County Resources for Small Business Employers & Employees

March 19, 2020

Summary

The Small Business Development Centers in Contra Costa and Alameda County are scheduling “Pop-Up” Calls for business owners. They utilize Zoom, which provides a flexible platform where you can ask questions in a chat room and pop in and out, in accordance with your schedule.

I listened to a session featuring Margaret Jackson of the Alameda County Small Business Development Center.

The emphasis was on the **COVID-19 Survival Guide**, how to utilize information contained within, and how to work with SBDC advisory teams to fill out a loan application. The call was interactive and designed to share information that is known today. Because now is a time of uncertainty, it also presents opportunity. They encouraged creative thinking to fill niches that may exist that didn't exist before.

Featured guests were 15 SBA Partners from SBDC advisory teams. Advisors included real estate professionals, financial analysts, import / export professionals, a Google engineer helping with business starts, coaching, consulting, marketing, advertising professions, recruitment, hiring, and events planners.

SBDC reinforced that those businesses that can pivot or utilize online resources will be best equipped – thinking beyond 3 weeks to 3 months with a key question being: How will you deliver your services or your products?

KEY LINKS IN SD-07

For Contra Costa County - <https://www.contracostasbdc.org/>

For Alameda County - <https://www.acsbdc.org/>

Northern CA SBDC Finance Center -- <https://www.norcalsbdc.org/>

[Download the COVID-19 Survival Guide](#) – everyone should download this – it is 16 pages long. Be sure to read all of the information – A lot of questions are addressed here regarding business interruptions, insurances, SBA Disaster Injury Loans, Unemployment Insurance and resources for employers and employees.

Essential Business Resources from the State and County Accessible Now through the COVID-19 Survival Guide

1. SBA Economic Injury Disaster Loans

- The SBA (federal) provides low-interest, long-term economic injury disaster loans to small businesses, small agriculture coops, and most private non-profit organizations to help meet financial obligations that could have been met had the disaster not occurred.
- SBA's mission right now is to mitigate and decrease losses. For businesses seeking relief -- don't think about whether you're qualified or disqualified – the goal is to garner information that moves you forward.
- SBA operates County SBDC offices, complete with advisors who will work with applicants to encourage them to apply – these advisors are skilled, smart and not emotionally attached to your business.

Key Take-Aways:

- Businesses should apply – regardless of your situation. The loans are offered at an interest rate not to exceed 4%.
- What’s unique about this loan is that it is open to non-profit organizations at low interest rates of about 2.5%.
- The loans will not need to be paid back right now. There is an opportunity to rebuild your company prior to paying it back. You can submit loan applications up through December 15, 2020.

2. EDD for Business Owners

This section outlines how to apply for programs, such as disability insurance, paid family leave, unemployment insurance, paid sick leave and workers compensation.

Key Sections:

- What to do if your business has slowed as a result of COVID-19
- What if I have to let go of some of my workers temporarily?
- What if I have to shut down my business permanently?
- What if I can’t file or pay my payroll taxes on time because of COVID-19?
- What opportunities are there to innovate your business?
- How do I protect my workers from COVID-19?
- Are you having a supply chain / vendor issue that you can’t get the supplies you need?
- What if I can’t pay my federal or state taxes on time?

3. EDD for Business Employees

Key Sections:

- What benefits are available if I’m sick and can’t work?
- What kind of medical documentation is required to support a claim for Disability Insurance Benefits?
- How much can I earn in disability benefits and do I qualify if I’m quarantined?
- Are benefits available to me if I’m sick and self-employed or otherwise not covered by the State Disability Insurance (SDI) program?
- What if a family member is sick and I have to miss work to be their caregiver?
- How much can I earn in Paid Family Leave benefits?
- What medical documentation is required to support Paid Family Leave benefits?
- How much can I collect with an Unemployment Insurance (UI) claim?
- Can I collect UI insurance if I work remotely from home?
- What Unemployment Insurance benefits are available if I’m subject to quarantine but not ill?
- Are there benefits available to me if I’m sick, self employed or otherwise not covered by the State Disability Insurance (SDI) program?
- Are benefits available if my child’s school is shut down and I need to stay home?
- Are benefits available if my employer reduces my hours or shuts down operations?

4. Business Interruption Insurance

For many people, business interruption insurance exists with their general insurance policy. Business interruption insurance is coverage that replaces business income lost in a disaster.

Key Takeaways:

- Business interruption insurance is coverage that replaces income lost in the event that a business is halted for some reason, such as natural disaster.
- This insurance covers operating expenses, move to a temporary location, and applies if government actions cause operations to cease temporarily, resulting in loss for a firm.

CONCLUSION:

The SBDC is requesting patience with government loan officials as they've never had to address a pandemic or the circumstances like this. To relieve business stress, they reinforced the importance of remembering that this is going to pass – it's a scary, difficult period – but it will pass.

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