Four Partners One Purpose Collaboration Successful

Earlier this year leaders of different organizations that provide services to small business got together to evaluate our collective efforts to help Carroll County entrepreneurs and small business owners. While the group identified a diverse list of small business needs, two significant areas of improvement that were suggested included increasing communications between service providers and stakeholders, and offering enhanced training options - a “Business 101” menu of training – along with advanced training for individuals and groups.

The “Four Partners One Purpose” partnership that developed strengthens our business resource network and better serves entrepreneurs in the County. Economic Development aligned small business services with our Small Business Development Center (SBDC), Carroll Community College’s Miller Small Business Resource Center and Start-Up Carroll (a privately funded business support program). This unique partnership leverages the resources of each affiliate in an integrated service delivery system to provide technical assistance and training to small business owners as well as those who seek to start new ventures.

This fall, the partners offered general business seminars like First Steps to SMARTStart Your Small Business, Developing a Brand/Logo for Your Business, Creating and Updating Your Marketing Plan and Creating Your Strategic Business Plan. Most of the classes were held at the Carroll Community College Business Training Center and we are proud to say that the Department of Economic Development arranged for many of the courses to be offered at no charge. We strongly feel that this worthwhile investment will help to develop and grow our small business community.

The initial results of this collaboration indicate a resounding success. A record-setting 18 classes were held with 222 business owners registered. Some who thought they wanted to start a business realized that there was a lot more to starting a business than just having a dream. Seasoned business owners sharpened their skills in key business management areas. And, we continue to engage established business owners to share information about the business and financial resources that are available through our Inc.link network. We hope that all of these efforts will help our small business owners meet daily business challenges and survive changing market conditions.

Entrepreneurs should visit our website at www.carrollbiz.org for the Four Partners One Purpose new schedule of classes to be offered in the spring. One-on-one counseling, as a follow-up to the seminars and to address specific business needs, is available from SBDC counselor, Beth A. Woodring, who can be reached at 410-386-2317.

If starting a business or improving your existing business is on your list of goals for the New Year, give yourself the gift of learning and sign up for a class through the Four Partners One Purpose program.

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