

TechSource: Commercialization Talking Points

What's the background/evolution of technology programs at the CSBDC?

Over 10 years ago, scientists, engineers, and technology entrepreneurs began to seek out assistance from the SBDC in order to launch and grow their businesses, and especially to understand the go-to-market process prior to meeting with potential investors. Interest was mostly concentrated along the Front Range near research labs and universities.

Individual Centers in Colorado responded to requests with referrals to both online and outside resources, both in Colorado and nationwide. Businesses returned continuing to seek assistance, indicating that they were not getting the support they were seeking elsewhere. That trend supported the hypothesis that the SBDC network may have a role in providing assistance for these science and engineering ventures.

To further understand the need, Center Directors and stakeholders used formal and informal processes to identify business requests and market gaps. They gathered data from businesses, partners, and stakeholders and analyzed current resources available and other factors before moving forward. As network understanding of the demand developed, pilot initiatives were launched in response to client requests. This is the basis of the **Continuous Learning Process (CLP)**. In the early program stage and continuing today, Directors receive professional development training (ASBDC conferences, technology commercialization certification, and specialized training) to provide better assessment and consulting to these entrepreneurs and businesses in the advanced industries.

At both the Center-level and at the Lead Center, relationships were built with strategic partners: industry organizations, specialists at colleges and universities, for-profit business specialists, etc. High-caliber specialized expertise was tapped from professionals in our communities and developed within some centers. As funding and other resources permitted, pilot initiatives were tested. Businesses highly rated both the training and consulting assistance received. The program demand and positive response encouraged the Colorado SBDC TechSource: Commercialization next phase.

How is Commercialization deployed on a statewide basis? How does my Center fit in?

Statewide marketing efforts seek to identify, communicate, and attract companies to utilize the TechSource program. All Centers can help identify potential Commercialization companies that may be entered into the Center IC database and/or entered into the CRM. This statewide prospect list (platform used is Nutshell) is compiled from many sources: generated lists (i.e. SBIR grant awardees), local market knowledge, referrals from strategic partners (i.e. Colorado Bioscience Association), public relations and digital marketing initiatives, etc. Potential Commercialization businesses may request assistance online through sbdtechsource.org and will also be entered into the CIC.

For the Centers

When you get an e-RFA, email or phone request for assistance, follow the same process you normally do with any request: ask what type of business they are/plan to be; ask what type of assistance they are requesting. If it appears to be a fit for the statewide TechSource: Commercialization program, refer the client to Jamie Brandess at 720-799-4249 or jamie.brandess@bouldersbdc.com. Jamie will do intake to determine if the client qualifies for Commercialization resources and will work closely with the center to make sure the client receives resources from the local center as well, if appropriate.

Any impact collected from Commercialization clients is entered into Center IC and stays with the client's geographic region's center/referring center.

Payment for resources and specialists in the TechSource: Commercialization program comes from funding from the FAST (Federal and State Technology) program, which focuses on rural-, minority- and women-owned businesses. Additional funds come from VISA. The amount of assistance offered to clients depends on the funding and resources available – more funds are allocated to the target segments mentioned.

Why did we go through the Tech Accreditation process (and continue to pursue it)?

Being awarded the Technology designation as a state network:

- Increases the SBDC's value to Colorado technology entrepreneurs and businesses, as well as to advanced industry sectors (a key focus of our stakeholders) - the SBDC TechSource: Commercialization program evolved from and answered an unmet market need
- Provides added credibility with stakeholders
- Allows us to raise more funding to provide more services throughout Colorado
- Elevates the stature of the SBDC network within the entire Colorado community

What statewide Commercialization events are planned for 2020?

- **Four Innovative Business Road Trips - Trinidad, Sterling, Durango, Salida**
Colorado SBDC TechSource: Commercialization collaborates with SBDCs throughout Colorado to plan four programs each year around the state, specifically in rural areas. Information and specialized consulting is shared with businesses that may otherwise not be aware of these opportunities. For technology businesses, topics will include Federal and State Innovation Grants (SBIR/STTR; Advanced Industries) and other funding, plus technology commercialization and market research. The agenda is developed to match the location and audience.
<https://www.sbdc-techsource.org>
- **Webinar Series – short/intensives, streamed online/on demand**
Topics focused on SBIR/Commercialization as well as Contracting and Certification. Previous webinars are available online free of charge
<https://sbdc-techsource.org/workshops/past-live-stream-workshop-recordings>
- **Statewide Innovation and Opportunities Conference with NASA**
This is the third year of this conference coming to Colorado. It is a 1 ½ day event including presentations by reps from NASA, one-on-one matchmaking sessions, corporate roundtables, and keynote speakers
<https://innovation-opportunity-conference.com>