

CaregivingApp & Pest Care of Pinellas

Finding success through FSBDC-SPARK-TAFFIE partnership



Making connections and networking are critical for business growth – just ask Sherry Sultenfuss and Kaye Buckler, clients of the [Florida Small Business Development Center \(FSBDC\) at Pinellas County Economic Development \(PCED\)](#). Thanks to partnerships between the FSBDC at PCED, [Clearwater Business SPARK](#), and the [Technical Arts Facility for Innovation and Entrepreneurship \(TAFFIE\)](#), Sultenfuss and Buckler have received information, introductions, training and insight into opportunities to take their small businesses to the next level.

“Partnering with these agencies provides our clients with options and opportunities beyond what we alone offer, and it also introduces SPARK and TAFFIE clients to the workshops, events and consulting tools we provide,” explains Yolanda Cowart, a business consultant at the FSBDC.

Sherry Sultenfuss believed that TAFFIE’s business incubator and its connection to technology would be a great fit for her [CaregivingApp](#) business, a calendar sharing application for coordinating community and family patient support. Through TAFFIE, Sultenfuss received the technical assistance she needed and was introduced to the FSBDC to explore methods and opportunities to grow her emerging business.

“I understood there were opportunities in government contracting, but I needed help navigating the federal marketplace,” says Sultenfuss.

Her goal was to offer the CaregivingApp to U.S. Veterans Affairs to beta test the product while providing assistant in coordinating the care of veterans. Cowart assisted Sultenfuss through the certification process for [government contracting](#), and provided assistance with marketing, market research, website review, and marketing strategic assessment to help identify a target audience for the CaregivingApp. Additionally, Sultenfuss took part in the Pinellas County Reverse Tradeshow and other regional networking opportunities.

So impressed was Sultenfuss with her experiences, she recommended the FSBDC to Kaye Buckler, who is also a member of TAFFIE and was looking to grow [Pest Care of Pinellas](#). Working with TAFFIE has enhanced Buckler’s business operations by introducing her to more efficient, paperless processes and streamlining her administrative tasks, which has given her more time to network and build business relationships in the community.

Through TAFFIE, Buckler was also encouraged to connect with the FSBDC at PCED, where she has taken advantage of government contracting resources and opportunities. Buckler has received Woman Business Enterprise Certification for Pest Care of Pinellas and participated in the Pinellas County Reverse Tradeshow, as well as receiving financial management practices.

“Working with the FSBDC has been very helpful,” Buckler says. “With their assistance, we now are able to do bids for government facilities as a Small business Enterprise and Woman in Minority, which puts me in a better position.”

Client testimonials like these come as no surprise to Dr. Cynthia Johnson, Center Director at the Pinellas FSBDC.

“This valuable feedback from our clients affirms that our partner collaborations are connecting business owners to additional resources to help them grow,” she asserts. “And that we hear it often means the entrepreneurial eco-system is working well in Pinellas to support the small business community.”

Learn more about how the Florida Small Business Development Center at Pinellas County Economic Development is working with local partners to support business growth at www.pced.org/entrepreneurs.