

Community Focus Statement C: Build human capital and promote enterprise, with a focus on environmentally friendly businesses, to strengthen the local economy and provide opportunities for residents and families to be self-reliant.

Action Statement C.4: Collaborate with the local chambers and County EDA to establish a valley-wide economic development initiative that links emerging entrepreneurs with mentors and potential investors and fosters new business development.

C4

Benchmark: Healthy new business growth occurs in Bear Valley providing high-quality jobs for local residents.

Champion: Volunteer group or person or can be identified by the community

Estimated Cost: \$8,000–\$30,000



Business mentoring and coaching sample. Photo source: [3uma](https://www.3uma.com)

Navigating the path to starting a small business requires knowledge of a number of different topics, including finance, human resources, time management, and local regulations. People who have a great idea but no formal business training can often find this task daunting. In addition, successful business people who live in the community have shown interest in investing locally and support development of new business concepts. The Bear Valley communities have the opportunity to create an organization dedicated to connecting emerging entrepreneurs with

experienced mentors or potential investors. This organization could provide new or struggling small-business owners not only with a potential source of capital, but more importantly with a resource to whom they can go to ask questions, get advice, and learn from people who have often been successful in the past.

The US Small Business Association (SBA) has developed the Service Corps of Retired Executives (SCORE) Association (what is this acronym?), a nonprofit association made up of volunteer business counselors throughout the United States. The goal is to make mentors available to emerging entrepreneurs to help guide them through the start-up process. The closest current SCORE Resource Partner is the Inland Empire SCORE in Riverside. While this office is quite a distance from the Bear Valley communities, the SBA also offers free online resources and tools for mentors and mentees, and the abundance of available technology makes in-person meetings less of a necessity.

Along with the SCORE program, there is also the possibility of creating a program local to the Bear Valley communities. Accomplishing this would require:

- An organizing committee which would champion the effort of marketing the program, matching volunteers, and coordinating events.

- Identifying retired or experienced business owners willing to volunteer their time.
- Creating resources to facilitate discussion.
- Organizing formal meetings.

A local program may be preferred, as it could foster a closer relationship between the mentor and the mentee while capitalizing on community pride and the overall goal of improving the community.

Action	Action Leader	Timeline	Resources
1. Establish an organizing committee.	Champion	Months 1 – 2	US Small Business Administration
2. Determine strategy to market the program, recruit volunteers and business owners, and coordinate events.	Committee	Months 3 – 6	https://www.sba.gov/offices/headquarters/oed/resources/148091 SCORE Association
3. Launch program to link entrepreneurs with mentors and investors.	Committee	Month 7	https://www.score.org/ Big Bear Chamber of Commerce
4. Host regular events and meetings to foster increased entrepreneurship in Bear Valley.	Committee	Month 7, on-going	http://www.bigbearchamber.com/ San Bernardino County Economic Development Agency http://www.sbcountyadvantage.com/home.aspx