



Educating for social justice and systemic change

Women's Small Business Program

Some frequently asked questions about the WSBP *Start Up* Course

What will I learn?

Students learn how to write a business plan for their business idea, learn important business skills and develop the confidence that comes with understanding the language of business. A business plan is a document that outlines all the facets of your idea and becomes an operation manual for your business. In *Start Up*, the course is broken into three parts; marketing, financial and personal & professional development. Each section is taught by a different instructor that has the relevant background and years of experience in her field. You will learn how to create, read and interpret all the spreadsheets that are necessary to run a successful business. You will also learn all the fundamentals of market research as you define your product or service and determine your target audience. You also consider your competition to further define your niche and ultimately determine how to best position yourself in the marketplace. You will learn how to balance all the aspects of self employment and learn the skills and ability to communicate well through all your various business interactions. Students meet with professionals, alumnae, and hear knowledgeable speakers on topics such as taxes, legal issues, and alternative business financing options and internet marketing strategies.

Why do I need a business plan?

The business plan is most important for three reasons.

- 1) You must have a plan to procure financing from any bank and even non-traditional funding sources will take you far more seriously if you have a plan.
- 2) Working to create a plan helps you identify and resolve the assumptions most people have about their untested idea. A business plan can help you make more informed decisions about your next steps or business growth.
- 3) The plan serves as a guide for how to run your business. It becomes a blueprint for starting or expanding your business, answering all the questions a business owner faces.

Why should I choose WSBP to help me write my plan?

Writing a business plan can be an arduous task. There is a lot of research involved and many hard questions to answer. It can be very helpful to have the guidance and support of knowledgeable instructors, a time tested curriculum that helps you make sure you cover all the bases, and most of all the support and enthusiasm of other women. Your classmates truly understand what you are going through as the excitement of starting a business goes hand in hand with the stress, uncertainty and hard work necessary to turn your idea into a reality. *Start Up* gives you access to the resources you'll need to address issues that arise through support from the teachers, WSBP alumnae, and the good will of peers and professionals in the greater WSBP community. Don't go it alone, WSBP providing a safe and supportive environment for women to learn and explore their dreams of business ownership.

What are my payment options?

- ◆ Vermont Student Assistance Corporation (VSAC) non-degree grants pay our entire tuition for most low income applicants. Call 1-800-882-4166 for a free application.
- ◆ Mercy Connections has additional scholarships available from Keybank and Sisters of Mercy.
- ◆ We offer a 4 month payment plan for whatever tuition balance students may owe.