

Arizona Small Business Development Center Network

Professional Development Program

1.0 Definitions

1.1 Professional Development Committee - provides input on professional development to the network operating committee. The Professional Development Committee is chaired by the Deputy Network Director and will consist of at least two center directors and two business analysts.

1.2 State Office -- presently consists of the State Director, Deputy State Director, and administrative assistant. Roles assigned to the State Office are the responsibility of the State Director.

2.0 Initial Certification

2.1 Hiring Requirements

Each of the respective host institutions in the AZ SBDC Network handles hiring requirements. The goal of the professional development program is to ensure the development of network personnel after they have been hired. As such, the professional development program does not address hiring requirements beyond recommending the host institutions abide by the network recommended job descriptions.

2.2 New Employee Orientation

Each new Center Director or counselor (business analyst) will attend a new employee orientation. Each center will provide a center orientation to new counselors (business analysts). Additionally, the State Office will conduct an Arizona SBDC Network Orientation at each all-hands meeting or individually as time permits. At a minimum new employee orientation will include:

2.2.1 Center Orientation

- College and Center personnel structure
- Center mission and goals
- Observation of at least 10 counseling sessions
- Center IC training

2.2.2 State Network Orientation

- History of SBDC Program
- History of AZ SBDC Network
- Introduction of State Office personnel
- Role of State Office personnel
- Goals & Mission of the State Office
- The Management Information System

- Review of SBDC policy and procedures

2.3 Mentoring

Centers are encouraged to provide each new counselor with a mentor as prescribed in the network mentorship plan.

2.4 Time Requirement

New Center Directors and counselors are required to have worked for the network at least half-time for six months to qualify for certification. Center Directors and counselors must be approved for certification before their one-year anniversary.

2.5 Demonstrated Education

In order for a Center Director or counselor (business analyst) to receive initial certification, the individual must demonstrate sufficient education to provide appropriate services to network clients. To receive initial certification, individuals must demonstrate completion of a minimum of eight hours of training in each of the following areas:

- Financial Management
- Marketing
- Business Planning
- Business Financing

Additionally, individuals must demonstrate completion of a minimum of eight hours of training in three relevant areas including but not limited to:

- International Trade
- Management/Operations
- Time Management
- Stress Management
- Valuation Analysis
- Human Resource Management
- Procurement
- Technology Assistance
- SBIR/STTR
- Customer Service
- Manufacturing
- Negotiation
- Business Law
- Invention Marketing

2.6 Demonstrated Knowledge & Skills

In order for a Center Director or counselor (business analyst) to receive initial certification, the individual must demonstrate sufficient skills to provide appropriate services to network clients. To receive initial certification, individuals must demonstrate sufficient knowledge and skills in the following areas:

- Understanding of SBDC history and structure
- Understanding of the Arizona SBDC Network history and structure
- Financial Management
- Marketing
- Business Planning
- Business Financing
- Counseling Skills

Demonstrated knowledge and skills will be observed and approved by the candidate's supervisor (Center Director for counselors and a direct college supervisor for Center Directors).

2.7 Roles & Responsibilities

- **Professional Development Committee** – Maintain and update initial certification documents, review and approve all initial certification applications, recommend initial certification policies to the operating committee.
- **Center Directors** – Ensure center orientation meets the standards outlined in this document, ensure new personnel understand the initial certification process
- **Applicants** – Take personal responsibility for meeting training requirements; procure, complete, and submit application forms

2.8 Initial Certification Process

In order to apply for initial certification, candidates should submit a package which contains the following information:

- Date of hire
- Date of center New Hire Orientation
- Date of State Network New Hire Orientation
- A list education to be considered to demonstrate education requirements
- Supporting materials for education requirements
- A statement from the candidate's supervisor that the candidate has met the minimum required skills level for initial certification.

3.0 Recertification

3.1 Time Requirements

Center Directors and counselors (business analysts) must recertify within 36 months of their previous certification.

3.2 Demonstrated Continuing Education

Center Directors and counselors (business analysts) must demonstrate attendance at a minimum of 60 hours of continuing education every three years. At least 30 hours of training must be completed in the following areas:

- Financial Management
- Marketing
- Business Planning
- Business Financing
- Counseling Skills

A certificate of completion, school transcript, or other form of written proof will serve as adequate demonstration of attendance.

3.3 Supervisor Endorsement

The supervisor (Center Director for counselors or college supervisor for Center Directors) must endorse the applicant's recertification application.

3.4 Roles & Responsibilities

- **Professional Development Committee** – Maintain and update certification documents, review and approve all recertification applications, recommend recertification policies to the operating committee.
- **Center Directors** – Ensure personnel understand the recertification process, endorse applicant applications
- **Applicants** – Take personal responsibility for meeting training requirements; procure, complete, and submit application.

3.5 Recertification Process

In order to apply for recertification, candidates should submit a package which contains the following information:

- Date of initial certification
- A list education to be considered to demonstrate continuing education requirements
- Supporting materials for continuing education requirements
- A statement from the candidate's supervisor that the candidate is qualified for recertification

4.0 Network Continuing Education

4.1 Identifying Training Needs

Center Directors are uniquely situated to understand the specific needs of their regions. Center Directors should work with local chambers of commerce, other business development agencies, and local business owners to ascertain community training and development needs. Center Director's should also observe the work knowledge and counseling skills of each center employee to ascertain individual needs. Center Directors should report specific training needs at each Director's meeting.

Network personnel will be asked to complete a questionnaire at each All-Hands meeting to help identify future training needs or preferences.

The State Office will conduct a statewide customer needs survey which will also provide data useful in identifying statewide and regional training needs.

4.2 Training Delivery

Network-wide training will be provided at the semi-annual all-hands meeting. At least eight hours of training will be offered at each all-hands meeting. Two hours of training from at least two of the following topics should be offered at each all-hands meeting:

- Financial Management
- Marketing
- Business Planning
- Business Financing
- Counseling Skills

Each all-hands meeting should also offer at least two hours of training in at least two other topics.

Training sessions should allow employees the opportunity to choose the training topic which best suits the individuals' training needs.

4.3 Training Quality and Improvement

Network personnel will be asked to complete critiques of training sessions held at state all-hands meetings. The results of these critiques will be used to drive improvements in training quality

4.4 Roles & Responsibilities

- **Deputy State Director** – Approve all-hands training
- **Professional Development Committee** – Arrange for training at all-hands meetings, produce and distribute completion certificates for trainings at all-hands meetings
- **Center Directors** – Identify skill sets necessary to provide optimal client service, monitor employee training needs, report training needs at Center Director meetings
- **Counselors (Business Analysts)** – Identify skill sets necessary to provide optimal client service, identify personal training needs; communicate training needs to Center Director

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Arizona Small Business Development Center Network
Center Director / Counselor Initial Certification Application

Applicant Name: _____ Date of Hire: _____

Applicant Position (circle one): Center Director / Full-time Counselor / Part-time Counselor

Center: _____

Date Completed Center Orientation: _____ Date Completed New Employee Orientation: _____

Demonstrated Education

To receive initial certification, individuals must demonstrate completion of a minimum of eight hours of training in each of the following areas: Financial management, marketing, business planning, and business financing. Additionally, individuals must demonstrate completion of a minimum of eight hours of training in three other relevant areas. Please include copies of training certificates or transcripts to substantiate all education.

Training Dates	Training Description	Hours

Demonstrated Knowledge & Skills

To receive initial certification, individuals must demonstrate sufficient knowledge and skills in key areas. Demonstrated knowledge and skills will be observed and approved by the applicant's supervisor (Center Director for counselors and a direct college supervisor for Center Directors).

Skill Area	Supervisor Approval (Please Initial)
Understanding of SBDC history and structure	
Understanding of the Arizona SBDC Network history and structure	
Financial Management	
Marketing	
Business Planning	
Business Financing	
Counseling Skills	

 Signature (Person Making Request)

 Signature (Center Director or Supervisor)

Please Forward Completed Application and all supporting materials to:
 Mike Fox
 615 N. Stadium Ave.
 Thatcher, AZ 85552

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