



Maine Small Business Development Centers

*Building Maine's Future,
One Business at a Time*

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WELCOME SUMMER...AND TOURISTS!

The Department of Economic and Community Development declared Memorial Day the unofficial kickoff to the 2016 Summer Tourism Season. This time of year is imperative for many small businesses across the state.



Now is a good time to remind individuals and businesses of some simple tips to ensure visitors have a wonderful visit to our great

state. Each of us can have an impact on visitor experience. According to Deb Neuman's blog on the Bangor Daily News website, simple tasks such as being patient on the roads, stopping to take their photo or giving them directions can make guests feel welcomed.

If you own a business, you may want to consider ensuring your employees are well-trained and up-to-date on how to provide the best customer service. By creating a memorable experience for your customers, you create customer loyalty and improved business

performance. The University of Maine's Welcome ME Quality Service Training is offered at no cost -- [check it out here](#). In addition, make sure your customers can find you both on and offline! [This article](#) contains some helpful ideas on getting found by tourists in your area.

Need help? As always, if you need additional assistance, don't hesitate to contact a business advisor near you. They can help generate ideas on how to improve your business performance in a confidential, no-cost business advising session. [Click here to find the business advisor nearest you!](#)

ENTREPRENEURIAL CHALLENGES IN MAINE

Potential opportunities for small businesses and entrepreneurs

There are several towns and organizations offering funding incentives to small businesses and entrepreneurs.

New Ventures Maine (NVME) Marketing Mini-Grants: Downtown Dollars - Awards throughout the state!

Under the program NVME awards cash mini-grants (up to \$400) to micro-enterprises for marketing projects via a competitive process. Eligible businesses are 5 years old or less and employ 5 or fewer people. Not-for-profits are not eligible. A 25% match is required. NVME is hosting six regional competitions and eligibility is based on business location.

These deadlines are right around the corner - act quickly! [Visit the NVME website for more info.](#)

Grow GNG Challenge

This three-phased competition is looking to lure new and existing out-of-town businesses into Gray or New Gloucester. The winner of the competition will be awarded a total prize in excess of \$17,000 including a \$10,000 forgivable loan, 3 months free rent and many in-kind professional services. The business must be for-profit and meet other eligibility requirements. The first phase submissions (1-2 page Business Concept) is due June 30, 2016. Visit the [Gray-New Gloucester Development Corporation's website for more info.](#)

Houlton Entrepreneur Challenge

This three-phased challenge is looking to attract new and existing out-of-town businesses to Houlton. The winning business will receive a package that includes a \$25,000 forgivable loan and donated services. Activities for this challenge start September 1st. Many more details can be found on the [Southern Aroostook Development Corporation's website](#).

The Gardiner Growth Initiative

This ongoing growth initiative hopes to attract high quality, experienced businesses to supplement recent business growth and investment in Downtown Gardiner. This program is for established growing business to expand or locate in Gardiner with very little risk. They offer forgivable loan programs, free rent on long term leases, and micro grants for soft costs such as inventory and working capital. More details can be found at the [Gardiner Main Street website](#).

**Need assistance with preparing your challenge submissions?
The Maine SBDC can help!**

[Request a no-cost appointment with a business advisor.](#)

MAINE TECHNOLOGY INSTITUTE'S TECHWALK

June 22 in Portland - Showcasing some of Maine's most successful technology-based businesses

Meet Maine entrepreneurs, investors and innovators for this unique networking opportunity as over 45 companies exhibit their products and services that they have successfully brought to market! For more info or to register, [click here](#).



MAINE STARTUP & CREATE WEEK - June 20-26

Celebrate entrepreneurship, cultivate creativity and drive high-impact innovation

This 7-day conference features 50+ sessions, workshops and panels, 12+ parties and social events, and 6 keynote speakers. MSCW showcases the vibrant, startup eco-system in Maine and connects the growing community of people inspired by entrepreneurial success. The week features educational events, thoughtful speakers, discussions and networking. This event is for startups and small business owners in Maine! For more info, visit the [MSCW website](#). Enter to win a **free pass** from the Bangor Daily News [here](#).



Have Questions? Need assistance? Contact us now:

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