



Columbus OH

## Frequently Asked Questions About SCORE

SCORE provides expert guidance and assistance to thousands of startup and existing businesses, just like yours. Our goal is for you to receive the help you seek and be successful in your business.

### **Below is some helpful information about SCORE and working with a mentor.**

#### **What is SCORE?**

SCORE, America's premier source of free and confidential small business advice for entrepreneurs and small businesses, is a nonprofit resource partner with the U.S. Small Business Administration (SBA). We have over 300 SCORE offices across the country offering free business mentoring and low- or no-cost workshops.

For over 50 years, SCORE's thousands of working and retired business professionals have volunteered to support the success of small business nationwide. SCORE business mentoring is free and confidential.

#### **How does your mentoring service work?**

SCORE provides free business advice through our network of volunteer business experts. You can meet with a mentor online or face-to-face in a chapter near you. To request a mentor, visit [SCOREColumbus.org](https://SCOREColumbus.org) and search for a mentor by keyword, industry, location or expertise. If you prefer, we can also make a match for you based on your business question.

SCORE's experienced business mentors provide general business advice on every aspect of business planning, startup, management and growth.

#### **What can I expect from SCORE?**

- SCORE will attempt to contact you at least 3 times via email or phone, or both, over the next 2 weeks. If you have not connected with a mentor at the end of this time, please contact [info@scorecolumbus.org](mailto:info@scorecolumbus.org).

- SCORE mentoring services are provided at no cost to you, regardless of the number of times you visit a SCORE mentor.
- The discussion with your SCORE mentor is strictly confidential. Our mentors sign a Code of Ethics and Conduct that addresses the protection of your information and business idea.
- Your mentor will employ the SLATE methodology in your mentoring session, which stands for:
  - Stop and Suspend Judgment
  - Listen and Learn
  - Assess and Analyze
  - Test Ideas and Teach with Tools
  - Expectation Setting and Encouraging the Dream
 Your mentor's goal is to use their expertise to help you make sound decisions for your business.
- At the conclusion of your session, your mentor should ask "Did I help you today?" If you did not feel that you received valuable advice or assistance, please discuss this with your mentor. Our #1 goal is to provide you with a positive experience and help you with your business needs.
- SCORE will work to assign you to the perfect mentor, based on your need, industry, and location. If your initial mentor is not a good "fit" for you, we will work with you to locate another mentor. We have thousands of mentors across the country and no doubt do have the perfect person just for you. In this case, you may contact your local SCORE chapter at [info@scorecolumbus.org](mailto:info@scorecolumbus.org) to request a new mentor.

## **How can I maximize my experience with SCORE?**

- Your mentor will likely recommend different services to better meet your needs, including small group workshops or online materials, to accentuate mentoring. Take advantage, as they are supplemental to the advice you are receiving.
- SCORE does not provide grants, business loans, CPA services or legal services, but your mentor may be able to suggest outside resources to assist you in those areas. Keep an open mind about what you think you may need initially, and work with your mentor to try to find a solution.
- Your business is not built in a day. Similarly, you benefit most from SCORE by meeting with a mentor for more than a one-hour appointment. Before the conclusion of your initial session, your mentor will schedule another appointment for you or assist you in finding the correct resource. You should meet with your mentor regularly to maximize your chances of success.

## What do we expect from you?

- Our mentors are volunteers. Their time is given freely to help you and others achieve your goals and dreams with a small business venture. Out of respect of your time and our mentors' time, we ask that you follow through on any scheduled appointments or provide notice of a change.
- Both you and your mentor will work together to identify key areas to focus on to build to your business success. While your mentor will always be there to help you, they don't do the work for you. You are responsible for moving your business forward.
- After your first meet with your mentor, you will receive an electronic survey from SCORE office about our service. The survey will take you about 1 minute to complete. We ask for your feedback in order to continue to improve our service. Our Client Satisfaction Survey results are reviewed continuously at all levels in SCORE.

## What qualifies SCORE mentors to give business advice?

The key qualification SCORE mentors bring is real-world business experience. They are working and retired business owners, executives and managers who have tackled the same challenges and decisions that many entrepreneurs are facing today.

In addition, all SCORE mentors have successfully completed a Mentoring Methodology Training program before they become certified to meet with clients. Designed by SCORE mentors and a panel of industry experts, this program provides new and experienced mentors access to proven tools and methods to ensure successful client outcomes. These mentor tools and processes helped create more than 54,500 new businesses and 61,500 new jobs in 2017.

Working with a SCORE-certified mentor means personalized guidance and support from those who have "been there" and are equipped with the optimal tools to help others succeed too.

## How do I become a SCORE mentor?

If interested in becoming one of our volunteer business mentors, visit [www.score.org/volunteer](http://www.score.org/volunteer) and complete an application. Your application will be sent to the local SCORE leader for review. A SCORE leader will contact you for an interview and, if volunteering seems a good fit for you and SCORE, you'll be asked to complete our training and onboarding process. This process includes a one to three month probationary period where you'll complete several online training modules, review and agree to our standard operating procedures and code of ethics, shadow experienced mentors, and participate in team mentoring.

## **Are there other ways I can help if I'm not interested in mentoring?**

Absolutely! You can serve our small business clients in four volunteer roles: mentor, subject matter expert (SME), workshop presenter and administration. You can provide expertise based on your professional skills or industry, help present local workshops, assist in marketing efforts, participate in community outreach and fundraising activities and help with various administrative functions. Each SCORE volunteer must complete an onboarding & training program and agree to our code of ethics. Learn more about volunteer opportunities and fill out an application at [www.score.org/volunteer](http://www.score.org/volunteer). Contact us at [info@scorecolumbus.org](mailto:info@scorecolumbus.org) for more information.

## **What resources are available on SCORE.org?**

Since 1997, SCORE has offered a leading online business resource for entrepreneurs – [www.columbusoh.score.org](http://www.columbusoh.score.org). This site offers a comprehensive small business library that includes “how-to” e-guides, downloadable templates, checklists, articles, infographics and blogs. Our website also hosts online workshops, including live and recorded webinars and interactive courses on demand. To access SCORE's mentoring services, entrepreneurs can visit [www.columbusoh.score.org/find-mentor-44](http://www.columbusoh.score.org/find-mentor-44) to search a database of SCORE mentors or request a mentor match.

## **Are your workshops free?**

All SCORE online workshops are free of charge. You can register for a live webinar presented by a business expert, view a recorded webinar, or take an interactive course on demand. We also offer local instructor-led workshops, roundtables, and events. These are available for free or for a nominal fee. All funds received from the local workshops go back to supporting SCORE Columbus, including the development of new workshops, materials and other business resources. For a list of online workshops and upcoming events, please visit [www.columbusoh.score.org/take-workshop-2](http://www.columbusoh.score.org/take-workshop-2).

If you would like more information, please e-mail us at [info@scorecolumbus.org](mailto:info@scorecolumbus.org)