Considering Starting a Business? Here’s Help!

Why Start A Business?
People in Crawford County go into business for many reasons: to have more control of their income, exercise creative freedom, profit from their work, or simply gain the satisfaction of becoming successful through their own hard work. However, there are also risks associated with going into business. It is important to think through these risks carefully and ask some essential questions before jumping into starting a business. Use the resources below to help you ask the right questions, evaluate your idea along the way, and guide your business to success!

Exploring Your Business Idea
This Department of Commerce website http://toolkit.wi.gov/getting.htm is provides self assessment quizzes and early startup resources. The Build Your Business “BYB” website at http://www.wisconsin.gov/state/byb/index.html has a number of assessment tools (Business Wizard) that can help you evaluate whether owning and running a business is right for you as well as permit, license, tax and employment requirements specific to your business. You’ll also want to become familiar with resources available through the Small Business Development Center www.wisconsinsbdc.org and the Wisconsin Entrepreneurs Network www.wenportal.org. The Small Business Administration (SBA), both the federal and state, offers multiple resources, partners and programs to support the needs of the small business. http://www.sba.gov/ 1-800-U-ASK-SBA

Business Counseling & Education
Whether you have a high school diploma, a college degree or a Ph.D., you will need some practical advice to start a business. Here are a few programs and services designed to help you get started:

Small Business Development Center - Business Counselors from the Small Business Development Centers provide free counseling services and classes for new business owners. Counselor Gary Smith typically makes appointments in Prairie du Chien on the third Wednesday of each month but also visits Platteville, Fennimore, and Richland Center. To schedule an appointment or find out more about classes visit (Platteville office) www.uwplatt.edu/swsbdc/ (608) 342-1038 or (Lacrosse) http://www.uwlax.edu/sbdc/ 608-875-8782. The Wisconsin SBDC also has a great 24-hour answer line for business questions: 1-800-940-SBDC (7232).

Coulee Community Action Program (Couleecap) Couleecap’s Job and Business Development Program also offers business counseling, financing, and technical assistance for businesses in Crawford County. Visit www.couleecap.org or call Marilyn Huckenpoehler at (608) 796-2926.

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**Business Planning**

If you choose to start a business you should prepare a clear plan that takes your idea from concept to reality. A business plan lays out how you are going to run your business and is a management tool to help guide the future of your company. This is a required document for most business financing. Many web sites offer examples of business plans including [http://www.bplans.com/sample_business_plans.cfm](http://www.bplans.com/sample_business_plans.cfm). You may also purchase software programs to assist in writing a plan. Most business counselors can help you develop your business plan.