

## U.S. SourceLink

*By Maria Meyers*

### MAKING THE U.S. ENTREPRENEURIAL ECOSYSTEM VISIBLE

What started as a way to get entrepreneurs to the right resource at the right time in Kansas City has expanded to help rural and urban business owners find the help they need from Alaska to Florida. Communities across America are adopting the U.S.SourceLink model to create collaborative networks of entrepreneurship support organizations. These networks provide visibility to the local entrepreneurial ecosystem, and the resulting partnerships are changing local economies.

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### THE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT RESEARCH PARTNERS (EDRP) PROGRAM

#### DESIGNATED FOR INNOVATIVE LEADERS IN THE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMUNITY

#### THE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT RESEARCH PARTNERS (EDRP) PROGRAM

Economic Development Research Partners Program membership opens doors to concepts and schemes that assist economic development professionals in operating at a higher level.

**AIMS OF THE EDRP** Through the EDRP Program, IEDC is taking its mission to a new level, assisting practitioners to successfully compete in the global economy and increase prosperity for communities at an accelerated pace, empowering ED professionals to better define their vision and voice.

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# u.s. sourcelink

By Maria Meyers

Economic developers across the country are rushing to spur economic growth with a renewed focus on start-up and growth companies. An effective method to support this growth is to connect existing business development resources into highly visible, easily accessible, and entrepreneur-friendly networks. A number of these networks are emerging nationwide and are linked through U.S.SourceLink, a program of the University of Missouri – Kansas City (UMKC).

U.S.SourceLink began in the Kansas City region as KCSOURCELink, which today connects more than 150 entrepreneurship support organizations to each other and the entrepreneurs they serve. Since 2003, the program has been adopted by many cities, states, and regions across the United States. These collaborative networks in places like Alaska, Kansas, Oklahoma, and Mississippi have found a variety of ways to leverage their resources to create innovative and vibrant business development programs.

## THE BIRTH OF U.S.SOURCELINK: KCSOURCELink

The perception in Kansas City in the late 1990s was that there were many organizations providing entrepreneurial support services but aspiring and existing business owners just weren't finding the right one. Although Kansas City was fertile ground for entrepreneurs, many of the 165,000+ small businesses in the 18-county Kansas and Missouri bi-state region were finding it difficult to navigate the region's 150 service providers.

KCSOURCELink sprouted in this environment thanks to work done to improve the scholarship and instruction of entrepreneurship on the UMKC campus. An urban university, UMKC has a long history of linking the academic and business



SourceLink Tulsa launches at the Tulsa Metro Chamber in February 2010.

communities in ways that serve the small business owner and provide experiential learning for UMKC students.

In 2000, UMKC entrepreneurship outreach programs were moved to a small building on the outskirts of the UMKC campus, and other business development organizations were invited to join them. By 2003, about 20 support organizations were located together, creating a one-stop-shop for entrepreneurs. As the building became populated, discussions among UMKC, the U.S. Small Business Administration, and the Ewing Marion Kauffman Foundation began to focus around expanding this network throughout the community.

Given Kansas City's far-flung geography, leaders believed that any one location could never serve the entire market, so the network would need to be more than a single building. The idea evolved that a network, rather than one physical location,

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would be the best way to link partners from all parts of the metro area. The challenge for entrepreneurs was that they often didn't know where to start and got shuffled from place to place in search of the right service provider. In this model, wherever an entrepreneur started in the network would be the right place, because he or she would be referred to the right resource for his or her needs and stage of business.

With an initial \$487,000 investment from the Ewing Marion Kauffman Foundation and support from the SBA to identify and recruit resource partners, KCSOURCELINK was established as a program of UMKC in June 2003 and quickly moved from being a one-stop-shop to being a metro-wide, bi-state link for entrepreneurs.

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Today, KCSOURCELINK operates as a program of the UMKC Innovation Center, which acts as an umbrella for the university's many business outreach programs. KCSOURCELINK joins, among others, incubators, small business development centers, SCORE chapters, microloan providers, angel networks, chambers of commerce, and economic development corporations under a common mission: Help small businesses grow and prosper in the Kansas City region by providing business owners with easy access to vital services.

Aspiring and existing business owners are referred to the appropriate resource by calling a hotline number, visiting the website ([www.kcsourcelink.com](http://www.kcsourcelink.com)), or by approaching any of the network's resource partner organizations.

In addition to guiding business owners to the people and resources they need, KCSOURCELINK strengthens its network of nonprofit and government service providers, helping them to:

- Raise community awareness to bring more entrepreneurs into the network and increase entrepreneurial activity,
- Identify gaps in services,
- Initiate innovative programs and strategic alliances,
- Create a continuously improving process for providing quality services,
- Find new ways to increase funding for resource provider programs, and
- Measure economic impact.

The network's strength comes from its ability and willingness to shepherd entrepreneurs to the right resource. When entrepreneurs enter the network through

the hotline referral system, for example, KCSOURCELINK's "network navigators" direct them to the best support organization and then follow up to assess the appropriateness of referrals, quality of service, need for additional resources, and economic impact. If entrepreneurs enter through a resource partner, those organizations collaborate to provide better services to clients by partnering on service delivery, coordinating educational programs, and referring clients to each other.

With more than 100 partners involved, a simple directory listing was not enough to guide an entrepreneur directly to the program or service needed, nor would it give hotline support personnel an easy path to the right referral. KCSOURCELINK needed a simple tool that could

return quick results for both hotline and online access. Using resources at hand, KCSOURCELINK partnered with several UMKC School of Computer Sci-



*SourceLink Tulsa offers a small business center as a resource.*

ence and Engineering students to create a simple point and click search engine called The Resource Navigator.®

More than a mere directory of resources, The Resource Navigator® organizes specific resource partner programs and services into an entrepreneur-friendly, interactive, online database. Entrepreneurs and service providers alike can go online, answer a few questions about business needs, and be referred to the specific resources they need. The Resource Navigator® became an ideal tool for mapping entrepreneurial resources in a given region, making them visible and identifying gaps in services.

In its early years, KCSOURCELINK partner organizations found funders wanting economic impact information about companies served in return for their support. Many of the partners had no system at all for tracking client activity or were utilizing spreadsheets or limited database programs. Fifteen partner organizations came together to brainstorm a good management solution. The partners looked broadly at their needs and identified event management, training management, and client surveys as top priorities in addition to measuring business growth.

Out of this process came Biz-Trakker,<sup>®</sup> a versatile client management system that allows for easy referrals among organizations, manages events, and measures business growth and economic impact through an embedded survey system. KCSOURCELINK also uses it to aggregate information across organizations to determine entrepreneurial activity in the region.

### EARLY EXPANSION

The original grant from the Kauffman Foundation included a charge to incubate a model in Kansas City that could be used in other areas of the country. As the network grew, KCSOURCELINK documented each step in the process and developed software tools and support manuals, all with the underlying purpose to create a model that other regions could easily replicate. By early 2005, the network was already expanding.



*Steve Radley from NetWork Kansas makes a point during a small group discussion at the annual U.S.SourceLink Conference.*

The first expansion of the SourceLink model was to fill a particular niche: serving urban entrepreneurs through the Urban Entrepreneur Partnership, a program of the National Urban League to encourage minority entrepreneurship and business development. The system was replicated in the urban cores of Atlanta, Georgia; Cleveland and Cincinnati, Ohio; and Jacksonville, Florida. Smaller implementations of the SourceLink model, these systems are still in place today as the respective Entrepreneur Empowerment Centers which help urban entrepreneurs grow.

These early expansions of KCSOURCELINK helped refine the process for creating collaborative networks of service providers and became the basis for U.S.SourceLink, which now operates in a variety of regions. Like KCSOURCELINK, U.S.SourceLink is an outreach program of the UMKC Innovation Center. The mission is to match aspiring and existing entrepreneurs to the resources they need to grow by uniting existing programs into collaborative networks, providing a highly reliable, visible, and vibrant source of business start-up and growth information.

### BRINGING A NETWORK TO LIFE

U.S.SourceLink is all about partnerships, and they start from the very beginning. Typically, one or more organizations join forces to bring the SourceLink network to life. These founding partners set the vision and provide oversight of the network, often providing financial, administrative, and start-up support. The founding partners create an executive committee, comprising representatives from the founding partners, resource partners, and entrepreneurs, and then select the champion to lead the effort. Founding partners can typically be foundations, regional economic development agencies, or state and local governments. Resource partners include government agencies, educational institutions, small business development centers, angel groups, and other non-profit entrepreneurial support organizations.

Picking the network leader can be both challenging and rewarding. It takes a unique individual to reach out to potential network partners and create an environment of trust and excitement. Experience in collaboration, working with volunteers, managing staff, and fundraising are all valuable attributes – but the critical elements are passion and drive. The right leader will make the difference between a vibrant network and one that exists only on paper, between thriving collaborations and a few stilted meetings, and between success and failure. The leader needs to be a persuasive collaborator who is skilled in bringing together diverse groups, creating new partnerships, and bringing projects to completion.

With a leader and management structure in place, the next step is to create an asset map of the potential partner organizations. Many of these partners can be found by simply tapping into the initial connections. Founding partners help identify potential resource partners. Conversations with those prospects yield additional potential resource partners, creating a broad database to explore.

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As resource partners are recruited, they agree to let the network promote their services to business owners in a variety of ways but specifically through The Resource Navigator<sup>®</sup>'s internet-driven search tool and through a call center. Resource partners agree to provide basic information that can be searched by business owners looking for assistance. As information is entered into The Resource Navigator<sup>®</sup> system, an asset map of related service providers is created. When this information is compared with other networks across the community, gaps in services can be easily identified.



## NetWork Kansas grew out of a series of seven statewide prosperity summits involving more than 1,500 community and business leaders in 2003.

A website is then developed to bring together information about the partners in one easy-to-find place. The site includes a central list of programs, events, and classes provided by the partners, a resource library with detailed information on frequently asked questions by entrepreneurs, information for high-tech and life-sciences industry entrepreneurs, and The Resource Navigator.®

SourceLink networks emerge from these general guidelines, but each region is unique and each implementation finds its own path to success as illustrated by the following examples.

### NETWORK KANSAS: An Early Adopter

NetWork Kansas grew out of a series of seven statewide prosperity summits involving more than 1,500 community and business leaders in 2003. These meetings set the stage for the adoption of the Kansas Economic Growth Act of 2004, that laid out the plan for Kansas economic revitalization and established entrepreneurship and small business growth as a statewide economic development strategy.

NetWork Kansas was established as a result of this act and now operates as an independent 501(c)3 with an 11-member board appointed by the secretary of commerce. NetWork Kansas is charged with increasing the availability of capital, promoting new business development, and creating jobs for Kansas. Funding comes from an annual appropriation through the Department of Commerce and a percentage of the tax credits that are sold to finance loans to Kansas small businesses.

NetWork Kansas adopted the SourceLink model in 2005 and its five founding partners each took a role in establishing the network:

- The Kansas Department of Commerce was charged with program oversight.
- The lead office of the Kansas Small Business Development Center was contracted to establish operations.
- Wichita State University provided office space.
- Fort Hays State University and Butler Community College contributed in-kind support.

These founding partners searched for and found Steve Radley to serve as the network leader. Radley's background included experience in growing a company's revenues from \$6 million to \$175 million during the nine years he worked for a Kansas entrepreneur. He then went on to co-own and successfully exit from two other companies. A board of directors representing a mix of bankers, service professionals, and entrepreneurs completes the management structure.

Radley quickly saw that the network could do more than just connect entrepreneurs to business services. It would be an important conduit through which entrepreneurs, resource partners, educators, and government agencies could interact. As a result, the imperative became clear: Build a network of resources to serve as the foundation for all services from NetWork Kansas.

The first step was to talk to the stakeholders. NetWork Kansas worked with the eight regional Kansas Small Business Development Centers to hold 13 town hall meetings in 2005. The dual goal was to meet with potential resource partners to understand their needs and concerns, as well as recruit them for the network.

The NetWork Kansas website and hotline were launched in March of 2006 and the network quickly grew from nine partners at inception to more than 450 today. NetWork Kansas currently employs from four to six entrepreneurship students from Wichita State University on a part-time basis to field calls and emails and connect entrepreneurs and small business owners with comprehensive resources offered by NetWork Kansas partners.

When a client contacts NetWork Kansas – via telephone, email, or online chat – counselors determine physical business location, business stage, and if the client is already working with other resources. The counselors then use The Resource Navigator® to research the statewide network and determine which resource(s) can best assist the entrepreneur and make the connection to the partner.

NetWork Kansas' services don't stop with a single phone call. The center leverages the strength of the resource partner network to offer programs to assist economic development. These programs include:

- StartUp Kansas provides risk capital for entrepreneurs and small businesses in rural and distressed communities in the state. Entrepreneurs are required to access the funds through NetWork Kansas resource partners. Partners assist with due diligence prior to funding and support the company post-funding to ensure success. To date, StartUp Kansas has invested more than \$2 million in 86 businesses, which employ 421 full-time and 425 part-time workers.



*Kansas entrepreneur Joyce Parker from Sweet 120 receives a check from El Dorado Mainstreet, one of NetWork Kansas' resource partners.*

- Kansas E-Community partnerships allow a town, a cluster of towns, or an entire county to raise seed money for local entrepreneurs using Kansas Entrepreneurship Tax Credit allocations. Communities must demonstrate their active partnership in NetWork Kansas to participate. To date, 20 E-Communities have \$2.69 million in funds available and have made almost \$900,000 in loans or grants to 32 businesses.

In addition, eight resource partners in Kansas have recently embarked on an economic gardening pilot program, assisting second-stage growth companies in rural communities with gaining access to competitive intelligence information.



*Fred Goertzen, maintenance supervisor and engineer, explains the manufacturing process at Countertop Trends, a StartUp Kansas client in Gridley, Kansas.*

### **SOURCELINK TULSA: A Chamber-led Network**

SourceLink Tulsa found its roots in two strategic planning efforts for the city of Tulsa and its surrounding communities. Led by the Tulsa Metro Chamber, Tulsa's Future was a privately funded economic development planning effort to develop strategies to support business growth, strengthen educational opportunities, and improve downtowns and communities in the Tulsa metro region. About the same time, the city of Tulsa embarked on PlaniTulsa, a two-and-one-half-year project that involved 1,500 people in developing a city-wide, 30-year development plan.

Entrepreneurship and small business development were key parts of both plans, as 82 percent of all businesses in the Tulsa MSA have fewer than 10 employees. Representing some 29,000 small businesses, these companies support 55,000 primary jobs with an estimated payroll of \$1.4 billion annually, making a significant economic impact on the region.

The PlaniTulsa development plan pointed out that the city "has a one-stop center for permitting, zoning, and licenses. This concept should be expanded to

include other services necessary for prospective entrepreneurs, like business assistance, low interest loans, grants, access to mentors, etc."<sup>1</sup> To create this one-stop shop, funding from Tulsa's Future program helped to implement the SourceLink model.

SourceLink Tulsa launched in February 2010 and is led by Kinnee Tilly, vice president of business retention, expansion and small business for the Tulsa Chamber, which was recently named 2010 Chamber of the Year by the American Chamber of Commerce Executives. A volunteer SourceLink Advisory Committee guides the program, which receives wide visibility through chamber marketing activities.

Tilly partnered with Margaret White, an associate professor in the Department of Management at Oklahoma State University, to identify resource partners and used The Resource Navigator<sup>®</sup> to map the local entrepreneurial ecosystem. In addition to centralizing resource information on the website and The Resource Navigator<sup>®</sup>, the chamber operates a walk-in SourceLink Business Center with access to Dunn and Bradstreet listings, demographic, and other market research information.

### **MYBIZAM IN MISSISSIPPI AND ALABAMA: Leveraging the Community College Network**

Regions find their champions in a variety of organizations. While SourceLink Tulsa was chamber-led and the original KCSOURCELINK was developed as a university program, the MyBiz Alabama-Mississippi network (MyBizAM) grew out of a workforce development program. It found its champion in a nonprofit and created a strong partnership with the community college system to bring its network to life.

MyBizAM adopted the SourceLink model in 2006 after receiving a Workforce Innovation in Regional Economic Development (WIRED) grant from the U.S. Department of Labor. Like KCSOURCELINK, the project originally crossed a state line, encompassing 37 counties on either side of the Alabama-Mississippi border.

Championed by the Montgomery Institute, a regional nonprofit that focuses on citizen leadership, the network was built through a partnership with eight community colleges: four in West Alabama and four in East Mississippi. The project later spread to all of Mississippi and much of Alabama through the network of community colleges.

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MyBizAM is a network of agencies, nonprofits, and resource providers committed to improving opportunities for citizens in Alabama and Mississippi to start, own, and expand businesses. It consists of four main components:

- MyBiz.am website that includes entrepreneur toolkits and other information;
- The Resource Navigator® online search tool;
- Start It! Cards that display community points-of-contact for utilities, licensing, permitting, tax information, and local regulations; and
- MyBizAM Resource Partner Network.

Critical to implementing the work of the MyBizAM network are 15 Mississippi and four Alabama community colleges. These colleges add depth and richness to the support network, expanding access and connecting more entrepreneurs to small business development support like Small Business Development Centers, minority enterprise and entrepreneur programs, college training programs, community development corporations, and funding opportunities.

Program partners include, but are not limited to, the Mississippi Development Authority, Mississippi Technology Alliance, Mississippi Department of Employment Security, the State Board of Community and Junior Colleges, Alabama Department of Economic Development, and the Alabama Office of Workforce Development. The program serves communities across Mississippi and western counties of Alabama.

### ENERGIZING THE NETWORK THROUGH CONTINUED COLLABORATION

Regularly scheduled resource partner meetings keep the network fresh, allowing the partners to share and collaborate. Resource partners get to know each other and the services that they offer, meet new partners, and find out about new developments within the community.

Collaborations often develop from partner meetings or are started and facilitated by lead organizations. Joint program development and fund raising often result. Partners identify gaps in services and how to fill them, collaborate on training initiatives and events, and work together to reach underserved audiences or bring new programs to the region.

Regional collaborations leverage the resource partner capabilities into new programs that support entrepreneurs. An example of this is AKSourceLink, which has used the network to offer training programs and entrepreneurial support in very remote areas of Alaska.

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### AKSOURCELINK: Using Partnerships to Cover a Vast Territory

Alaska is a vast state. In size, it could swallow Texas, twice. For its enormous size, it is home to only 670,000 people, three-fourths of whom are concentrated in the south central area or close to the adjoining road system. The rest of the population is scattered across remote wilderness, with many communities accessible only by water or air.

Alaska has two designations for rural areas: “rural” and “remote rural.” Close to 70 percent of the state is remote rural where a subsistence lifestyle, sharing, and non-cash trading are important pieces of the economy. A subsistence lifestyle dominates in many villages, where



*Landing at airstrip at Goodnews Bay, AK, population 237, prior to a workshop.*



*Unloading training and other supplies at Goodnews Bay, AK.*



*Aniak workshop venue, Kuskokwim Native Association Computer Lab.*

hunting moose, bear, caribou, and waterfowl; fishing; and gathering berries are essential life-sustaining activities. Summer days can last 21 hours and winter temperatures can drop to 50 below. The roads stop at

the end of town and access is only by boat, plane, or sled, giving Alaska its moniker, “The Last Frontier.”

When the University of Alaska Anchorage Institute for Social and Economic Research and the University of Alaska Center for Economic Development conducted their 2007 study, *Viable Business Enterprises for Rural Alaska*,<sup>2</sup> small business owners statewide expressed frustration about the difficulty of finding relevant information and training on business and financial management, marketing, and available sources of funding. Often, business owners said they did not even know what kinds of assistance they needed, much less where to find such assistance.



Professionals working in the economic development field had been aware of this issue for some time from conversations with clients, conference and workshop attendees, and business plan competition applicants. They also identified other issues related to service providers:

- Outdated websites due to lack of staff support,
- Limited service visibility due to limited marketing dollars, and
- Difficulty in knowing about and collaborating with other resources.

In addition, service providers across the state regularly received calls for assistance outside their scope and were sometimes unsure of the most appropriate place to direct inquiries.

With this knowledge and the daunting goal of providing services to the *entire* state, partnering was the only way to go. A unique coalition of rural and urban and Alaska Native and non-Native organizations from every region of the state came together under the Alaska Entrepreneurial Consortium, sharing the goal of strengthening support to entrepreneurs and small business owners by providing easy access to available resources.

With the University of Alaska Center for Economic Development as the lead agency, the group approached the Denali Commission, an independent federal agency designed to provide critical utilities, infrastructure, and economic support throughout Alaska, for funds to establish AKSourceLink. Additional funding came from U.S. Department of Agriculture Rural Development and the University of Alaska Anchorage. AKSourceLink is led by an executive committee of economic development professionals from across the state, including the state director of economic development. Founding partners range from state and local economic development groups to nonprofits that support Native Alaskans.

Armed with a background in nonprofits and social entrepreneurship, Linda Ketchum leads the AKSourceLink network and is a true trailblazer. Daily life as AKSourceLink network leader can mean conversing with

a U.S. senator in Anchorage one day, then climbing into a small two-seat plane to reach businesses in remote areas the next.

Since its launch in 2009, the program's resource partners have conducted more than 30 small business development workshops in urban and rural communities of all sizes and populations. AKSourceLink is growing steadily, with 110 resource partners and 60 more on deck. The work of Ketchum and her partners has recently been recognized by the University Economic Development Association Excellence in Partnership Award.



*Workshop participants at AKSourceLink rollout in Aniak, AK hosted by Interior Rivers Resource Conservation & Development.*

## THE IMPORTANCE OF RESOURCE PARTNERS

As the stories demonstrate, there is no network without resource partners. Traditionally, the SourceLink model defines resource partners as nonprofit, government, or educational organizations that provide education, training, networking, technical assistance, financial, or physical services to those wishing to start and grow companies. They provide the services that are offered directly to business owners. Therefore, it is critical to recruit and retain a broad range of providers to the network.

Not all resource partners are exactly alike. Some spend 100 percent of their program budgets delivering direct counseling and business development services to businesses. Others, like chambers of commerce, focus on networking and policy and may refer business owners to other network providers for education, training, and other services. The network provides its biggest benefit by linking this broad array of organizations.

The myriad of business services can be daunting to navigate, not just for entrepreneurs but for economic development organizations as well. Over the past seven years, U.S.SourceLink has organized and categorized entrepreneur support organizations across the country. In addition, thousands of aspiring and existing entrepreneurs have called, emailed, or visited the website and The Resource Navigator® looking for help. One lesson learned: support organizations cluster, just like the businesses they serve.



*Resource partners gather at quarterly meeting.*



It is important to recognize these clusters because an entrepreneur needs to be directed to an organization that best matches his/her business type or the interaction with the support organization will be unsatisfactory. The chart shows typical support organizations by each of the following business clusters.

- **Innovation-Led Enterprises:** These endeavors are often associated with building life sciences or technology firms, which typically require significant funding and specialized facilities, generally giving away equity to secure the financial resources they need to grow. These businesses may cluster around research institutes and universities, as technology is transferred from research labs into the marketplace.
- **Second Stage Growth:** These firms have between 10 to 99 employees and/or \$750,000 to \$50 million in revenue, with owners who are focused on grow-

ing and expanding their businesses.<sup>3</sup> Second stage companies are looking for professional management teams, have the collateral for debt financing, and need market intelligence data and exporting support. According to the Edward Lowe Foundation (see [www.youreconomy.org](http://www.youreconomy.org)), these firms are currently creating most new jobs.

- **Lifestyle Companies:** A lifestyle company is a business that will grow to a certain plateau and then remain there, as the owner does not desire to invest the resources required to take it to the next level. These are the vast majority of companies in the United States, mostly operating as sole proprietorships and employers with less than five employees.
- **Microenterprises:** Defined as companies that require less than \$35,000 in capitalization to start, these firms are a common type of lifestyle enterprise. In

#### TYPICAL SUPPORT ORGANIZATIONS BY BUSINESS TYPE\*

##### Innovation Led

- Research Centers
  - University
  - National Laboratory
  - Corporate Research and Development
  - Other Research Institutes
- Angel Groups and Networks
- Venture Capitalists
- SBIR/STTR Assistance Programs
- Intellectual Property Attorneys
- High-tech and Biotech Incubators
- State Government Programs, e.g. incentives for early stage seed capital
- University Technology Transfer Offices
- Serial Entrepreneurs
- Some Small Business Development Centers (SBA)
- Mentorship Programs

##### Second Stage

- Professional Service Providers
  - Banks
  - Accountants
  - Attorneys
  - Insurance Agents
  - Management Consultants
- Economic Development Corporations
- Chambers of Commerce
- Revolving Loan Fund Programs
- Procurement Technical Assistance Centers (DOD)
- Manufacturing Extension Programs (DOC)
- Small Business Development Centers (SBA)
- Trade Adjustment Assistance Centers (DOC)
- Export Programs
- Market Research Organizations
- SBA Lenders

##### Lifestyle

- Small Business Development Centers (SBA)
- Non-technology Incubators
- Online Library and Training
- Micro-lenders
- Economic Development Corporations
- Chambers of Commerce
- SCORE
- Women's Business Centers
- Community Colleges
- Procurement Technical Assistance Center

##### Microenterprise

- Small Business Development Centers (SBA)
- Online Library and Training
- Workforce Development Offices
- Some Social Services Agencies
- Micro-lenders
- SCORE
- Women's Business Centers

\* Many organizations work across business types. This chart indicates most likely fit.

today's economic environment, dislocated workers and retirees are starting these companies to replace income lost through downsizing or the recession.

There are support organizations that help those in poverty build wealth through microenterprise programs. Referrals may come from social services agencies, and this group may need additional technical assistance due to lack of basic math skills, etc.

Regions across the country have different business needs and resources. Identifying the resources available, making them visible to the community, and leveraging them into collaborative groups can change local economies.

## CONNECTING ENTREPRENEURIAL ECOSYSTEMS

Today, U.S.SourceLink networks exist in more than 20 regions in the country. These networks regularly exchange best practices in economic development and share in marketing efforts and the cost of developing and maintaining the technology needed to run the network.

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### ENDNOTES

- 1 PlaniTulsa, City of Tulsa Planning Department. (2009). *Our Vision for Tulsa*. Retrieved from: <http://www.planitulsa.org/files/tulsa-vision-draft-091509-screen.pdf>.
- 2 University of Alaska Anchorage, Institute of Social and Economic Research. (2008). *Viable Business Enterprises for Rural Alaska*. Retrieved from: <http://ced.uaa.alaska.edu/vibes/report.htm>.
- 3 The Edward W. Lowe Foundation is recognized for its support for second-stage businesses. More information can be found at [www.edwardlowe.org](http://www.edwardlowe.org) and [www.youreconomy.org](http://www.youreconomy.org).



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