NH Small Business Development Center

2014 Annual Report

Submitted by:
Mary E. Collins,
State Director

I. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The NH SBDC closed out CY 2014 on a celebratory note with a 30th anniversary celebration held on November 20th at Dyn, an emerging high tech growth company in Manchester’s Millyard. Joined by the Governor and members of NH’s federal delegation the SBDC celebrated with more than 300 partners, clients, staff and board members and premiered its new short video highlighting clients “Building Businesses for New Hampshire’s Future”. The program was a huge success as it clearly illustrated the high caliber assistance provided by the staff of the NH SBDC and told directly through the small business clients we serve here in New Hampshire. We are truly grateful to our many partners who contributed numerous hours of personal time as well as financial contributions to produce this event and video.

The year 2014 also mark the end of an era of top leadership as both the Associate Director and State Directors announced their retirements. Janice Gregory retired in June after nearly 30 years with the SBDC and Mary Collins announced that she would retire in the spring of 2015 after 21 years with the SBDC and 17 years as State Director. Retirement is bittersweet as I leave behind many friends and colleagues, yet I am leaving my position with the highest confidence that the program is robust and that the incoming director, Richard Grogan has the vision and leadership to sustain and grow the 30 year NH SBDC program.

Key highlights for NH SBDC in 2014 included deployment of the following programs:
Pathway to Work, Business Services North (BSN), Building Profitable Business, Lakes Region Business advising as well as development of new partnerships with Manchester Community College and Nashua Community College.
Pathway to Work is a program for the unemployed starting businesses and in the past year the NH SBDC has screened more than 135 potential applicants, is working with 87 active participants in nearly 50 NH communities and in this short time has helped create 35 new jobs and start 31 new businesses. In 2014 Pathway clients represented $986,975 in sales contributing back into the NH economy.

Building Profitable Businesses was deployed as a pilot program in our Seacoast center with $20,000 of private sector funding and late in 2014 the NH SBDC was delighted to learn that we were recipients of a new $100,000 Portable Assistance grant that would allow us to fully deploy and execute this program. The program’s primary objective is to increase small businesses’ profitability and their resilience when faced with economic downturns.

Business Services North: In May 2014 the NH SBDC wrapped up 5 years working with the Neil and Louise Tillotson Foundation to create a model for sustainable services to businesses in NH’s North Country. Through this funding we launched Business Services North with White Mountain Community College and Northern Community Investment Corp. - a one stop shop for the regions businesses. Late in the year, the NH SBDC received SBA supplemental funding directed toward the creation of a strategic plan to sustain this model going forward!

Lakes Region Advising: Through CDBG and USDA rural development funding the SBDC was able to hire a part-time business advisor in an underserved area of the state. Partners Belknap County and Grafton County Economic Developments Councils identified the need for high caliber business advising in an area where the SBDC had a minimal presence and successfully sought the funding for an SBDC business advisor.

New partnerships: 2014 was the year of “moving” for three of the NH SBDC centers. With new partnerships developed with NH Community Colleges SBDC re-located its SBDC Nashua Regional Center to the Nashua Community College and its statewide education office to the Manchester Community College. Both locations offer enhanced synergy and support as well as donated space to the NH SBDC program. The Seacoast Regional Center located to better space in the same mill building in Dover, NH.

Continuation of our 17 year New England Professional Development program with a 2 day meeting attended by all staff in Plymouth, MA in November.

Funding remains the number one critical issue for the NH SBDC program. Last August the SBDC submitted a proposal for a significant and long over-due increase in state funding however as this report is being written the legislature is slashing programs and budgets. We are hoping to sustain a modest increase ($30,000) however nothing is secure at the moment. Any increase will immediately be directed to our business
advising capacity. I am incredibly proud of the NH SBDC staff and their commitment to high quality client services while faced with uncertain and limited resources. 

NH SBDC is strong team and as you read this 2014 Annual Report I think you will agree that the New Hampshire program is strong and poised for great accomplishments in the coming year!

II. BUSINESS ADVISING

The NH SBDC’s one-on-one business advising component continues to meet a critical need of small businesses in the state by providing the tools and personal guidance needed for success. Working with emerging as well as existing and growing businesses, the NH SBDC assists clients who would like to learn management skills, secure bank financing, control growth and develop feasibility, marketing and/or business plans. Services are delivered through regional offices, satellite locations, and the central office, which is located at the new Peter T. Paul College of Business & Economics (formerly the Whittemore School of Business and Economics) at the University of New Hampshire.

CY 2014 Impact:
With highly skilled business advisors in each of the regional offices, the NH SBDC delivered in-depth counseling to 949 clients during 2014.

The NH SBDC has had a minimal ($5,000) increase in core state funding since 1997. Despite the budget restrictions, the NH SBDC delivered services to clients in 200+ towns and cities throughout New Hampshire in 2014. Analysis of counseling hours indicates a strong demand for marketing and advertising, business planning, business start-up assistance, financial planning, access to capital, and cash flow projections. This is a reflection of the still difficult economy, with many existing businesses seeking to refocus their marketing efforts and repackage existing debt. As the economy rebounds, there has been a steady increase in demand for SBDC core services as well as assistance in far more complex areas attributed to the high caliber expertise of SBDC staff statewide.

III. EDUCATION

The purpose of the NH SBDC Training program is to meet the needs of small business owners and managers by offering consistent, high quality educational training programs throughout New Hampshire. Topics for educational programs are selected through an ongoing assessment guided by workshop evaluations, statewide needs assessments, and regional listening posts. The NH SBDC has many partners who participate in hosting programs. These include SBA resource partners, non-profit business service providers, chambers of commerce, regional economic development organizations, various state and federal agencies, and trade associations.

In CY 2014, the NH SBDC served 2,000+ attendees through 153 workshops and events, including:
Environmental Management Program Training
In 2014, OSHA roundtables and trainings continued to be an important part of the NH SBDC’s Environmental Management Program. In collaboration with OSHA, 9 workshops and roundtables were held on topics such as safe food handling and production, Department of Transportation audits, OSHA accident reporting, and top violations from the Department of Labor.

IV. PROGRAM OBJECTIVES
100 Advocacy

The NH SBDC actively promotes small business interests through response to sudden and severe economic changes, special projects, public outreach, and participation in Small Business Week activities. The State Director and Regional Managers frequently present information to groups such as legislators, chambers of commerce, media, economic development committees, and industry associations.

2014 Highlights

Public and Media Appearances

- On January 24, 2014, the SBDC participated in the 9th Annual Small Business Day at the State House in Concord, NH, hosted by the Business & Industry Association of NH.
- SBDC staff members and Business Advisors have participated in a variety of issues panels, and have participated in and presented at numerous board and council meetings including those hosted by SCORE, Main Street Boards, NH House Budget Committee, Chambers of Commerce, Business Associations, Lions Clubs, Rotary Clubs, Lakes Region Arts Council, College and University groups (UNH, Keene State College, Nashua Community College), Congressional Offices, bank roundtables, Entrepreneur Forum, and Angel Finance Groups.
- The Seacoast Regional Manager participated in sidewalk tour of SBA Regional Administrator Seth Goodall, SBA District Director Greta Johansson, and NH House representatives. SBDC clients were well represented on the tour.
- The State Director participated in numerous legislative and community events, including: BIA (Business and Industry Association) “Meet the Legislators”, BIA’s Fiscal Committee meetings, Nashua Chamber of Commerce Government Affairs Committee, NH Industry Forecast, New England Council Breakfast and luncheons with U.S. Senator Shaheen and with members of the NH Congressional Delegation, legislative roundtables and NH Governor and Council Meetings. Additionally, she meets with Senators Shaheen and Ayotte, and Congresswomen Shea Porter and Kuster as well as their staff to discuss small business issues both in NH and in Washington D.C. (March and April) including energy, the economy and various other issues.
- The State Director continues to be a member of U.S. Senator Jeanne Shaheen’s Small Business Advisory Committee. This is a group of over 20 small business owners and business leaders throughout the state who advise Senator Shaheen on issues and how they affect small businesses.
- The NH SBDC staffed a table at the 4th Annual Manchester Small Business Week in Manchester, and the Manchester Business Advisor participated in the stakeholder meetings prior to the event. It was spearheaded by the City of Manchester Economic Development Office and sponsored by Citizens Bank, Devine Millimet, and Business NH Magazine.
- SBDC staff members have manned tables, answered questions and presented at a number of local and state events, including: the SBA’s Women’s Business Forum with Senator Shaheen, Greater Keene Chamber of Commerce annual gala and awards ceremony, White Mountains Community College Launch Box workshops, Monadnock Economic Development panel, roundtable with Representative Ann Kuster, NH Small Business Matchmaker, Boots to Business, Local Investment Summit, Career and Opportunities Fair, Regional Economic Development Corp. ribbon cutting, and the 10th Annual NH Emergency Preparedness Conference.
- An Advisor from the Seacoast area continued to assist fisheries entrepreneurs to develop a business plan and budget for a Community Supported Fishery in New Hampshire. This cooperative is a unique ownership structure with 80% of ownership vested in commercial fisherman and 20% vested in community members. Incorporating in 2013, NH Community Seafood used social media and public news coverage to quickly spread the word. The NH Fishing Industry just completed its third year of the
new fisheries management plan. The new quota management system has resulted in a great reduction in
discards, more flexibility in how NH fishermen operate, more selective fishing, and spread the fish catch
out over more of the year. The 2013/2014 season opened with the troubling news that the Allowable
Catch Entitlement (ACE or Quota) for the Northeast Region was drastically cut by the NMFS, due to
care of the health of some stocks. On the upside fishermen, the sector manager, land base
processors, UNH Cooperative Extension staff, and area chefs have come together to form an alliance to
bring greater awareness to NH local caught fish. A branding campaign, titled New Hampshire Fresh and
Local Seafood, was launched this spring. Efforts are being made to keep NH fish local. A multi-
Stakeholder model formed as a collaborative between fishermen and consumers, called New Hampshire
Community Seafood, has just been formed to launch a Community Supported Fishery (CSF), in which
consumers will buy shares and receive two pounds of different fish over eight consecutive weeks.

- **Regional Managers and advisors** met with local bankers and community leaders to discuss the issues
  that are impacting communities and small businesses. They also participated in and attended numerous
  small business events held by state and federal legislators, including Small Business and Women’s
  Roundtables held by Congresswoman Anne Kuster, Congresswoman Carol Shea-Porter, and U.S.
  Senator Kelly Ayotte.
- Senior SBDC staff members have been active in the “Live Free and Start” program, a joint initiative
  between the NH Governor’s Office, the NH Business Finance Authority and the NH Dept. of
  Resources and Economic Development which is aimed at creating jobs and making it easier for
  technology companies to start, grow and succeed in NH.
- NH SBDC staff have presented to numerous student groups, including Keene State College, Monadnock
  Waldorf High School, Monadnock Regional High School, Plymouth State University, and the
  University of New Hampshire.
- The SBDC continues to partner with NH Employment Services on the Pathway to Work program,
  which allows qualified and accepted individuals to collect unemployment benefits while working full
time to start a small business. In January Governor Hassan hosted an event in Concord recognizing the
  program and program sponsor Citizens Bank Foundation, which was attended by SBDC staff and
  Pathway to Work clients who spoke to the crowd of 100+.
- SBDC staff also represented the NH SBDC in print and on the radio, writing various articles and blog
  posts, supporting small business on a local radio show, and discussing the NH SBDC’s 30th Anniversary
  in November on the radio as well.
- In November the NHSBDC celebrated its 30th Anniversary with a grand celebration in Manchester
  which featured various clients and their products. Over 200 individuals attended including staff and
  board members, clients, Governor Maggie Hassan, U.S. Congresswoman Anne Kuster, UNH Paul
  College Dean Garron and many others.

**Small Business Week**

The NH SBDC no longer hosts the annual New Hampshire SBA Small Business Awards Luncheon, but
annually attends the event and nominates many clients. In 2014 the event, hosted by the Center for Women’s
Business Advancement at Southern NH University, was attended by SBDC staff and multiple SBDC clients
were honored with awards, including the Young Entrepreneurs of the Year (Ash Fischbein and Matt
Trahan, Sap House Meadery), and Family Owned Business of the Year (the Meulenbroek family, Studley
Flower Gardens).

**200 Capital Formation**

The NH SBDC plays a leadership role in the state by helping small businesses gain access to both traditional
and non-traditional sources of capital to finance growth. This continues to be one of the NH SBDC’s strategic
goals.
2014 Highlights:

- SBDC Business Advisors continue to be active in support of NH Angel groups. The *Northeast Angels Investment Group*, launched in 2005 with assistance from the Nashua SBDC center, currently has more than 20 members. The Nashua Regional Manager continues to help facilitate the group, and assists companies in preparing for presentations, advises businesses and provides follow up assistance.

- The NH SBDC assisted clients in obtaining **$7.8 million in loans** (SBA and non SBA), and **$22.5 million in total capital formation** (loans, owner investment, and other capital).

- The NH SBDC partnered with *Business NH Magazine* (readership of 50,000+), Service Credit Union, and the Paul College of Business and Economics for the 9th year to produce and publish a supplement inside *Business NH’s Annual Finance Guide*. The 2014 supplement was titled *Plotting Your Path to Success* and is distributed throughout the year.

- In 2014, NH SBDC’s finance-related e-Learning courses were taken **257 times**. These include Accounting 101, Creating a Loan Package, Creating Financial Projections, Finding Money to Start a Business, and Finding and Attracting Investors, as well as 2 courses that were developed in house – Financing a Business in NH, and Sites That Sell: Building Your e-Commerce Business.

- SBDC staff members continually meet with economic development professionals, bankers and lenders in order to cultivate linkages and relationships between organizations. In 2014 they met with representatives from community loan funds, commercial lenders and bankers through the state, Angel Investors, Credit Unions, economic development officers and venture capitalists.

- The State Director, Associate State Director, and Business Advisors attended **lender roundtables around the state (Monadnock Region, Lakes Region, etc.) which were co-hosted by the NH SBDC and the SBA**. These events focused on helping small businesses gain access to credit. Staff also attended a Finance Fair in NH’s North Country.

- NH SBDC Business Advisors helped numerous clients prepare materials for submission and presentation to various economic development groups and agencies.

- The Lakes Region Business Advisor works with the *Belknap County EDC* to make downtown Laconia businesses aware of the Citizen’s Bank Façade Matching Grant Program and Belknap EDC’s loan program. She also works closely with the *Grafton County EDC*, the *Enterprise Center at Plymouth and Belknap EDC* for loans, microloans, training programs and business plan development.

- The NH SBDC State Director participate on a panel at the 2014 Small Business Day entitled “Growing Your Small Business”, which emphasized various ways for small businesses to access capital. Panelists included Gary Barr, Regional Vice President, Eastern NH, TD Bank, and Commissioner Jeffrey Rose, NH Department of Resources and Economic Development.

- The Keene Regional Manager and SBDC partner *Hannah Grimes Center researched options for small businesses to access alternative lending* in the Greater Keene region.

- The Seacoast Business Advisor works closely with WEDCO, and SEDC, both regional economic development organizations. She receives client referrals from them to provide assistance in loan proposal development and she referred appropriate loan applicants to WEDCO.

- The Nashua Regional Manager has assisted numerous client businesses obtain funding through SBA 7a loans, from private angel investment and from the Regional Economic Development Corp.

- The Seacoast Regional Manager assisted with many different capital formation structures; in particular bank funding, community and regional economic development loans, CDBG programs, SBA guarantees, SBA working capital, export loans, and SBA 504 loan program as well as crowd funding financing. He also continually met with Regional & City Economic Developmental Directors, local banks and loan officers to discuss issues impacting the small business lending needs.
300 Innovation & Technology Transfer

2014 Highlights:

- Following 13 years on the Board of the NH High Technology Council, SBDC State Director Mary Collins stepped down to become a Trustee with the organization and will continue to serve on the NHHTC legislative committee. Collins also participated in the NH Product of the Year awards ceremony which drew more than 300 attendees and served as a member of the steering committee for the annual Entrepreneur of the Year Award dinner with 250+ attendees.
- The State Director serves on the Board of the Experimental Program to Stimulate Competitive Research, EPSCoR, which facilitates the state’s access to federal R & D funds.
- The NH SBDC and the NH Innovation Research Center participate in NH Inspires Innovation, a collaboration to offer SBIR education, training, and one-on-one expert SBIR consulting to NH small business owners. SBIR workshops were offered in Manchester in February and Lebanon in July.
- The NH SBDC Manchester Regional Office partnered with UNH Manchester’s Emerging Technology Center, which provided more than 20 SBDC clients with technology assistance around website and video development.
- SBDC advisors worked with numerous clients to assist them in implementing technology in their business. This is primarily related to financial recordkeeping, transferring paper-based records to online platforms ranging from QuickBooks to Excel spreadsheets. Other sources of technology transfer are in the areas of Point of Sale (POS) systems, customer relationship management systems, social media marketing systems, and basic website design.
- The Keene Regional Manager regularly advises clients on the benefits of utilizing various forms of social media, e-Commerce technology, and cloud computing technologies. These include Square Up technology, search engine optimization, and Dropbox. Additionally, he has contributed information on essential technology skills to blog posts for one of the SBDC’s Keene area partners, the Hannah Grimes Center.
- We continue to promote the NH SBDC’s e-Learning courses offered 24/7 in Business Plans, Sales & Marketing, Accounting & Finance, Management and Social Media. In 2014 we developed three mini-courses on social media: Pinterest for Business, Mobile Marketing, and Instagram for Business.
- Throughout the year the SBDC worked with host institutions and partners to promote technology classes throughout the state as well as partner SBDC clients with student projects in social media, logo design, business planning, and software usage.

Environmental Management Program

The Environmental Management Program, located at the Manchester Regional Office of the NH SBDC, provides confidential business advising in environmental management to promote sustainable business practices. This program also helps small businesses access resources and develop tools they need to effectively manage environmental and workplace safety requirements.

2014 Environmental Management Program highlights:
• Partnered with industry leaders to offer 9 General Industry Roundtables.
• With representatives from the OSHA Training Institute, OSHA and the private sector, the NH SBDC cosponsored a General Industry Safety Roundtable which has trained more than 600 industry professionals to date.
• The SBDC EMP Manager attended a meeting with the Grocer’s Association, and also a NH Dept. of Environmental Services event on Grocers Leadership Initiative. She also assisted NH Dept. of Environmental Services in developing/marketing information for the NH Grocers Leadership Initiative. The initiative targeted all aspects of sustainable operations including: selling organic/local, energy efficiency, property management, and recycling.
• SBDC staff participated in a regional SBDC Sustainability workgroup led by Manomet Center for Conservation Sciences in Maine with the goal of developing a sustainability tool for small business.
• The SBDC EMP Manager attended a training session on Hazard Analysis and Emergency Planning, which was facilitated by officials from the City of Manchester and the Environmental Protection Agency. She also attended the EPA Region1 Annual Meeting for Enforcement, Compliance, and Assistance Providers as well as the 10th Annual Emergency Preparedness Conference.

400 International Trade

The SBDC Seacoast Regional Manager is trained and SBA certified as an export and trade counselor. He assists clients in key aspects of global trade, and has competency in working with businesses in international trade and export assistance. The SBDC continues to work with the NH Office of International Commerce (formerly known as the International Trade Resource Center) at the NH Department of Resources and Economic Development and the U.S. Department of Commerce to meet small business exporting needs.

2014 Highlights:

• SBDC Business Advisors continued to refer clients to the NH Office of International Commerce for assistance with exporting and importing plans. They also met with the OIC to implement exporting strategies and incorporate them into business plans for clients.
• The State Director continues to serve on the Board of the International Trade Advisory Committee.
• SBDC staff attended a workshop at the annual New England Professional Development conference in November entitled “Taking Your Business Global.”
• The SBDC continues to promote ITRC workshops and trade missions abroad in its eNews Blasts and Social Media outlets.
• SBDC staff participated in planning meetings with state, federal, non-profit, and private sector partners which led to the formation of the New Hampshire International Trade Resource Network (NHITRN), a collaborative team in which each entity provides its specific expertise to the table to assist NH businesses. The NHITRN is a result of the National Export Initiative (NEI), which committed Federal Government resources in support of American businesses that sell their goods and services abroad.
• The SBDC Seacoast Regional Manager is an active member of the International Trade Resource Network, a collaborative organization assisting NH businesses in creating and sustaining exporting markets. He works with the U.S. SBA, the U.S. Department of Commerce, SCORE, Granite State District Export Council and the Export/Import Bank.

500 Minority Business Development
The NH SBDC serves a higher percentage of minority business owners/entrepreneurs than are present in the NH population (5.9% of clients compared to 3.5% of the population according to the U.S. Census). Additionally, the SBDC receives CDBG funding from the City of Rochester and the CDFA to provide counseling assistance to minority and low income clients.

2014 Highlights:
- The NH SBDC’s Manchester Business Advisor worked with the International Institute of New England in organizing and attending the annual Manchester World Refugee Day which was attended by several hundred people.
- The Manchester Business Advisor also participate in a workshop where she presented information on starting a small business to a group of women from the Congo, Rwanda and Burundi.
- The State Director attended the U.S. Small Business Administration’s Hispanic Roundtable.

600 Resource Development

Professional Affiliations and Resource Partners

NH SBDC State Director Mary Collins maintains strong ties to industry and technology organizations. Collins currently serves as a trustee of the NH High Technology Council, EPSCoR Board (Experimental Program to Stimulate Competitive Research), the ASBDC Legislative Committee, and the International Trade Advisory Board, and serves on the Economic Development Committee for the NH Business and Industry Association. Collins also sits on the UNH Peter T. Paul College Dean’s Executive Committee. The Operations Program Manager in Durham sits on the Dean’s Staff Advisory Committee.

Regional Managers and business advisors are dedicated to working collaboratively with our affiliated organizations (SCORE, CWBA, NH Manufacturing Extension Partnership, and SBA). They also participate in local groups and associations throughout NH, and are active in numerous organizations such as: OSHA, NH Pollution Partnership Advisory Committee, Retail Merchants Association, League of NH Craftsmen, NH Entrepreneur Forum, NH Society of Accountants, and the NH/VT Federal Health and Safety Council. Additionally, the Seacoast Regional Manager taught online classes at Granite State College and the Keene Regional Manager taught entrepreneurial courses at Keene State College.

2014 Highlights:
- NH SBDC State Director, Associate State Director, Regional Managers and staff were actively involved in PR and media. Regional Managers were featured in various newspapers (Portsmouth Herald, Seacoast Online, Fosters, The Telegraph, Keene Sentinel, etc.), radio shows and local media.
- SBDC staff participated in the various NH Employment Security Job Fairs, multiple Career/Job Fairs held by Congresswoman Kuster, and attended multiple NH Business and Industry Association (NHBIA) listening sessions.
- The NH SBDC continued to partner with NH Employment Security to offer the Pathway to Work program, which allows approved individuals to work full time towards starting a small business while still collecting their unemployment benefits. This requires regular communications and meetings between the two organizations. In 2014 the SBDC State Director and Operations Program Manager collaborated with NH ES staff to draft official rules for the program which are to go to the NH legislature. Also in 2014, the NH SBDC applied for and obtained a CDFA
Micro-Enterprise grant to support the Pathway to Work program, which was legislated without additional funding but has generated a substantial uptick in clients, staff time and advising hours.

- The SBDC received CDBG money for SBDC services from the city of Rochester. These funds were targeted to provide counseling services to microenterprises and minority and low income clients.
- The North Country Business Advisor participated in numerous “Launch Box” business plan presentations presented by SBDC partner White Mountains Community College. He also attended the Small Business Start Up Series on Financing Your Business at the Enterprise Center at Plymouth, the Coos County Expo and Conference, and the Northern Community Investment Corp Annual Meeting with the State Director and Operations Program Manager.
- The Keene Regional Office is a member of the Monadnock Business Resource Partners, which includes the Hannah Grimes Center, the Greater Keene Chamber of Commerce, Keene State College, E-Source Franchise Service, AdviCoach Business Trainers, SCORE, and the NH Department of Resources and Economic Development. Additionally the center maintains a strong partnerships with the Hannah Grimes Center which refers over 20% of new clients and where it has a permanent satellite office, and with local lending institutions such as Savings Bank of Walpole, NBT Bank, TD Bank and Mascoma Bank who regularly refer clients. The Regional Manager also collaborated with Keene State College faculty to develop and internship program which began in 2014.
- The Seacoast Regional Manager and business advisors continue to cultivate partnerships with banks, regional economic development corporations (Portsmouth, Rockingham County), community organizations (Main Street Programs, Chambers of Commerce), and communities (Dover, Somersworth, Portsmouth, Rochester) in the area. Business advising is offered in offices provided by Rockingham Economic Development Corporation, Wentworth Economic Development Corp., and the City of Portsmouth.
- The Nashua Regional Manager actively works with SCORE, the NH Department of Resources and Economic Development (DRED) and Business Resource Partners and is a member of the Greater Nashua Chamber, the Hudson Chamber, and the Merrimack Chamber of Commerce. She is also a member of the American Institute of Certified Public Accountants, and the NH Society of Accountants, and sits on the Board of the Rockingham Economic Development Corp., and Northeast Angels. She has a close partnership with host Nashua Community College, working closely with the head of the Business School, assisting students and staff on small business issues, and working with the President’s Office on special programs such as the Nashua Chamber’s Business After Hours event.
- The NH SBDC Advisory Board continues to serve as an advocate for the NH SBDC with advice on program development and legislative issues.
- The State Director serves on the Greater Nashua Chamber of Commerce Government Advocacy Committee, which is comprised of key leaders from large industry, hospitals, and small business.
- SBDC staff worked closely with staff at the NH Department of Resources and Economic Development to make the referral process between them as clear and simple as possible. This involved each organization putting on paper their step-by-step internal referral process, solidification and streamlining of the inter-organizational referral process, and creation of referral documents to be used by staff. SBDC and DRED staff last met together in May, 2014.
- The Manchester business advisor/Environmental Management Program Manager has worked closely with the NH Department of Environmental Resources, assisting them in rolling out their Grocers Leadership Initiative. She also compiled a panel of small business and government program leaders to create a small business presentation on sustainability, and attended the 20th Anniversary celebration for the OSHA Training Institute at Keene State College, with whom she
Partners to offer regular **Construction and General Industry Roundtable** trainings to small businesses.

- The Education Program Manager participated in an SBA Finance Fair, and IRS Focus group webinar, and Affordable Care Act Forum at Southern NH University, among others.
- The SBDC refers clients to the UNH Law Schools Intellectual Property Center for assistance with trademark and contract issues.

### 700 Procurement

The NH SBDC is active in fostering opportunities for increasing small business’ share of procurement dollars spent by the government and private sector.

#### 2014 Highlights

- Throughout 2014, advisors worked with NH PTAP (Procurement Technical Assistance Program) to build programs and assist clients. Their efforts have been specifically targeted to promoting innovation and supporting manufacturing clients.
- NH SBDC, in collaboration with the SBA and the NH Procurement Technical Assistance Program, hosted a Small Business Matchmaker in March 2014 at Rivier University in Nashua. Over 250 people attended the event, including 30 federal agencies and prime contractors, 200+ small business owners, NH Dept. of Resources and Economic Development Commissioner Jeff Rose, and staff from the offices of U.S. Senators Jeanne Shaheen and Kelly Ayotte.

### 800 Special Emphasis Groups

#### Student Projects which benefit regional companies

- SBDC staff regularly draw upon the faculty and staff of their host colleges and universities. The Lakes Region Business Advisor connected with Plymouth State University professors of business, marketing, sales and technology via the Enterprise Center at Plymouth for assistance in bringing “real” business issues to students.
- The SBDC’s Manchester Regional Center, Nashua Regional Center, Keene Regional Center and Lakes Region Office(s) all worked with students from local colleges and universities, assisting them with business ideas of their own and also with student projects that benefitted SBDC clients.
- The Keene Regional Center engages students on a regular basis. It has successfully placed an intern from Keene State College, regularly supports classroom learning at the college and high school.
levels by presenting entrepreneurship materials, and supports SBDC client-businesses through student involvement whenever possible.

- The Seacoast Office works with Peter T. Paul Business School interns through senior level Entrepreneurship Internship course. The students are placed in entrepreneurial of various stages of development and gain experience in a variety of areas. The businesses are recipients of students expertise with a mutually agreed upon deliverables. Seacoast Regional Manager helps manage the deliverables such as marketing plan, financial projections, financial analysis, and social media marketing strategy.

- The Manchester regional office hosted a graphic design intern from Manchester Community College who assisted 8 clients with graphic design needs.

![Image of a group of people]

A Student Marketing team from UNH’s Paul College of Business and Economics worked with SBDC client Sharon DiRusso or Sharon’s Granola.

**Young Entrepreneurs**

- The Manchester Business Advisor served as mentor and coach to two BizGen high school teams from Souhegan High School. Each team placed in the top three and one of the teams received $3000 in funding.

![Image of a group of people]

SBDC Business Advisor Andrea O’Brien and a BizGen team from Souhegan HS.

- The Keene Regional Manager had a commitment to working with college-age entrepreneurs. Each year he lectures to a variety of KSC classes in a range of departments (e.g., Management, Arts, Communication), in addition to working with high school students at both the Monadnock Waldorf School, and the Monadnock Regional High School. In Q3 he began working on an initiative to bring a business plan contest to the Monadnock Region, aimed at young entrepreneurs. He has been asked to participate in a steering committee for the YEA! Program (Young Entrepreneurs Academy), which is being jointly administered by Keene State College, and the Greater Keene Chamber of Commerce.
Pathway to Work Program

The Pathway to Work Program, created by the NH legislature and signed into law in July 2013, is a partnership program between the NH SBDC and NH Employment Security. Eligible participants accepted into the program are able to work full time starting a business while collecting unemployment benefits instead of looking for employment elsewhere. In 2014 the NH SBDC assisted 129 Pathway to Work clients – nearly 1,000 hours of business advising.

Pathway to Work client Reinig Morris speaks at a Pathway to Work Program recognition event attended by legislators, clients, SBDC staff, Governor Maggie Hassan, and program sponsor Citizens Bank Foundation.

Rural Assistance

39.7% of New Hampshire’s population live in rural communities compared to 19.3% nationally (2010 US Census), making the state the 11th most rural in the nation. The NH SBDC has consistently provided service through regional offices and satellite locations to the most remote areas of the state, serving more than 200 of NH’s communities.

The NH SBDC continues to partner in the North Country with White Mountains Community College and Northern Community Investment Corp. to provide services under one banner – Business Services North (BSN). The program is funded in part by the Neil and Louise Tillotson Fund via the NH Charitable Foundation and provides a full range of business advising services at four North Country locations: Berlin, Littleton, Lancaster and Colebrook.

2014 Highlights

- E-Learning for Entrepreneurs, launched in 2008, offers an alternative to long-distance travel and increases access to NH SBDC’s business management education. At the end of 2014, 9,000+ e-Learning courses had been taken by over 46,500 entrepreneurs. Many of these business owners are from rural locations in NH, and are now able to easily access NH SBDC’s services via the Internet and broadband access.
Private sector funding supported an SBDC circuit rider for the Greater Wolfeboro Region. Through a partnership with the Wentworth Economic Development Corporation, the SBDC was able to reach businesses in this low income, distressed area.

Counselors used email and GoToMeeting to conduct counseling online, and utilized NH SBDC’s Business Plan OnLine to develop business plans with clients.

The part-time advisor in the Lakes Region presented to a group of farmers about opportunities for assistance. Particular areas of discussion included spreadsheet development relative to measurement, returns on investment, and marketing.

The Keene Regional Manager worked with many small-scale farming clients in the Southwestern part of the state. He also has worked closely with the Cheshire County Conservation District Director to collaborate on supporting food-related businesses through technical business assistance.

SBDC staff worked with North Country partner organizations White Mountains Community College (WMCC) and Northern Community Investment Corporation (NCIC) to launch and grow Business Services North. BSN provides business owners and entrepreneurs with one-stop access to services they need to help them prosper – management assistance, entrepreneurial counseling, marketing assistance, business financing, educational opportunities and more. Since inception, Business Services North has helped create 119 new jobs, start 28 new businesses, and create $2.4 million in capital infusion.

Recently Business Services North launched a website, Local BizWiz (www.ncic.org/bizwiz), where North Country businesses can access local and online business development resources as well as connect directly to a BSN/SBDC business advisor.

In the center of the state, a traditionally underserved and rural area, Belknap County Economic Development Council and Grafton County Economic Development Council are contracting with the SBDC to fund a part-time business advisor to serve small businesses in these counties in 2013-2014. This is funded by CDBG funds for the region.

The SBDC/BSN hosted a series of Launch Box and Shoebox workshops in the North Country. The Launch Box program provides participants with an all-inclusive box filled with information and forms needed to start a business which is presented in a series of five workshops covering financial information, legal aspects, marketing and business planning topics. At a Shoebox Party, participants bring boxes of receipts to learn how to develop a recordkeeping system and organize their accounts for filing tax returns.

Clients with Disabilities
The NH SBDC provides business advising services to disabled clients who are referred by the NH Department of Vocational Rehabilitation. In 2014 approximately 4% of NH SBDC clients served had disabilities.

2014 Highlights
- The Manchester office continues to have a special focus on entrepreneurs with disabilities. Several clients are supported by NH Vocational Rehabilitation and NH SBDC works closely with these individuals as well as their support teams to improve their business management skills.

Veterans: See Section 1800

900 Economic Development and Community Initiatives

Economic Development

Part of the NH SBDC’s vision is to be “an integral part of New Hampshire’s economic development community.” To this end, the State Director and staff actively engage in statewide and regional economic development programs. The SBDC enjoys productive relationships with such partners as the State Department of Resources and Economic Development, the NH Manufacturing Extension Partnership and the NH Business and Industry Association.

2014 Highlights
- SBDC’s Keene Office provides business advising services at the Hannah Grimes Center in Keene and in Claremont at River Valley Community College. Hannah Grimes Marketplace is the source of many of the centers referrals for small-scale food producers.
- The Keene Regional Manager views his role in part as economic development, and makes it a point to be involved with the local Chamber of Commerce, the aforementioned Hannah Grimes Center, economic development initiatives at KSC, the City of Keene, the Swanzey & Chesterfield economic development committees, and a consortium working to build a technology-focused incubator on Marlboro Street in Keene.
- The Manchester Business Advisor refers clients on a regular basis to the “Free Business Launch Program” offered through the law firm Devine Millimet. The advisor has also participated in the planning of the Manchester Small Business Week, and has formed a partnership with Manchester Community College.
- The Manchester Business Advisor assisted the International Institute of New England (IINE) prepare and plan World Refugee Day 2014. She also participated in the event held in Manchester Veteran’s Park and included community partners like Catholic Charities, YWCA, and City of Manchester Health Dept.
- The State Director attended numerous economic development and community partner events, including meetings with local incubators, chambers of commerce, economic development corporations, and the NH Institute of Politics’ Forum on the Future events.
- SBDC staff collaborated with partners and legislators and NH Employment Security on the Pathways to Work Program, including fine-tuning program processes and procedures, and drafting formal rules (RSA’s). Signed by the Governor, this bill allows a specific subset of unemployed individuals to continue to collect unemployment benefits while working with the SBDC and Employment Security to start their own business.
- The State Director and Associate State Director attend bi-annual 2-day strategic planning meetings with a collaborative economic development group hosted by the Tillotson Fund in the NH’s
North Country. Business Services North is a result of this group. BSN provides a full range of business advising services at four North Country locations: Berlin, Littleton, Lancaster and Colebrook.

- The Nashua Regional Manager continues to plan an ongoing role in the incubator system and in the capital formation and startup communities in NH. She participates in the NH Funders Group and is a member of the “Live Free and Start” initiative.
- Business advising was offered on a regular basis at River Valley Community College in Claremont, Regional Economic Development in Exeter, Wentworth Economic Development in Wolfeboro, and at Portsmouth City Hall.
- The Seacoast Regional Manager has assisted restaurants in sourcing locally through area farms and suppliers, and in sourcing sustainable and environmentally friendly products and services.
- The Lakes Region Business Advisor participates in many local economic development efforts, including “Reinvent Laconia”, the Laconia Main Street Initiative, Chamber of Commerce events and Enterprise Center at Plymouth events including the incubator at ECP.
- In 2014 the NH SBDC’s Nashua Regional Center relocated to Nashua Community College and its Statewide Education program relocated to Manchester Community College.
- The NH SBDC held various SBIR workshops and assessments at various locations around NH including Dartmouth College and UNH Manchester.

Community Initiatives

Business Improvement Program. The NH SBDC 2014-15 Portable Assistance grant is funding the launch of the Business Improvement Program (BIP), a pilot program created to assist entrepreneurs in parts of Rockingham County and Carroll County of NH in building profitable businesses through assessments, access to resources and support toward meeting their business goals. Recent years have witnessed increased small business closures due to the economic recession, changing market conditions as well as a number of natural disasters including storms, tornadoes and floods. There have been numerous small business closures in cities such as Ossipee, Salem, Seabrook and Plaistow in Carroll and Rockingham County. Consequently, there are pockets of high unemployment in these areas.

To address this issue, the NH SBDC aims to increase small businesses’ profitability and their resilience by developing a program which helps entrepreneurs identify weaknesses, set goals and access resources that provide the knowledge and skills to address the weaknesses. This will be done by employing a uniquely designed assessment tool, tracking the client progress, and developing a virtual resource library which provides the resources to address topics related to profitability and resilience.

The 2014 Portable Assistance grant has two major purposes: 1) Provide Targeted Technical Assistance through the use of Business Assessments and 2) Provide Educational Initiatives for businesses through the development of a Virtual Resource Library.

Disaster Preparedness. The NH SBDC recognizes that communities in New Hampshire are continually affected by sudden disasters such as severe storms, changes in climate which impact the tourism industry, and local economic events such as large plant closures. Consequently, we identified business disaster preparedness as one of our strategic goals. Our aim is to help NH communities remain strong and vibrant.

- 2014 Highlights
  In May 2014 the NH SBDC wrapped up 5 years working with the Neil and Louise Tillotson Foundation to create a model for sustainable services to businesses in NH’s North Country. Through this funding we launched Business Services North with White Mountain Community College and Northern Community Investment Corp. - a one stop shop for the regions businesses. We also produced 3 client videos as well
as marketing with Portable assistance funding. We have now been awarded funding to create a strategic plan to sustain this model going forward!

1000 Research

The NH SBDC recognizes the importance of gathering and utilizing information about small business needs and issues, as well as collecting feedback concerning SBDC programs. Information is gathered through workshop evaluations, client counseling evaluations, and the ASBDC impact assessment of SBDC services, as well as pre-counseling data (as a baseline for future client surveys). In addition, each center tracks important impact information (jobs created and saved, loans received, new companies started, sales growth, etc.).

2014 Highlights:

- The NH SBDC continues to work with the Carsey Institute at the University of New Hampshire to develop short and long range impact measures for our business advising services in the North Country. We have developed a Logic Model, which ties each of our grant objectives to specific, measureable outcomes in addition to traditional measures such as job growth and revenue generation. We eventually hope to implement this model statewide.
- Utilizing Portable Assistance Grant funding, the SBDC surveyed all clients from 2010-2012 on variables that helped them survive the Great Recession.
- As part of the Business Improvement Program funded by the Portable Assistance Grant, SBDC staff have conducted research on scoreboards, dashboards, Balanced Scoreboard and other assessment and goal setting models related to business performance. They are also researching business assessment tools which will be incorporated into a "Resource Library."
- The Manchester Business Advisor worked closely with the North Country Council’s economic development planner to develop a survey of the small business community around the topic of preparedness and weather resiliency.
- The Keene Regional Manager worked with host Keene State College to create an internship specifically for research to assist small businesses. This research leads to a report that each client receives, which includes financial benchmark information (RMA), industry trend and summary information (IBIA and Hoover’s), and best practices & miscellaneous research from industry associations.

1100 Other Activity

2014 marked the 30th Anniversary of the SBDC program in New Hampshire. In November the SBDC celebrated this milestone with hundreds of partners, funders, sponsors, clients and friends with a grand celebration held at a Manchester high-tech business. As part of the celebration, the SBDC unveiled a 12 minute video produced by a NH small business (and former client) celebrating 30 years, which featured numerous clients, partners, funders, U.S. Senators Shaheen and Ayotte, NH Governor Hassan telling the story of the SBDC through their eyes and their interaction with the organization. This video is on our website (www.nhsbdc.org) along with over a dozen client stories written for the 30th Anniversary, and featured on social media and our website banner.

1200 Success Stories

- Example of NH SBDC counseling assistance:
Claremont Spice and Dry Goods, Claremont

When David Lucier got the idea for opening a new store selling high quality spices from around the world in Claremont, NH, he sought advice from NH SBDC advisors, who helped him conceptualize the idea and gave him confidence that it would work. Together, they worked out a promotional plan, including the use of social media and the Internet. In December 2011, Claremont Spice and Dry Goods opened for business.

The store is now offering more than 190 different spices and blends, with more added every day. David is thinking of expanding the line of spices and blends that has some of the state’s best restaurants and steady customers coming in his door. He runs the shop with his wife, Ingrid, and says sales have increased steadily over the past two years. He’s been working with NH SBDC business advisor Rich Grogan, of the Keene office, on expansion ideas and says those plans are currently being solidified.

- Example of NH SBDC counseling assistance:

NH School of Mechanical Trades, Manchester

Co-owners Dean Millard and John Duff began working with NH SBDC business advisor Andrea O’Brien back in 2012, when the two decided to locate their New Hampshire School of Mechanical Trades in Manchester. “We knew nothing about Manchester, so we sought somebody who did,” Millard explains. Andrea helped the pair with a site survey question and, after looking at their credentials, she raised the all-important question: “Do you have a business plan?”

Millard admits they didn’t, so Andrea walked them through everything they really needed to get a business up and running. Now, the business’s ambitious 7-year plan is coming to fruition. Four full-time staff and 17 part-time teachers are currently employed at the school, and plans are underway to expand their Manchester site and to open schools in Portsmouth and Gilford.

Andrea also pointed them towards funding, which ultimately came from the Capital Regional Development Council in Concord, New Hampshire.

Now two years later, the New Hampshire School of Mechanical Trades is approved through the New Hampshire Department of Education and has taught approximately 600 students in air conditioning, electrical work, facilities maintenance, gas and oil heating systems, etc. “Our placements are off the charts,” Millard said. “There is such a need for this kind of training. Students go off to job fairs and 90 percent of them are getting jobs very quickly.”
Example of NH SBDC counseling assistance:

7th Settlement Brewery, Dover

Dave Boynton and Josh Henry, co-owners of Dover’s 7th Settlement Brewery, worked with NH SBDC business advisor Warren Daniel for about a year before opening in 2013. The brew pub “nearly” broke even in its first fiscal year – no small feat for this industry.

“We worked with Warren to line up our financing and on our business plan,” Dave explains. “We got an initial loan, then a second round of financing to expand our brewery’s capacity. We actually have a mosaic of financing including crowd-funding to start and some pre-sales such as our mug club.”

“We entrepreneurs are all an optimistic bunch, but Warren brings the realism and plays devil’s advocate,” Dave continued. “He really makes sure you can focus the passion you bring to what you’re doing to turn it into a successful business.”

Growth has been steady in the business which occupies 2,000 square feet in the Cocheco Mill building in Dover. Josh and Dave now employ 35 people, have spent over $450,000 with local distributors, farms and fishermen, and their payroll is $650,000. “We’ve made a good impact,” Dave says. “We’ve had a very successful year—we’ve learned a lot.”

Example of NH SBDC counseling assistance:

Intrinsyk Medical Devices, Salem

Paul Fueller, Tom Gannon and Jim Booker together turned to Hollis McGuire of the New Hampshire Small Business Development Center with their desire to start a medical device design and manufacturing firm. “When we got involved with Hollis in our planning stage, we got the cream of the crop,” Tom said. “She reviewed our business plan, our marketing plan, all of our data. She identified our weaknesses and really, really helped us beef up the plan to be ready to present it to investors.” Their start-up officially launched in July of 2013 in Salem, New Hampshire.
Today Intrinsyk is busy preparing to bring one of its products to its first sizable market and it is generating its first sales. With help from the NH International Trade Resource Center, they recently took part in an international medical trade show in Dubai, where they demonstrated their device that helps take blood samples from newborns up to age one-and-a-half. The blade-type device is more comfortable and efficient than a needle-stick would be at that age, plus it produces enough blood for accurate samples and involves quick-healing time for the child. Visitors in Dubai “wanted it yesterday,” Paul reports. Two active clients came from that trade show and shipping begins in April or May of this year.

Tom says, “We owe a lot to the SBDC and the connections they’ve helped us to establish. It’s been extremely helpful and we’re very grateful. I just can’t say enough about them.”

1300 Travel

No unplanned travel in 2014/2015.

1400 Problems

Funding – Funding continues to be a threat and a hardship for the New Hampshire SBDC program as mentioned in the Executive Summary.

1600 Women-owned Businesses

The NH SBDC has traditionally served a higher percentage of women-owned businesses than the 29.5 % that exist in the state. In 2014, businesses with some degree of ownership by women accounted for 44.9% of clients and 47% of clients were women. In addition to direct service to women-owned businesses, the NH SBDC has worked closely with three organizations, the Center for Women’s Business Advancement (formerly Women’s Business Center), the Women’s Rural Entrepreneurial Network, and the Center for Women and Enterprise, which provide education, mentoring, and other services.

2014 Highlights

- The Manchester Business Advisor presented at a micro-enterprise forum for refugee women looking to start their own day care businesses. The women were from Burundi, Rwanda and other African nations.
- SBDC staff participated in a Women’s Roundtable event hosted by then Congresswoman Carol Shea-Porter.
• The 2014 NH and New England Winner of the SBA’s Woman Owned Business Award was nominated by the NH SBDC and was also a long-term SBDC client.
• The Manchester Business Advisor worked closely with several clients in this category including an accessories designer, food product manufacturer, gym owner, and restaurateur. She also attended U.S. Senator Jeanne Shaheen’s Women in Business Roundtable (including Jeanne Hulit, Acting Administrator, U.S. SBA at Labelle Winery), attended Jules Pieri presentation on “Citizen Commerce” sponsored by NH Women’s Initiative and attended Manchester’s Women’s Networking Night sponsored by Devine Millimet law firm.

1700 Economic Impact

The NH SBDC continues to have a significant impact on the NH economy.

Note: Fewer counseling resources directly impact number of jobs created/saved.

**CY 2014 Impact:**

<table>
<thead>
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<th># of new Businesses created:</th>
<th>76</th>
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<tr>
<td>Jobs:</td>
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<tr>
<td>Created</td>
<td>204</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Retained</td>
<td>44</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Growth in Sales:** $6,589,965

**Loans:**
- SBA - $2,590,727
- Non SBA – $5,293,986

**Capital Formation:** $22,473,213

SBDC: An Investment in New Hampshire’s Economy

• SBDC assisted businesses have a greater chance of survival than those who do not seek assistance. **After 5 years, 80% of SBDC counseled businesses are still in business. This contrasts with the 44% survival rate of non-assisted businesses (Source: Dr. James Chrisman, ASBDC economist)**
• Each dollar invested in NH Small Business Development Center business advising returns:
  - $158.18 in wages to New Hampshire workers
  - $10.22 in tax revenues to the State of New Hampshire

1800 Veterans

The NH SBDC is committed to providing business counseling to our men and women who have served in the armed forces. **Veterans accounted for 9.2% of the total clients served** who received counseling from the NH SBDC in 2014. The NH SBDC collaborates with other organizations to provide services to veterans, including special outreach events.

- SBDC Business Advisors taught sessions in the **Boots to Business** program.
SBDC staff worked with the SBA District Office and the University of NH Manchester to offer **Veteran’s Starting a Business workshop**, and participated in the SBA’s **Veterans Roundtable** at Nashua Community College.

The Manchester Business Advisor continued to work closely with a disabled veteran client in assisting him to put a stakeholder group together in an effort to plan a multi session small business workshop series; in partnership with the University of NH Emerging Technology Center.

**1900 Manufacturing**

**2014 Highlights:**

- The State Director and the Nashua Regional Manager continued to promote opportunities for firms to apply for SBIR funding through their work with the NH High Technology Council, EPSCoR (a statewide initiative with UNH, Dartmouth and the state and the private sector), the UNH Innovation Research Center and Alpha Loft.
- **10% of SBDC clients were manufacturing clients in 2014.**
- SBDC Regional Managers and Advisors work with manufacturing business statewide of on a number of different issues, including whether to insource or outsource items, and understanding contribution margins for product sets.
- The Keene Regional Center continues to direct manufacturing clients to the Regional Coalition for Advanced Manufacturing, which assists manufacturing businesses with business planning. The Coalition also consists of Keene State College, the City of Keene, the Keene Chamber of Commerce, and private manufacturing companies.
- The Manchester Business Advisor worked closely with a manufacturing client to assess environmental compliance in a number of issues including air emissions, oil storage, hazardous waste storage and wastewater discharges.
- The Nashua Business Advisor worked with a significant number of manufacturing companies, many in technology, hardware, software, and a good number in customer products. The common theme in customer products is the challenge of cost accounting, and the common theme in technology is funding.

- **Environmental Management**

The Environmental Management Program, located at the Manchester Regional Office of the NH SBDC, provides confidential business advising in environmental management to promote sustainable business practices. This program also helps small businesses access resources and develop tools they need to effectively manage environmental and workplace safety requirements. The EM Program works closely with manufacturing clients to help them incorporate sustainable business practices.

- The Environmental Management Program participates in networking events and meetings with NH Businesses for Social Responsibility – most members are manufacturing businesses.
- The program assists individuals and companies negatively affected by mill closures, including displaced manufacturing workers.

**2000 Online Activity**
Online activity and technology continues to be a major focus of the NH SBDC’s in 2014/2015, and we continue to increase our online activity by improving the delivery of our services to the many rural regions of New Hampshire, to disadvantaged populations and to entrepreneurs statewide. NH SBDC’s online services and e-tools include our twice-weekly blog, active Facebook page, online e-Learning courses, including NH-specific courses, an online business plan software package, a content-rich website, and online counseling.

2014 Highlights

- NH SBDC counselors worked with clients via email and GoToMeeting. Additionally, many used Google calendar for scheduling, mobile phone devices for emailing and scheduling, Skype for Business Advising, and blogs and social media.
- **Online Advising:** SBDC’s certified business advisors all use online tools to work more efficiently with their clients. They strive to hold in-person meetings at the beginning of a client/advisor relationship, and as the need arises. The use of email, Skype, GoToMeeting, and other online tools for advising FYE 6/20/14 was 25% higher than in the prior period, totaling 1,657 hours.
- Over 95% of Keene Regional Manager’s business plan reviews are conducted online through track change. He requires clients to send him their plans in electronic format, and have found this to be the most efficient way to support clients as they craft a plan. Anecdotally, over 75% of new client referrals now come via email rather than telephone. He also finds this to be more efficient, and encourages this method of referral from resource partners in the region.
- The Manchester Business Advisor worked closely with a regional expert on small business case for disaster preparedness and resiliency training. The topic is planned to be offered on the NHSBDC website as a short e-learning course for sustainability.

Online courses & e-Tools:

- **Website:** Google Analytics shows that NH SBDC’s website traffic continues to grow each year. www.nhsbdc.org had:
  - 57,460 visits in 2014, 49,421 in 2013, a **16% increase**
  - 46,772 unique visitors in 2014, **an increase of 21% over** 2013’s 38,451; over 16,000 more visitors than in 2012
  - Three quarters of the visitors were new and one quarter were returning visitors.
  - Almost 12,000 visits were made from mobile phones and tablets, 7,500 in 2013, and 3500 in 2011. **2014 had an increase of 60% from 2013.**

- **e-Learning:** e-Learning for Entrepreneurs, launched in October 2008, **reached another milestone in December 2014: it surpassed 9,000 courses taken.** The courses provide an avenue for newer entrepreneurs to find answers to their many questions, and help them to formulate their goals for working with an SBDC business advisor. The courses act as refreshers to more experienced entrepreneurs. They also offer specialized topics through the NH SBDC-developed e-courses such as *Advanced Social Media Tools and Tactics for Small Business, Sites That Sell: Building Your e-Commerce Business, Basics of Export Documentation* and *Basics of Online Global Marketing.* We are able to offer these courses at no charge because several sponsors have underwritten this resource for NH entrepreneurs, and Portable Assistance grants and the Small Business Jobs Bill have funded the development of several new e-courses.
  - In 2014 the NH SBDC introduced 3 three new mini-courses on customer service: Achieving Good Customer Service, Stand Out With Customer Service, and Train Your Employees to Provide the Best Customer Service. Additionally the SBDC launched three social media mini-
courses: Pinterest for Business, Mobile Marketing, and Instagram for Business. As of March 26, 2015, 9,536 courses were taken by 6,743 entrepreneurs.

- **Social Media:**
  - Facebook. The NH SBDC started a Facebook page in 2009, and we currently **have 944 people who have liked our page**. Our blog posts on our Facebook page twice a week, we post other entries often, and we receive comments consistently. We have placed a Facebook link on our homepage and it appears in our email announcements and email signatures.
  - Twitter: A Twitter link appears on the website homepage and in our email announcements and the NH SBDC’s Twitter page has over 444 followers.

- We will explore the **next phase of our e-Learning (including creating a number of new mini-courses on small business topics and process-related topics for the SBDC), are in talks to update our website**, and will continue to build our Facebook page, Twitter, and other e-tools, such as online videos, to further infuse business advising and entrepreneurial education with online resources. We will look at the growing use of mobile devices and consider how to provide better mobile access to our website. We also will continue to investigate trends in social media and other online tools for use by the NH SBDC, our advisors, and by NH businesses.