

## OAKLAND COUNTY

# Small business support services coming to communities

By Mark Cavitt

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Oakland County is bringing its One Stop Shop Business Center directly to communities across the county.

The county is hosting Local Business Connect community events, beginning Tuesday, to bring support and resources directly to small business owners emerging from the COVID-19 pandemic.

As the small business community continues to recover from the pandemic, Oakland County Executive Dave Coulter said this program will offer “fresh ideas to help our businesses bounce back and flourish.

“Small businesses are the lifeblood of our county and we recognize the many challenges they face as they emerge from the pandemic,” he said. “Over the long term, we want to make this program a mainstay in Oakland County’s economic development strategy.”

Topics covered at each

event include: financial management, how to create new business plans, and maximizing online presence. The program, which runs from 8 a.m. to 10:30 a.m., will be held in the following communities:

- Tuesday, July 13, Oak Park City Hall Campus Community Center, 14300 Oak Park Blvd, Oak Park

- Wednesday, July 14, Embassy Suites by Hilton, 850 Tower Drive, Troy

- Thursday, July 15, Baker’s of Milford Restaurant, 2025 S. Milford Rd., Milford

- Tuesday, July 20, Flagstar Strand Theatre for The Performing of Arts, 12 N. Saginaw St., Pontiac

- Wednesday, July 21, Old Town Hall, 486 Mill St., Ortonville

- Thursday, July 22, Lake Orion United Methodist Church, 140 E. Flint St., Lake Orion

- Wednesday, July 28, Salvation Army, 27500 Shawassee Rd., Farmington Hills

Session topics and speakers will include:

- “Financial Management,” by Meri Dembrow, senior business consultant, Michigan Small Business Development Center (SBDC), Lansing. She will provide examples of financial analysis for marketing and pricing.

- “A Short, Action-Oriented Business Plan,” by Diana Dimitroff, senior business consultant, SBDC, Lansing. She will discuss revisiting a business plan while emerging from the pandemic and making changes to operations; welcoming past customers and attracting new ones.

- “Maximizing Your Online Presence,” by Son Tran, founder of Pitch Black Media, Ferndale. He will discuss properly listing your business online, growing location-based searches, and optimizing your digital marketing channels.

In addition to the speakers, several other professionals will be on hand to meet with attendees for information sharing and networking. These include

representatives from the Oakland County Department of Economic Development’s leadership team, as well as CEED Lending, Chaldean Chamber of Commerce, Main Street Oakland County, Michigan Restaurant and Lodging Association, Michigan Small Business Development Center, Oakland County Business Finance Corporation, Oakland County Michigan Veterans’ Services, and Pitch Black Media.

A new survey by the Small Business Association of Michigan showed that small businesses are optimistic despite being hit hard by the pandemic. The survey revealed that 72 percent of businesses report feeling optimistic about the survival of their businesses.

The survey, conducted June 8 – 18 of more than 600 Michigan small businesses, also revealed that:

- 47% of respondents say difficulty finding and keeping employees is the biggest problem facing their busi-

ness.

- 78% of respondents said that COVID-19 had a negative impact on their business in 2020 and 63% say that COVID-19 is still negatively impacting their business.

- 63% of those surveyed reported a decline in sales in 2020 as compared to 2019, including 34% that reported a decline of revenues of more than 25%.

- 45% say the pandemic created permanent changes in the customers they serve.

- 91% of businesses received Paycheck Protection Program assistance during the pandemic, the largest source of relief by far.

- 33% of businesses reported staffing reductions due to the pandemic.

- 16% of businesses report struggling to pay bills as they come in.

Pre-registration is required. To register, go to [OakGov.com/SmallBusiness](https://OakGov.com/SmallBusiness). For information, small business owners may contact Erick Phillips at [philipse@oakgov.com](mailto:philipse@oakgov.com).

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