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Rogue Community College Small Business Development Center Receives \$48,320 Grant to Support Entrepreneurs, Child Care Providers, and Rural Business Owners in Josephine County

by: Kelly Gonzales

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The Rogue Community College (RCC) Small Business Development Center (SBDC) has been awarded a \$48,320 grant from Business Oregon to pilot a new program aimed at expanding business advising and support services in Josephine County. The funding will enhance outreach, services, and training for small businesses, with a focus on entrepreneurs, child care providers, and rural business owners.

“This new funding allows us to better serve the small businesses that are the backbone of our community, especially in underserved areas,” said Ruth Swain, Director of the RCC SBDC. “With this grant, we can open doors for aspiring entrepreneurs, child care providers, and rural business owners to access valuable resources, training, and ongoing support.”

Founded in 1984, the RCC SBDC has been a vital resource for local entrepreneurs, offering free, confidential business advising and low-cost training programs at its Redwood Campus in Grants Pass. This new pilot program will build on the SBDC’s established services by funding additional part-time faculty hours, expanding marketing efforts, and developing new curriculum designed specifically for child care providers and rural entrepreneurs.

A key component of the program is its focus on child care businesses, an area that has faced challenges in recent years. One of the most significant hurdles for new child care providers is securing funding to purchase the necessary equipment and supplies for opening a licensed child care facility. To address this need, the RCC SBDC has begun collaborating with local partners to identify targeted grants and financial resources for new and growing child care businesses.

In partnership with the City of Grants Pass, Southern Oregon Regional Economic Development, Inc. (SOREDI), the Southern Oregon Child Care Resource Network, and RCC’s Early Childhood Education department, the SBDC is introducing the Child Care Business Accelerator program. This initiative will provide specialized support for both

new and existing child care businesses, helping them to establish, expand, and thrive in the region.

“Access to trusted, reliable child care is essential not only for working families but also as a critical component of our local economy,” Swain emphasized. “By assisting child care providers in starting and growing their businesses, we’re not only supporting local families but also creating a stronger economic foundation for the entire community.”

The grant-funded pilot program also includes efforts to expand business support for rural entrepreneurs, a group often underserved due to geographic isolation and limited access to resources. By increasing outreach and enhancing training opportunities, the RCC SBDC aims to equip these business owners with the tools and knowledge they need to grow and succeed.

The RCC SBDC’s initiative aligns with the larger goal of fostering economic development in Southern Oregon by promoting small business growth, creating jobs, and providing valuable services that improve the overall quality of life in Josephine County.

With this new funding, the RCC SBDC is poised to make a significant impact in supporting local businesses, particularly in underserved sectors. By helping entrepreneurs, child care providers, and rural business owners navigate the complexities of business development, the SBDC is playing a key role in strengthening the region’s economy.



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