



Louisiana Small Business Development Center

For Immediate Release

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LSBDC at UL-Lafayette Helps Psychologist Expand Her Practice

(Lafayette, LA) Psychologist, Donna Aucoin, Ph.D., knew she was ready to expand her private practice, but she just wasn't sure how to go about it. Aucoin received her Bachelor's from UL-Lafayette in psychology, her Master's and Ph.D. in psychology from the University of Southern Mississippi in Hattiesburg, MS and completed her internship at Johns Hopkins in Baltimore, MD. Until 2003, she had spent most of her career working for the State of Louisiana and running her private practice part-time.



Donna Aucoin, Ph.D., owner,
Aucoin & Associates

"I had heard about the Louisiana Small Business Development Center (LSBDC) at UL-Lafayette from several friends and colleagues, so I made an appointment in August of 2007. When I was filling out the initial paperwork, the application asked what I needed help with: marketing, accounting, a business plan, and etc. At that point, it dawned on me just how much assistance I needed and how much the LSBDC had to offer. I had an "aha" moment. I couldn't believe I waited so long to come to LSBDC," said Aucoin.

The first order to business, consultant Heidi Melancon helped Aucoin develop a business plan, which outlined exactly how she would grow her private practice. Melancon also helped her become certified under the Small & Emerging Business Development (SEBD) program offered by Louisiana Economic Development (LED). Through SEBD, Aucoin received: marketing assistance to create a website and letterhead; human resource assistance to develop an employee manual, job descriptions, and salary compensation packages; and financial assistance to pay for much needed software.

"My consultant Heidi and I worked on a marketing plan, which helped me to reach a broader client base. I had many contacts from my years of working with the Office of Mental Health, but the website and monthly flyers introduced my practice to a much larger group of people," said Aucoin.

After working with the LSBDC for seven months, Aucoin & Associates mushroomed into a full-service practice, which offers individual and group counseling in all areas of treatment from children and adolescents with emotional, behavioral, and/or academic concerns to adults with marital problems, drug addictions, and other psychological conditions. Aucoin & Associates went from three full-time psychologists and two part-time support staff to eight full-time psychologists and therapists and four full-time support staff. Aucoin also built a larger office building to accommodate a training academy for other psychologists and therapists. Revenue more than doubled last year.

"I definitely credit part of my success to the assistance I received from LSBDC at UL-Lafayette. I don't think I would have grown so quickly had I not received the guidance and support from my LSBDC consultant. Heidi is the first person I turn to when I'm hitting an obstacle or just need direction. She has become my trusted advisor. LSBDC provides such a wealth of resources, assistance, and support," praised Aucoin.