

# SMALL BUSINESS RESILIENCY TOOLKIT

## *PLANNING WORKBOOK*



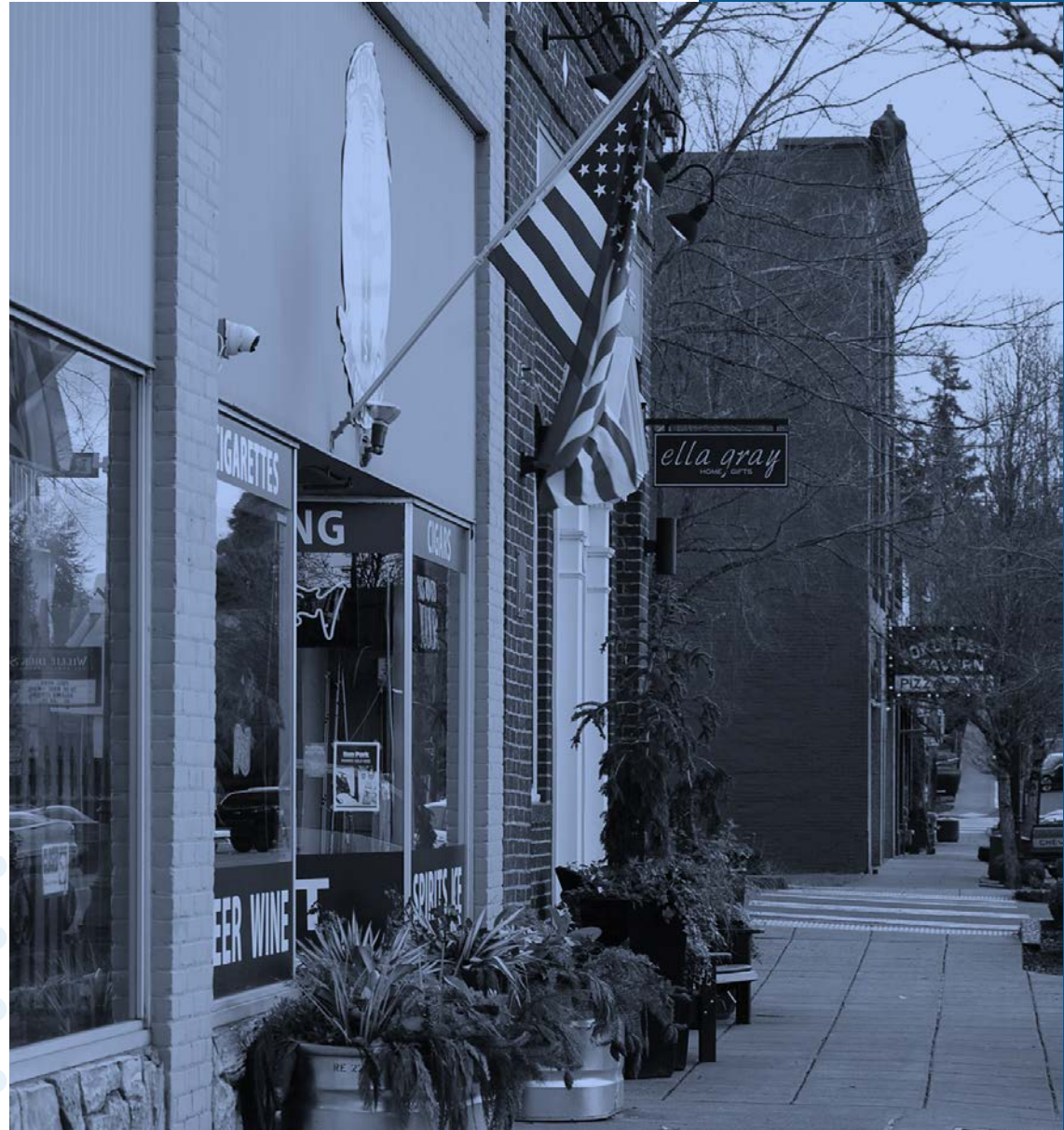
**Cowlitz-Wahkiakum**  
Council of Governments  
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT



STRATEGIES

# COMPONENTS

1. INTRODUCTION
2. BUILDING RESILIENCE
  - ▶ BUSINESS PLANNING
  - ▶ FINANCES + CASH FLOW
  - ▶ SUPPLY CHAIN
  - ▶ WORKFORCE
  - ▶ INNOVATION
  - ▶ SUCCESSION PLANNING
3. NEXT STEPS



1

# INTRODUCTION

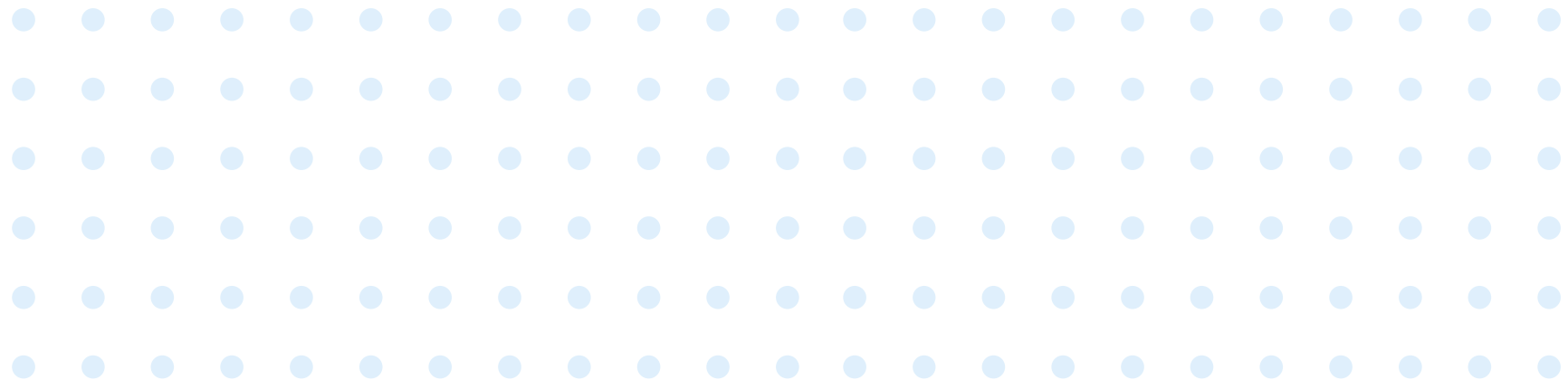


# OVERVIEW

This workbook is designed to support business leaders in their endeavor to prepare their business to weather varying economic conditions.

Although the questions outlined in the workbook often build on each other, they can be answered independently and returned to as often as needed. You may find that questions in one section need to be evaluated frequently, whereas others may only need an annual review.

In addition to the resilience-planning questions, the workbook notes local resources and services available to businesses, most being provided at no cost. The Cowlitz-Wahkiakum Council of Governments (CWCOG) is available to connect business leaders with service providers in the region, and can assist at all stages in the business lifecycle, from startup planning to succession planning.



2

# BUILDING RESILIENCE



# RESILIENCE PLANNING



BUSINESS PLANNING



FINANCES + CASH FLOW



SUPPLY CHAIN



WORKFORCE



INNOVATION



SUCCESSION PLANNING



# BUSINESS PLANNING

*The first step to ensure resiliency and recovery is to have a solid business plan. A business plan should cover topics from basic operations to future planning. Your plan can be built in stages based on your needs and time constraints.*

1

What is your plan for improving the viability of your business? Do you have a plan? If so, how often is it updated? What changes are you going to make to your business over the next few months?

2

What are your income streams? What are you doing to improve and/or diversify them?

3

Do you have a plan to respond to an expanding economy? A contracting economy? How would you make key decisions in either case?

## ***Additional Resource***

The Small Business Development Center (SBDC) offers free business-planning tools. Resources can be found online, as well as at local SBDC offices.



# BUSINESS PLANNING

*The first step to ensure resiliency and recovery is to have a solid business plan. A business plan should cover topics from basic operations to future planning. Your plan can be built in stages based on your needs and time constraints.*

4

What role does technology play in your business? How are you adapting to technological changes? How are you thinking about future technology and how it might impact your business?

5

Who are your present competitors? How does your pricing strategy compare to theirs? Who might your future competitors be, given the activities your business is engaged in?

6

What can you do to improve your understanding of your customers' needs? What steps can you take to improve your approach to meeting those needs? How can you improve your customers' experience?

## ***Additional Resource***

The Washington State Department of Commerce provides an online version of their Small Business Guide, which has a section on writing a business plan and additional resources for each step of the plan.









# FINANCES + CASH FLOW

*Business financial concerns are often among the first that arise during an adverse event, whether due to a market disruption, an economic recession, or an environmental disaster. Thoughtful business planning can help mitigate potential impacts.*

1

What is the current state of your business's finances (assets, liabilities, revenue, expenditures)? How has this changed over the years?

2

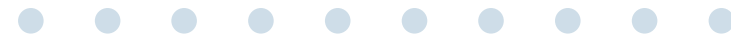
What systems do you have in place to manage your operating cash flow over the next 3 to 6 months? 6 to 12 months? Do you feel your current systems are adequate to manage your business's finances? If not, what needs improvement?

3

Are there areas of business finance that you feel you need assistance with? Are you aware of the local organizations that can connect you to tools and other resources to help address your concerns?

## ***Additional Resource***

The Washington Small Business Development Center (WSBDC) and SCORE offer online courses on accounting systems, financial statements, business insurance, and more.





# FINANCES + CASH FLOW

*Business financial concerns are often among the first that arise during an adverse event, whether due to a market disruption, an economic recession, or an environmental disaster. Thoughtful business planning can help mitigate potential impacts.*

4

Have you taken any steps to establish a line of credit for your business? Do you have an established relationship with a banker?

5

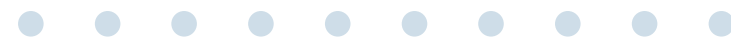
Are you aware of the federal, state, and local government-backed financial relief and loan programs? Do you have a trusted resource of whom to ask questions about these programs?

6

Have you considered alternative funding mechanisms for your business (such as the Lower Columbia Investment Network (LCIN), crowdfunding, cooperative structures, etc.)?

## ***Additional Resource***

The Washington Small Business Development Center (WSBDC), the LCIN, the Cowlitz Economic Development Council (CEDC), chambers, and the CWCOG are resources to connect you to local financial institutions, Small Business Administration (SBA) programs, private investors, and business grants and loans.









# SUPPLY CHAIN

*Planning for supply-chain disruptions and sourcing locally (when possible) can help minimize interruptions in service during adverse events. Expanding and diversifying your customer base can open new opportunities to grow business. Although this topic may impact manufacturing most visibly, there are components that every business should consider.*

1

Do you keep an inventory of your suppliers (with information such as their location, capacity, quality, cost, etc.)? If you grow, can your suppliers keep up with you?

2

What percentage of your materials and supplies are sourced locally? Can this be increased?

3

How do you find alternative or secondary suppliers for your materials and supplies?

## ***Additional Resource***

The Small Business Administration (SBA) hosts a Recovery Hub on their website with resources on supply-chain resilience, evaluating your supply chain, and mitigating disruption remotely.



# SUPPLY CHAIN

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4

What are the characteristics of your core customer base? Who buys from you and why?

5

Do you have the processes and/or certifications in place to sell goods or services to federal, state, or local government agencies? Do your suppliers?

6

Do you have sustainability goals for your business? How does your supply chain impact those goals?

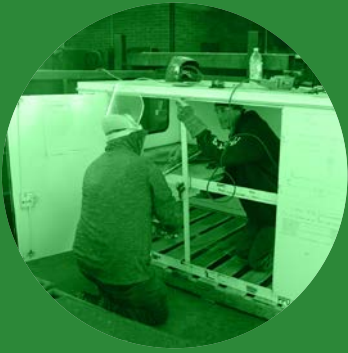
## ***Additional Resource***

The Washington State Department of Enterprise Services and USA.gov provide helpful information on contracting with state and federal governments.









# WORKFORCE

*Whether you are a two-person shop or one hundred people strong, workforce is critical to your business's success. Finding and nurturing talent can help build a resilient business, as well as propel your business to the next level.*

1

How do you find talent? How has this changed since the COVID-19 pandemic?

2

How are you investing in your workforce? Is there an internal career pathway in your company? Are your employees cross-trained in key business operations?

3

How has COVID-19 impacted your workforce? How have your employees been affected by the pandemic? Are you able to make accommodations to provide more flexibility to your staff?

## ***Additional Resource***

Workforce Southwest Washington (WSW) professionals are available to connect your business to the local labor force, including talent from postsecondary sources. They also offer cost-sharing opportunities for training and onboarding.



# WORKFORCE

*Whether you are a two-person shop or one hundred people strong, workforce is critical to your business's success. Finding and nurturing talent can help build a resilient business, as well as propel your business to the next level.*

4

How are your competitors providing for their workforce?

5

Will you have hiring needs once the pandemic has waned?  
How will you attract or source talent?

6

What does your future workforce look like (size, skill sets, etc.)?  
How many employees will you need to achieve your business goals?

## ***Additional Resource***

The Washington State Department of Labor & Industries website provides information for businesses on current regulations, workers' compensation insurance, how to request inspections, how to acquire licenses and permits, and more.







# INNOVATION

*Understanding how your business is equipped to adapt to new technology, systems, and processes is essential for longevity. As is being responsive to the changing needs of the people you serve, both internally and externally.*

1

What resources do you draw from to develop new products or services?

2

Have you connected with technical schools, colleges, or universities to see if they offer resources for your business?

3

Are you a member of a chamber of commerce or trade association? Do you attend events in your industry to network, learn, or identify project partners? How often have you acted on information garnered from industry events?

## ***Additional Resource***

There are many industry associations and professional organizations available to business leaders where they can collaborate, build connections, develop new ideas, and find support for vertical expansion and new lines of business.





# INNOVATION

*Understanding how your business is equipped to adapt to new technology, systems, and processes is essential for longevity. As is being responsive to the changing needs of the people you serve, both internally and externally.*

4

What processes do you currently have in place to provide your goods or services? Are any of them slowing your business down? If streamlining isn't an option, what other processes can you adopt that work better for your end goal?

5

Do you have a plan to regularly check in with employees, customers, or suppliers for ideas on how to improve aspects of your business? Do you ask for feedback when developing new products or services?

6

How do you market your business and track results? How often do you revisit and update your marketing and sales strategy?

## ***Additional Resource***

Washington State University (WSU) has many personnel and programmatic resources for local businesses. For example, the Business Growth Mentor and Analysis Program (BGMAP) in the Carson College of Business pairs student consultant teams with small businesses to help them improve and grow.











# SUCCESSION PLANNING

*What happens to your business after your departure is important and should be carefully considered.*

1

What is the ownership structure of your business? Have you considered alternative forms? How would a change in structure impact your business?

2

What would happen to your business if you were no longer able to manage day-to-day operations? What might you do to improve the ability of the business to produce revenue even if you cannot work?

3

What are you doing to prepare your business for your departure, either through retirement or sale? Are there insurance products or other services that you might need or purchase?

## ***Additional Resource***

The Small Business Administration provides information on business types to help you understand the options available to you. Professional assistance with the process is recommended.



# SUCCESSION PLANNING

*What happens to your business after your departure is important and should be carefully considered.*

4

Have you developed a financing strategy to fund a transition out of the business?

5

Have you engaged legal counsel to ensure you have everything in place in the event of a business merger, acquisition, sale, or transfer?

6

Would you want to continue to have a role in the company following a sale or change in leadership? What kind of role would you like to have?

## ***Additional Resource***

The Governor's Office for Regulatory Innovation and Assistance (ORIA) provides a step-by-step guide for closing a business, and provides links to resources for the gradual sale or lease of it as an alternative.





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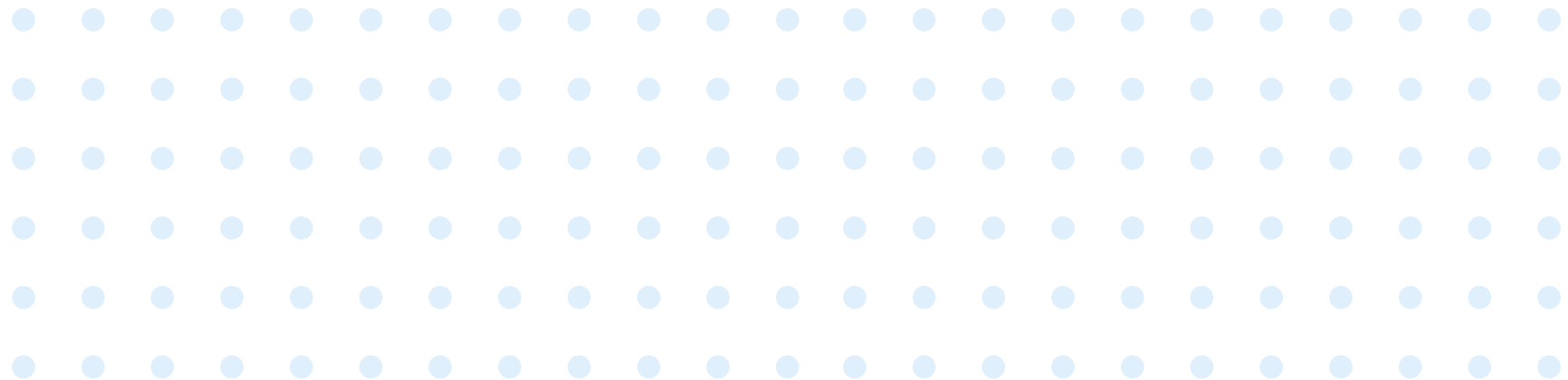
NEXT STEPS



# NEXT STEPS

Now that you have reviewed and worked your way through at least some portion of this toolkit, you might find you have more questions than when you started. If you discovered areas where you would like additional assistance, the Cowlitz-Wahkiakum Council of Governments (CWCOG) is available to meet with you to help connect you to available resources.

Your business strategy should be dynamic and be easily updated to respond to changes in the economy or your business. There is no right answer to how often you should update your plans, but annually is a recommended starting point. What is important is that you keep a focus on those items that you have identified as the most crucial elements of your ongoing success.





# FOR MORE INFORMATION

**Please contact the Cowlitz-Wahkiakum Council of Governments:**

- ▶ [www.cwcog.org](http://www.cwcog.org)
- ▶ Phone: 360-577-3041
- ▶ Address:  
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*The Cowlitz-Wahkiakum Council of Governments is a multipurpose association of governments that delivers a diverse array of federal, state, and local programs while fulfilling its primary function as a regional planning organization.*

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**This toolkit will be refreshed periodically and is available at [www.cwcog.org](http://www.cwcog.org).**