



Memorandum of Understanding

Between

University of West Florida

Florida Small Business Development Center Network

and

The Able Trust

This is an agreement between **The Able Trust and the University of West Florida**, for and on behalf of its Board of Trustees and in support of the Florida Small Business Development Center Network, hereinafter called FSBDCN.

I. Purpose

The Florida Small Business Development Center Network (FSBDCN) and The Able Trust are partnering for the purpose of advancing and strengthening the small business climate in the state of Florida through education and training on the availability and expertise of persons with disabilities in the workforce. The parties will work together in the spirit of cooperation and open communication, with the primary goal of supporting the small business workforce and entrepreneurship for persons with disabilities.

In particular, this MOU is intended to facilitate programs, events, and mutual partnerships to serve small business and an expanded workforce, and provide access to the Florida SBDC Network and The Able Trust programs and resources.

II. MOU Term

The term of this MOU Agreement is the period within which the project responsibilities of this agreement shall be performed. The term commences on the date of execution and terminates on June 30, 2026.

III. The Able Trust History

The mission of The Able Trust is to be a key leader in providing opportunities for successful employment for Floridians with disabilities.

The organization was created by the state legislature in 1990 as the Florida Endowment for Vocational Rehabilitation, as a direct supporter of vocational rehabilitation efforts by state agencies and community organizations. Operating under the dba of The Able Trust and supporting the work of The Division of Vocational Education in the Florida Department of Education, this organization has helped to put thousands of individuals with disabilities to work, and has supported employment-related efforts in all counties of Florida.

The Able Trust does its work in three primary strategic areas:

- Research
- Outreach
- Capacity Building

The Able Trust also devotes resources to addressing barriers to employment through targeted communication efforts and conducts research to identify issues that affect the employment of Floridians with disabilities.

The organization is funded through a combination of public and private dollars. The positive impact of the work of The Able Trust has been felt by non-profit agencies serving people with various disabilities, by post-secondary institutions that welcome students with disabilities, Florida's business community, and by people with disabilities and their families.

IV. FSBDCN History

The FSBDCN is designated the State of Florida's principal provider of small business assistance [§288.001, Fla. Stat.]. As a statewide provider of entrepreneurial and business development services, the FSBDCN plays a vital role in Florida's economic development initiatives and prosperity by:

- assisting entrepreneurs in every stage of business across all industries,
- linking and making available the human, financial and information resources available in the public and private sectors,
- utilizing the expertise and resources of the best colleges and universities in Florida,
- accessing the resources of a national network of more than 1,000 centers and 5,000 experts, and
- deploying Malcolm-Baldrige based principles and standards for continuous improvement in operation and service delivery.

The FSBDCN was one of the original eight state SBDC pilot programs and has 45 years of experience helping businesses start, grow, and succeed. First funded by Congress in 1976, the FSBDCN has grown to be a statewide network of more than 40 partner centers bringing access of its business development services to all 67 counties in the State of Florida.

FSBDCs provide in-depth, substantive, long-term outcome-oriented business development assistance to emerging and growth businesses in order to promote growth, expansion, innovation, increased productivity and management improvement. The FSBDCN accomplishes this purpose by creating and maintaining strategic partnerships and employing and deploying expertise that provide business development services that result in substantial economic impact as measured by the successful creation and retention of businesses and jobs, increased access to capital and increased company revenues.

Since 1976, FSBDCs have assisted over one million emerging and growing businesses by providing the professional expertise, education and business information needed to make sound business decisions in a complex and ever-changing marketplace. With partners ranging from institutions of higher learning to federal, state and local governments to private organizations, and funding from the U.S. Small Business Administration, FSBDCs offer this business management and technical assistance at little or no cost.

The FSBDCN has a statewide presence from Pensacola to Key West; the Florida SBDC's integrated infrastructure has the professionals and partners needed to successfully serve the Florida business community.

FSBDCN's contact info is as follows:
Florida SBDC State Director's Office
University of West Florida
220 West Garden Street, Suite 302
Pensacola, FL 32502
P: 850-898-3479
www.floridasbdc.org

The Able Trust contact info is as follows:
The Able Trust
1709 Hermitage Blvd., Suite 100
Tallahassee, FL 32308
P: 850.224.4493
www.abletrust.org

V. Parties A and B Agree to the Following Provisions:

Both The Able Trust and the FSBDCN shall share the following mutual responsibilities:

- Have regular meetings between Leadership to inform the other party of their new services and upcoming events,
- Promote the other party's special events and initiatives via online marketing channels,
- Provide representation and/or speakers for the other party's events, including regional events, when appropriate,
- Review the parties MOU/Charter together annually to ensure we are providing best value to our clients and stakeholders and,
- Participate in surveys as needed to drive vision, strategy, and programming,
- Acknowledgement of this agreement and link to partner on website,
- Referral of partner, clients, and stakeholders when applicable.
- Will join forces to show solidarity and commitment to each other's mission and the greater good for Florida's business in each other's or the collective pursuit of additional resources, funding or otherwise, to advance the state's economy and its workforce,
- Work together to educate staff, consultants, stakeholders, and partners on each other's missions to allow for enhanced and expanded state and regional relationships.
- Support legislative advocacy at the state and federal level when appropriate to show strength and collaboration of two successful programs, and
- Support cross branding opportunities when appropriate to help both organizations fulfill their missions.

The involvement, participation and contributions are acknowledged as being without prejudice to any statutory or non-statutory functions, duties or responsibilities.

Both The Able Trust and FSBDCN should ensure that program activities are conducted in compliance with all applicable Federal and state laws, rules, and regulations. Both parties will work to avoid competition, respecting the scope of each party's federally legislated mission and seeking every opportunity to leverage each other's limited resources.

VI. Restrictions

Neither The Able Trust nor the FSBDCN is permitted to:

- Share confidential information, including names of clients or workshop attendees without the clients' written consent,
- Share proprietary or organizational information, and
- Use the other party's name, logo or seal without specific written permission.

VII. Modification and Termination

This agreement may be canceled or terminated without cause by either party by giving thirty (30) calendar days advance written notice to the other party. Such notification shall

state the effective date of termination or cancellation and include any final instructions/requirements.

Any and all amendments must be made in writing and must be agreed to and executed by the parties before becoming effective.

VIII. Effective Date and Signature

This MOU/Charter shall be effective upon the signature of The Able Trust and FSBDCN authorized officials. It shall be in force from the date of execution to June 30, 2026. The Able Trust and FSBDCN signify agreement with this MOU/Charter by their signatures.

**University of West Florida
Florida Small Business Development
Center Network**

The Able Trust

By:

By:

DocuSigned by:
Greg Britton 02/01/2023
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Greg Britton Date
State Director

DocuSigned by:
Allison Chase 02/01/2023
6DAB6C9E5AB8413

Allison Chase Date
President and Chief Executive Officer