



# **Snoqualmie Valley Micro-business Incubator Feasibility Study**

**February 2025**

# Snoqualmie Valley Micro-business Incubator Feasibility Study

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# Executive Summary

On behalf of the City of Carnation, A Supportive Community For All completed the Snoqualmie Valley Micro-business Incubator Feasibility Study in partnership with Cloudbreak Collective. The project was funded by the Washington State Department of Commerce and overseen by the Community Economic Revitalization Board (CERB) to assess the community's economic needs and opportunities. The hypothesis was that a micro-business incubator could be a useful tool to address entrepreneur needs in our region, specifically among local artisans, creatives, and small business owners.

**Methodology:** Between May and December 2024, we undertook a series of targeted activities to gather insights about community needs. These activities included in-person and virtual interviews, focus groups, an online survey, and outreach at farmers markets and other local community events in the Snoqualmie Valley. We convened an advisory committee comprised of community members representing local businesses and nonprofits throughout the Valley. This group provided insight and guidance throughout the study process.

**Key Insights:** The findings confirm a demand for shared retail and meeting spaces, affordable resources, and tailored support for local small businesses and entrepreneurs. The proposed incubator aims to foster economic growth, build community resilience, and enhance equitable opportunities.

**Challenges for Businesses:** Identified challenges include high operational costs, scarcity of affordable retail and workspace, limited access to business community and mentorship, and feelings of isolation among entrepreneurs.

**Proposed Solution:** To address challenges for local small businesses, this report proposes a versatile incubator that offers retail and meeting space, business support, networking opportunities, and community-focused events.

**Feasibility:** This project's success hinges on identifying an appropriate location, securing a capable host organization, and obtaining sustainable funding, requiring a significant seed funding investment estimated at \$175,000. There is demand for an incubator with community interest in flexible and accessible spaces, business support services, and opportunities for local entrepreneurs.

## Recommendations:

- ❖ Secure seed funding to launch the initiative.
- ❖ Contract a Program Strategy Consultant and Grant Writer to support programmatic components, including (1) vetting partner organizations, (2) additional research and outreach, and (3) development of a comprehensive business plan to sustain long-term impact.
- ❖ Partner with a qualified host organization to ensure operational expertise.

By advancing these efforts, the Snoqualmie Valley Micro-business Incubator can serve as a cornerstone for innovation, inclusion, and economic opportunity in the region.



“There’s a lot that’s homegrown here. It’s of great value, and income inequality is a huge issue. So I feel like in the model of whatever’s created, there needs to be a place for everyone of any income. As a working artist, to fit in and not ever feel like you’re being priced out by somebody who can afford a much higher studio rent.”

FOCUS GROUP PARTICIPANT,  
OCTOBER 25, 2024

## Our Team

**Laura Fletcher** served as the consultant, writer, and research strategist for this project, leading research design, data analysis, and strategic development to ensure it accurately reflected community needs and economic opportunities. Laura is an experienced nonprofit leader with a strong background in financial oversight, strategic leadership, and community development. She is the Managing Director at Evergreen Business Capital Community Finance, where she oversees strategic initiatives to expand access to capital for under-represented entrepreneurs. Previously, Laura was a consultant at Cloudbreak Collective, supporting mission-driven organizations with financial strategy and impact evaluation. She also served as Associate Director and Interim Executive Director at Ventures, where she managed multimillion-dollar grant portfolios, government grant administration, and strategic growth initiatives. With a strong background in financial management, business consulting, and nonprofit lending, Laura has worked extensively to help entrepreneurs access capital and build sustainable businesses. She holds a Master of Business Administration from Seattle University and a Bachelors of Arts in Politics from Whitman College. She is committed to economic empowerment, financial inclusion, and fostering equitable opportunities for small businesses and communities.

**Malia Pownall** is the Partnerships and Outreach Manager at A Supportive Community For All and led the community engagement and outreach components of this project. Malia has participated in a variety of qualitative and quantitative research projects that contribute to the bodies of work on best practices for outdoor educators' approach with diverse audiences, evaluation design to improve outcomes for environmental education programs, and understanding ways that justice is considered in municipal climate adaptation planning. Throughout her work, Malia remains passionate about community wellbeing and creating inclusive opportunities for those most impacted by structural inequities. Malia holds a Bachelor of Science degree in Environmental Biology from Christopher Newport University and a Master of Science in Forest Resources and Environmental Conservation from Virginia Tech.



# Acknowledgments

We express our deepest appreciation to all the individuals who shared their voices, experiences, and perspectives throughout the process. Your participation in interviews, surveys, focus groups, and community meetings provided essential guidance and shaped the vision for the Snoqualmie Valley Micro-business Incubator.

A special thank you to the Advisory Committee for their time, expertise, and commitment to this initiative. Your leadership and thoughtful contributions have played a crucial role in grounding this work in the realities and aspirations of local entrepreneurs:

- ❖ Will Fenholt, Business Owner and Independent Artist
- ❖ Morgan Henley, Business Owner of Morgan Henley Presents
- ❖ Deb Landers, North Bend Art & Industry Chair
- ❖ Karla Russell, Empower Youth Network

We would like to extend our gratitude to the staff at A Supportive Community For All, Cloudbreak Collective, and the City of Carnation for their invaluable support throughout this project. Their insight and collaboration have been instrumental in shaping this feasibility study and ensuring it reflects the needs of the community. Specifically, thank you to Jody Miesel, Executive Director of A Supportive Community for All, and Rhonda Ender, Carnation City Manager, for their invaluable support, insights, and guidance throughout this project.

We hope this project serves as a foundation for fostering economic opportunities, strengthening community ties, and supporting the incredible talent and creativity that define the Snoqualmie Valley.

– Laura Fletcher & Malia Pownall

# Background

Snoqualmie Valley, celebrated for its vibrant creative activity inspired by the region's natural surroundings, faces critical challenges in supporting micro-businesses. Entrepreneurs in the region commonly report barriers such as unaffordable retail and working spaces, limited access to collaborative venues and networking opportunities, and insufficient business support services. These obstacles hinder the growth of sustainable creative enterprises, despite the area's abundant talent and potential.



"Some guidance or help in terms of business structure—like that kind of analytical mindset that a lot of creatives don't really care to spend too much time in that arena—would be nice."

FOCUS GROUP PARTICIPANT,  
OCTOBER 25, 2024

Recognizing the need to diversify the economy and enhance long-term sustainability, regional government plans have emphasized the importance of supporting micro-businesses and fostering innovation. The City of Carnation hired A Supportive Community For All, a local nonprofit, to evaluate the feasibility of a micro-business incubator for the Snoqualmie Valley. A Supportive Community For All collaborated with a local consulting firm to conduct an extensive engagement process between May and December 2024. This engagement included interviews, community meetings, a comprehensive community

survey, and focus groups to better understand the unique challenges and opportunities faced by local entrepreneurs.

The study revealed a demand for an incubator to address these challenges. Local creatives and small business owners expressed particular interest in access to affordable space and resources, business support, and networking opportunities. The findings highlight the potential for an incubator to retain and nurture local talent, creating a vibrant hub for business development, collaboration, and community building.

This report evaluates the feasibility of establishing a micro-business incubator in Snoqualmie Valley as a strategy to support local economic growth and resilience. It focuses on three key areas:

- ❖ Assessing market demand to determine the specific needs and viability of an incubator.
- ❖ Identifying suitable business models, operational strategies, and site criteria.
- ❖ Evaluating the potential economic and community impacts of the proposed initiative.

Together, these elements will provide a framework for creating a dynamic incubator that supports Snoqualmie Valley's economic landscape and builds an entrepreneurial ecosystem.

## Challenges Faced by Small Businesses

Small businesses, especially creative enterprises, play a vital role in fostering economic diversity and community vibrancy, yet they face significant challenges that threaten their sustainability. Approximately 20% of startups fail within their first year, and about 65% fail within the first ten years.<sup>1</sup> These significant failure rates are similar for creative industries, such as arts, entertainment, and recreation, with approximately 21.9% failing within the first year and 51.1% within five years.<sup>2</sup> In addition to overall ability to survive, creative business models are hard to scale, requiring funding, strong market demand and products that can be reproduced while still appealing to the consumer.

For many individuals, particularly those experiencing underemployment or economic hardship, small or side businesses provide a crucial source of income. Traditional employment structures frequently fail to accommodate individuals with caregiving responsibilities, limited mobility, or challenges accessing transportation. These barriers often push individuals toward entrepreneurship as a more flexible and viable option for earning a livelihood. These ventures offer pathways to financial stability and self-reliance, but these entrepreneurs face significant obstacles in developing and managing successful businesses and the absence of structured support systems often hinders their growth. An inclusive business incubator tailored to small businesses run by individuals with diverse needs can bridge this gap by offering technical assistance, training, mentorship, and access to resources necessary to transform these enterprises into sustainable sources of income.

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“I don't make a lot of money on art every year, but I have no clue how to go from really being like a hobby artist that does small sales to scaling.”

FOCUS GROUP PARTICIPANT,  
OCTOBER 25, 2024

In addition to economic challenges, many small business owners, particularly artists and creative entrepreneurs, experience social isolation, especially in rural or less urbanized areas like the Snoqualmie Valley. This isolation limits opportunities for collaboration,

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.forbes.com/advisor/business/software/startups-failure-rate/>

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.bls.gov/bdm/bdmage.htm#Arts>



networking, and community building, which are essential for professional growth and personal well-being. By creating a shared space where entrepreneurs can connect, learn, and support one another, an incubator can foster a sense of community, reducing isolation while strengthening local economic ecosystems.

Comprehensive support systems can empower entrepreneurs, enhance economic opportunities, and build resilient communities. By investing in such initiatives, communities can ensure that small businesses not only survive but thrive as essential contributors to local economic and social vitality.

## Research Methodology and Participation

A Supportive Community For All completed this study in partnership with Cloudbreak Collective for the City of Carnation. The project was funded by the Washington State Department of Commerce and overseen by the Community Economic Revitalization Board (CERB) to assess the community's economic needs and opportunities. The hypothesis was that a micro-business incubator could be a useful tool to address entrepreneur needs in our region. Data collection focused on determining the feasibility of this initiative to support local economic growth and diversification. Between May and December 2024, we undertook a series of targeted activities to gather insights and support the research for this study. To enhance inclusivity and accessibility, the feasibility study prioritized diverse engagement through multi-modal outreach. This approach included in-person and virtual sessions, targeted communications, and events held at various locations throughout the Snoqualmie Valley.



Our efforts encompassed the following:

**Advisory Committee Meetings:**

SCFA posted a call for community members to join an advisory committee to provide oversight throughout the project. We facilitated four (4) advisory committee meetings to foster collaborative oversight, ensure diverse perspectives, and guide the study’s direction. The committee was comprised of community members from throughout the Snoqualmie Valley with representation from nonprofits and small business owners.

**Interviews:** We conducted ten (10) in-depth interviews with individuals connected to the local business community, providing valuable qualitative insights into challenges and opportunities.

**Public Community Meetings:** We hosted three (3) public meetings were held to explain the concept of a business incubator, gather community feedback, and publicize the Community Survey, enhancing broad engagement and transparency. Two meetings were held in person at Duvall Library (July 16, 2024) and Encompass in Snoqualmie (July 17, 2024), and one meeting was held virtually (July 28, 2024).

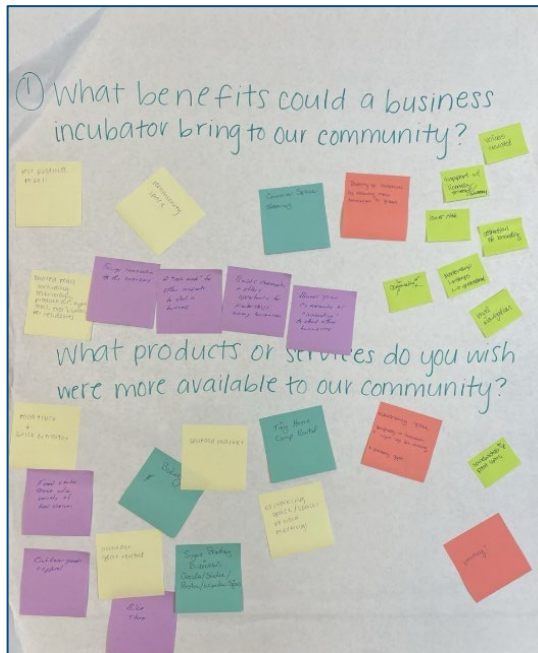


Figure 1: Notes from community meeting on July 17, 2024.

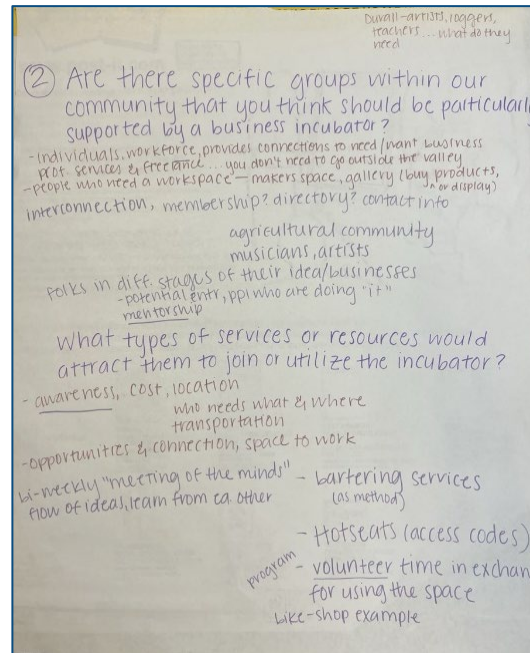


Figure 2: Notes from community meeting on July 16, 2024.

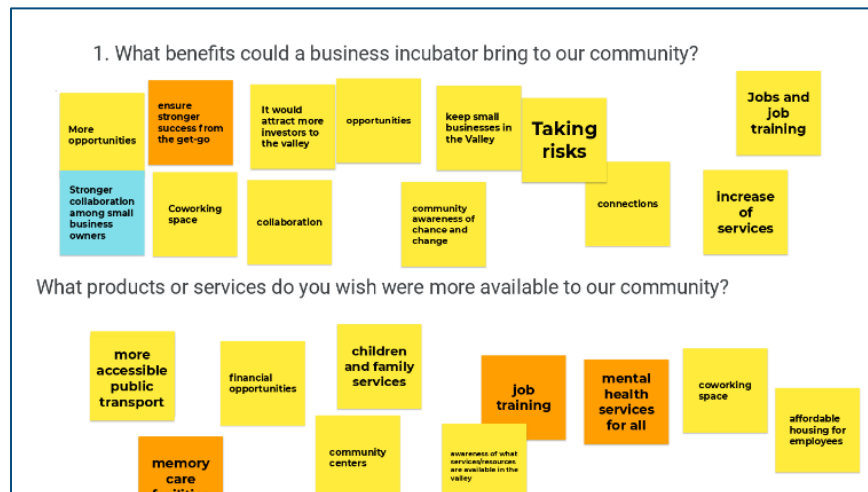


Figure 3: Notes from community meeting on July 18, 2024.

**Outreach:** We gathered community input while tabling in person at four Snoqualmie Valley summer events. Individuals were invited to participate in a poll to identify which sectors in the Snoqualmie Valley would benefit from the support of a micro-business incubator. We collected one hundred and ten (110) votes. The votes indicated which sectors participants believed would benefit the most from incubator support. Creatives (artists, musicians, etc.) received the highest support with forty-five (45) votes. Agriculture/Farmers followed with twenty-seven (27) votes. Food/Drink Producers received (4) votes.

- ❖ Eight (8) in-person outreach events
- ❖ Twenty-six (26) social media posts with three hundred and eighteen (318) combined shares and reactions
- ❖ One (1) newspaper article (Snoqualmie Valley Record)<sup>3</sup>



Figure 4: Outreach materials

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.valleyrecord.com/business/carnation-enlists-help-from-a-supportive-community-for-all/>

**Community Survey:** We conducted a comprehensive survey electronically (see Appendix), garnering over one hundred (100) responses and capturing broad input from across the community. We conducted survey and survey outreach in English and Spanish. Outreach was conducted at community events, via social media and by word of mouth.

**Focus Groups:** We facilitated two (2) focus groups with nine (9) individuals connected to creative industries. Participants offered nuanced perspectives to inform the research, allowing us to delve deeper into the needs and priorities of this specific population.

## Community Survey Responses

The survey, with one hundred and eight (108) responses, provided valuable insights into the economic needs and opportunities in Snoqualmie Valley, reflecting perspectives from current business owners, aspiring entrepreneurs, and residents. Of the respondents, forty-five (45) were business owners currently operating in the Snoqualmie Valley, offering insights into the challenges and opportunities faced by local entrepreneurs. Additionally, ten (10) respondents expressed interest in starting a business in the region, highlighting a potential pipeline of new entrepreneurs who could benefit from the incubator's resources and support. Outreach was conducted in person tabling at community events, email and social media marketing and through phone, email and text message requests to community members to participate and share the survey. The survey and outreach materials were available in English and Spanish.

Respondents were invited to share their demographic information. Business owners' demographic profiles are outlined below; note that some respondents may belong to multiple demographic categories:

- ❖ **Female-Owned Businesses:** The majority of business owner respondents (80%) identified their businesses as female-owned, indicating a significant representation of women entrepreneurs within the surveyed group.
- ❖ **LGBTQIA+ Owned Businesses:** A notable portion (15.6%) of businesses owners identified their businesses as LGBTQIA+ owned, reflecting diversity in ownership.
- ❖ **Minority-Owned, Disability-Owned, and Female-Managed Businesses:** Each of these categories had one respondent (2.2%), highlighting a smaller representation of these groups in the dataset.
- ❖ **None of the Above:** Six business owners (13.3%) did not identify in the categories outlined above.

Another significant group included forty-two (42) residents of the Snoqualmie Valley, who, while not necessarily business owners, provided valuable feedback on community utilization and economic development priorities. Lastly, eleven (11) respondents identified

as "other," indicating that they do not own a business or live in Snoqualmie Valley but expressed an interest in business activities within the Snoqualmie Valley, underscoring the broad appeal and potential regional impact of the proposed incubator initiative.

While the sample size is relatively small, the findings are consistent with broader national trends in entrepreneurship and small business development. These trends include common challenges such as business planning, marketing, management, and financing, which are key factors in the success or closure of small businesses.<sup>4</sup> Additionally, the targeted nature of the focus groups and survey provided insights specific to the Snoqualmie Valley community, capturing diverse perspectives and strong interest in fostering local economic growth. This alignment with larger trends, combined with the depth of engagement, supports the findings despite the limited sample size.

## Key Findings

We incorporated input from a diverse range of community members to ensure the findings are inclusive and relevant. This approach strengthens the connection between the proposed solutions and the actual needs of the Valley's artisans, entrepreneurs, and small businesses. Several challenges and needs arose as top priorities that a local micro-business incubator could address.

### Meeting and Event Spaces

Around sixty-five percent (65%) of small business owner survey respondents and community engagement participants emphasized the lack of affordable meeting spaces in the region. Many expressed a desire for venues that could host workshops, networking events, and consulting opportunities. These respondents underscored the importance of fostering collaboration and building a sense of community among local businesses and artisans. Such spaces are seen as crucial for facilitating idea sharing and innovation within the Valley's entrepreneurial ecosystem.

### Flexible Workspaces

Shared office spaces emerged as a significant need, with sixty percent (60%) of survey respondents indicating interest in part-time, flexible co-working solutions. Startups and freelancers in particular indicated a high demand for affordable, low-commitment options. Additionally, entrepreneurs emphasized the value of a central hub that could offer mentorship, training, and access to essential resources. This could position flexible

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<sup>4</sup> <https://www.chamberofcommerce.org/small-business-statistics/#small-business-statistics>

workspaces as more than just physical locations; rather, they could be an integral component of business development.

Focus group participants emphasized the importance of shared, flexible spaces for artists and entrepreneurs. They valued options for smaller, affordable footprints within a shared environment that could reduce overhead costs. The focus groups suggested that flexible rental rates and incentives that encourage participation from local Valley residents were identified as essential to ensuring inclusivity. Ideally, spaces should accommodate diverse needs, such as workshops, pop-up displays, and collaborative hubs, while remaining adaptable to the evolving requirements of the businesses involved.

## **Business Support Services**

The focus groups emphasized a significant need for tailored business support services, including administrative and front office infrastructure. Participants expressed challenges in areas such as marketing, merchandising, and financial planning. They stressed the importance of free or subsidized marketing assistance, especially with social media, as well as mentorship for scaling their businesses. Participants also called for guidance on pricing, business structure, and tax preparation to address gaps in their knowledge and confidence. More than half of the businesses surveyed (55%) reported a need for consulting services to enhance their operations. Challenges in accessing affordable business strategy and operations services, such as marketing, legal, and financial consulting, were frequently cited.

## **Business Training**

Respondents expressed enthusiasm for workshops on topics like e-commerce, financial literacy, and product development, highlighting the importance of accessible training and educational resources for businesses at all stages of growth. This aligns with national data indicating that small businesses often face challenges in accessing critical business development services. Free and reduced cost business training opportunities are available online through SCORE,<sup>5</sup> Small Business Administration,<sup>6</sup> local and national Business Development Organizations and Community Development Financial Institutions (CDFIs), and the King County Library System.<sup>7</sup> Despite the availability of free virtual and remote resources, there was a desire expressed in the community meetings and focus groups in local, in-person and community-centered business support.

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<sup>5</sup> <https://www.score.org/>

<sup>6</sup> <https://www.sba.gov/sba-learning-platform>

<sup>7</sup> <https://kcls.org/small-business-resources/>



## Retail Space

Seventy-five percent (75%) of the surveyed artisans identified affordable retail spaces as a major obstacle to their growth. Artisans and small business owners alike expressed a strong interest in a curated marketplace that would not only provide a shared space to sell their products but also offer collective marketing resources. This demonstrates a demand for a centralized retail hub that can support the creative and entrepreneurial community with rent costs that are shared, with particular interest in finding ways to access below market rate rent. This local data mirrors national concerns, as rising commercial rents are threatening independent businesses across the United States. The Institute for Local Self-Reliance reports that average commercial rent increases can range from seven to twenty-six percent (7% to 26%) annually.<sup>8</sup>

The Kauffman Foundation report, “National Report on Early-Stage Entrepreneurship in the United States: 2021”,<sup>9</sup> highlights challenges faced by entrepreneurs that align closely with the findings from survey and focus group discussions. Both sources emphasize the pressing need for a supportive ecosystem to address disparities in entrepreneurship. These challenges include limited access to funding, gaps in entrepreneurial knowledge and technical skills, and a lack of strong networks, particularly for underrepresented groups.

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“A lot of times creatives aren't necessarily extra extroverted and they're not necessarily marketer salespeople of their own.”

FOCUS GROUP PARTICIPANT,  
OCTOBER 25, 2024

Survey respondents indicated the need for centralized resources, financial education, and mentorship opportunities, needs echoed in the Kauffman Foundation report's identification of barriers for diverse entrepreneurs. Both the report and survey highlight the knowledge gap among necessity-driven entrepreneurs, particularly in technical skills such as marketing, technology, and legal compliance. Focus group participants underscored the need for tailored support, emphasizing the importance of peer networks and training programs. These observations align with the Kauffman Foundation report's call for targeted education and capacity-building initiatives.

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<sup>8</sup> <https://ilsr.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/03/ILSR-AffordableSpace-ExecutiveSummary.pdf>

<sup>9</sup> <https://indicators.kauffman.org/wp-content/uploads/sites/2/2022/03/2021-Early-State-Entrepreneurship-National-Report.pdf>



Overall, these findings support the hypothesis that a multi-faceted community hub addressing intersecting needs—providing affordable retail and workspaces, fostering collaboration, and offering supportive services—would benefit current and aspiring Snoqualmie Valley entrepreneurs. Overall, these findings indicate support for a local micro-business incubator to address regional needs including flexible spaces (for coworking, meetings, events, and retail), business support services, and business training.



“Learning how to do it [display and merchandizing] and then again making sure that all the spaces around you have that same kind of special attention to detail for merchandise...it draws more people in.”

FOCUS GROUP PARTICIPANT,  
OCTOBER 15, 2024

## Market Analysis of Micro-Business Incubator

### Market Demand Overview

The community survey revealed that most respondents (75%) see substantial value in establishing a local micro-business incubator, demonstrating strong support for this initiative. Subsequent interviews further validated these findings, identifying a high demand for shared workspaces and business mentorship opportunities. A micro-business incubator could serve as a facility that provides accessible resources, collaborative environments, and professional guidance to local entrepreneurs and small businesses, addressing the top needs identified in our community research.

### Economic Trends and Targeted Industries

The broader economic climate is characterized by an increasing interest in entrepreneurship, driven by shifts toward remote work and greater access to online markets. These trends have empowered individuals to launch new ventures, particularly in creative and service-based industries. By aligning with these shifts, the incubator is well-positioned to attract a wide range of entrepreneurs while fostering innovation and economic resilience within the region.

The incubator could be well positioned to support industries such as:

- ❖ **Creative Arts:** Empowering local artisans and creators by providing affordable retail opportunities and collaborative spaces.
- ❖ **Professional Services and Freelancers:** Catering to consultants, freelancers, and small service providers seeking flexible workspaces and networking opportunities.

These targeted industries not only reflect the strengths and aspirations of the local entrepreneurial community but also align with the incubator’s mission to drive innovation, foster collaboration, and build economic resilience across the region.

## Competitive Landscape

There is an opportunity for the incubator to fill a critical gap in entrepreneurial support. While existing resources in the Snoqualmie Valley provide platforms for business connections, their current utilization levels suggest a potential need to facilitate broader engagement, especially for low-income and underrepresented business owners. Additionally, entrepreneurs in the area face limited options for accessible workspace, mentorship, and development programs, with the nearest comprehensive facilities located in adjacent counties. Establishing a local incubator would provide a centralized and dynamic hub designed to meet the diverse needs of the community, fostering a more inclusive and supportive entrepreneurial ecosystem.

The largest cities in the Snoqualmie Valley have more support for small businesses and may offer potential opportunities to expand this support geographically or expand the portfolio of services available. In North Bend, SnoValley Innovation Center is a nonprofit entity that holds meetings for entrepreneurs, start-ups, and small businesses to explore innovative ideas and provides business support including networking meet ups.<sup>10</sup> North Bend Art & Industry is a nonprofit whose mission is to grow, mentor, and celebrate the arts. They hold classes and are developing a creative hub, the Center For Creativity, in North Bend.

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One of the things that is tricky about 3D art is how do you show it off? How do you, how do you display it? How do you, how do you merchandise those things to make it really pop?”

FOCUS GROUP PARTICIPANT,  
OCTOBER 15, 2024

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<sup>10</sup> <https://www.valleyrecord.com/news/valley-nonprofit-looks-to-help-new-businesses-innovate/>

In addition to opportunities that nonprofit entities provide, each city throughout Snoqualmie Valley hosts art festivals and farmer's markets that provide vending opportunities for small businesses. However, these events are not consistent throughout the year and have barriers to entry such as vendor costs or requirements that limit the number or type of vendor.

## **Market Analysis**

The analysis underscores a demand for a local incubator, with support from the community and favorable economic trends. By focusing on the creative industry and professional services, the incubator can address specific needs while driving economic growth. This initiative will not only support individual businesses but also strengthen the broader entrepreneurial ecosystem within the community.

The community survey results demonstrate strong interest in a Snoqualmie Valley business incubator market that features local businesses, with several categories of products and services receiving significant support. Highly favored categories include handmade crafts and artisan goods (72%) and local artwork (64%), showcasing a strong appreciation for creative, locally made products. Home décor items (57%) also received considerable support, reflecting the potential for a diverse marketplace catering to aesthetically driven consumer preferences.

However, it is important to note that the survey conducted for this analysis represents a small sample size. While they provide valuable initial insights, further refinement of the target market will be essential in subsequent steps to ensure the incubator aligns with the evolving needs of the entrepreneurial community. This initiative has the potential not only to support individual businesses but also to strengthen the broader entrepreneurial ecosystem within the region.

## **Site Selection Criteria**

The success of the incubator project depends on selecting a location that aligns with community needs and operational goals. Survey respondents indicated components of a location that were most important to them. These included accessibility, functionality, and visibility. Selecting a location that balances accessibility, functionality, and visibility may contribute to the incubator's economic growth and entrepreneurial success. To ensure the site meets the project's objectives, several key criteria have been established, grounded in community input and feasibility considerations.

## Central Location in Snoqualmie Valley

A central location with proximity to public transportation is critical for accessibility and inclusivity. Survey data revealed that 78% of respondents prioritized access to transit options, emphasizing the importance of connecting artisans, small business owners, and customers across the region. A site near major transit routes or a regional hub would enhance participation and support the incubator’s mission of fostering economic opportunity.

## Accessible Parking and Visibility

Free and accessible parking emerged as a significant consideration, with eighty-five percent (85%) of survey participants ranking it as “important” or “very important.” Parking access is particularly critical for artisans transporting inventory and for customers visiting the retail hub. Adequate parking capacity will play a key role in attracting in-person customers and ensuring ease of use for participants. Visibility and foot traffic are additional priorities for the site, as seventy percent (70%) of respondents noted the importance of being in a well-traveled area or a downtown location to boost retail sales and program engagement. A visible, easily accessible site would not only support marketing efforts but also attract customers and potential business partners, enhancing the incubator’s long-term sustainability.

## Flexible Space

The selected site must also comply with local zoning regulations that allow for mixed-use purposes, including retail, co-working, and event spaces. Survey respondents expressed strong interest in a location capable of hosting both retail and meeting or event needs, making proper zoning a crucial factor in avoiding delays and ensuring smooth implementation. Space flexibility and adequate square footage are also essential; specifics would be tailored to the chosen incubator model. For example, with a retail and meeting space model, the site must accommodate retail displays, meeting rooms, and shared workspaces. Adaptability is vital, as sixty percent (60%) of respondents highlighted the need for multi-functional areas to host events, workshops, and networking opportunities. Space flexibility ensures the incubator can meet evolving needs and maximize its utility for participants.

### Most Important Incubator Features

Identified in the Survey

- 1 High speed internet
- 2 Vehicle parking
- 3 Central location
- 4 Proximity to other small businesses
- 5 Access to public transportation
- 6 Shared meeting space

## Community Fit

Finally, the location should integrate seamlessly with the community and leverage nearby resources, such as local nonprofits, schools, and cultural centers. A Nonprofit Center Feasibility Study conducted for Snoqualmie Valley in 2021 examined the demand for shared nonprofit spaces in the region, with a focus on co-location opportunities to enhance collaboration, reduce costs, and increase the efficiency of service delivery. The findings from the feasibility study emphasize the need for spaces that support community engagement and integration. It highlights a demand for office, meeting, and gathering spaces across Snoqualmie Valley, particularly in Carnation, where environmental organizations show strong interest, and Snoqualmie, where human service providers are more concentrated. This aligns closely with the incubator’s goals to foster community collaboration and serve as a hub for local artisans and entrepreneurs.

The Nonprofit Center Feasibility Study identified recommends obtaining 10,000–15,000 square feet in Carnation or 20,000–25,000 square feet in Snoqualmie and provides an opportunity for potential collaboration on this project. Cross-sector integration would foster collaboration, amplify the incubator’s impact, and create opportunities for participants to access additional support. Furthermore, the report’s emphasis on affordability, accessibility, and visibility aligns with the incubator’s priorities. The study highlights the importance of locating spaces near public transportation, offering adequate parking, and ensuring accessibility for diverse community members, criteria that are integral to the incubator’s mission to create an inclusive economic ecosystem.

Another national study, the “Rural Development Hubs: Strengthening America’s Rural Innovation Infrastructure,” conducted by The Aspen Institute,<sup>11</sup> similarly underscores the important role of place-based hubs in fostering entrepreneurial ecosystems and regional economic growth. They make a case for embedding an incubator within a larger hub or nonprofit center. Rural Development Hubs are identified as critical to building inclusive wealth, enhancing local capacity, and creating long-term opportunities for better livelihoods. By integrating an incubator into a greater hub, such as a nonprofit center, the initiative leverages the collaborative and multi-functional

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“In terms of renting space, sharing space, having the small footprint space within something, an umbrella would help people not have to have so much expense.”

FOCUS GROUP PARTICIPANT,  
OCTOBER 25, 2024

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<sup>11</sup> <https://www.aspeninc.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/07/CSG-Rural-Devel-Hubs.pdf>

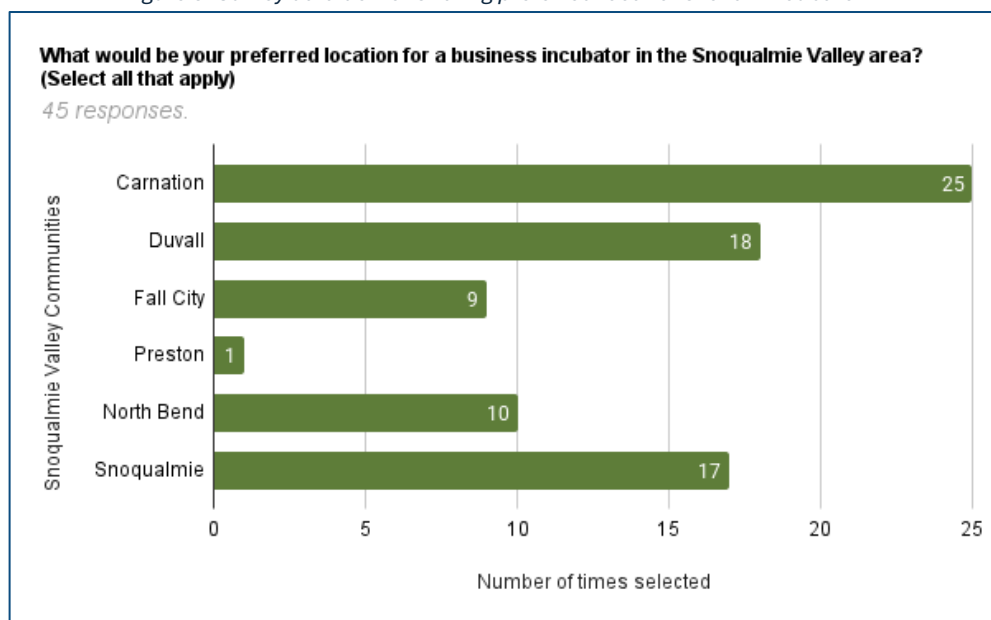
nature of these centers to provide not only business support services but also access to a broader network of community resources. The report highlights how rural hubs can strengthen connections across local institutions, businesses, and individuals, fostering a cohesive system that supports entrepreneurs and small businesses while addressing barriers to success. Embedding the incubator in a larger hub aligns with these principles, positioning it as a cornerstone for inclusive economic development, innovation, and community resilience in the Snoqualmie Valley.

## Site Selection Considerations

The City of Carnation stands out as a compelling site for the proposed business incubator, meeting key criteria outlined in the site selection process while addressing pressing community needs and an emphasis on engaging under-resourced entrepreneurs. With just over fifty-five percent (55.6%) of survey respondents identifying Carnation as their preferred incubator location, the data reinforces its viability as a strategic hub for small business growth and economic development.

The 2023 Snoqualmie Valley Regional Housing Needs Assessment Report<sup>12</sup> provides insights into the economic landscape of Carnation, highlighting its potential suitability for a business incubator that serves a diverse range of income levels.

Figure 5: Survey data demonstrating preferred locations for an incubator.



<sup>12</sup> <https://www.snoqualmiewa.gov/DocumentCenter/View/36420/Snoqualmie-Valley-Housing-Needs-Assessment-Report-11023>

Key findings include:

- ❖ **Income Distribution:** Carnation exhibits a higher proportion of households in the "Extremely Low" and "Very Low" income categories compared to neighboring cities such as Snoqualmie, North Bend, and Duvall.
- ❖ **Employment and Economic Opportunities:** The 2023 Snoqualmie Valley Regional Housing Needs Assessment emphasizes the need for diversified employment opportunities to support residents across various income brackets. A business incubator could stimulate local entrepreneurship, create jobs, and provide pathways for economic mobility.
- ❖ **Housing Cost Burdens:** Many households in Carnation experience housing cost burdens, spending a substantial portion of their income on housing. By fostering business growth and additional income, a business incubator could alleviate some of these financial pressures.

As a central location in the Snoqualmie Valley, Carnation could support accessibility and inclusivity for artisans, small business owners, and customers across the region. Proximity to public transportation and major transit routes would further enhance participation, aligning with the seventy-eight percent (78%) of survey respondents who prioritized access to transit options. However, the limited availability of retail real estate in Carnation presents a notable constraint, underscoring the importance of selecting and optimizing the right space to ensure maximum community impact and program success.

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“It would be nice to be with other creatives to see what they're doing, to get inspired by them, and to share what I'm doing.”

FOCUS GROUP PARTICIPANT,  
OCTOBER 25, 2024

The scarcity of real estate amplifies the significance of the incubator's design and functionality. Flexible spaces that integrate retail, co-working, and event areas are essential to meeting the diverse needs of entrepreneurs while maximizing the utility of a limited footprint. Despite space limitations, zoning in the area supports mixed-use purposes, streamlining implementation. Insights from the 2021 Nonprofit Center Feasibility Study further highlight Carnation's potential to support a space that integrates business support services with broader community resources. Despite the challenge of limited real estate, embedding the incubator within a larger hub or nonprofit center could help mitigate this constraint by leveraging shared resources, reducing costs, and



enhancing service delivery. Such a model aligns with recommendations in the "Rural Development Hubs" report, which emphasizes the importance of place-based hubs in fostering economic resilience and innovation.

The proposed incubator site must meet zoning regulations, transportation access, and environmental considerations to ensure a sustainable and community-focused development. Collaborating closely with Carnation, the project will undergo a cultural review to guarantee cultural sensitivity and compliance with local guidelines. Environmental considerations will be addressed through thorough assessments, identifying and mitigating any potential impacts to the surrounding area. Accessibility remains a top priority, with plans to ensure convenient access via public transportation and the availability of free parking, creating a welcoming and inclusive space for all.

While the limited availability of retail real estate in Carnation poses a constraint, it also presents an opportunity to design a highly efficient and impactful incubator that meets the unique needs of the community. From an economic perspective, Carnation's higher proportion of households in the "Extremely Low" and "Very Low" income categories underscores the critical need for diversified employment opportunities. A business incubator could stimulate local entrepreneurship, provide pathways for economic mobility, and alleviate financial pressures faced by many households. The 2023 Housing Needs Assessment highlights these economic disparities and emphasizes the importance of initiatives that foster local job creation and economic development. The incubator would not only address these needs but also strengthen connections across local institutions and businesses, positioning Carnation as a hub for regional collaboration. By strategically addressing this challenge and capitalizing on Carnation's central location, economic landscape, and alignment with site selection criteria, the incubator would serve as a cornerstone for inclusive economic development and innovation in the Snoqualmie Valley.



Snoqualmie and North Bend have some things like this already. Duvall has a lot of spaces where entrepreneurs can cross over with one another already. Carnation is in the middle...and could be a chance for the area to contribute something positive to the wider valley.

SMALL BUSINESS AND  
COMMUNITY SURVEY RESPONSE



# Proposed Models to Inform Site Selection

## Retail-Only Location

*Centralized retail space for local artisans to sell their products.*

**Square Footage:** 1,500 sq. ft.

**Features:**

- ❖ Permanent retail shelves and booths
- ❖ Storage space for inventory
- ❖ Basic marketing support for artisans

## Meeting Space & Pop-Up Retail Events

*Flexible meeting space for workshops and events, with pop-up retail opportunities.*

**Square Footage:** 1,500 sq. ft.

**Features:**

- ❖ Sliding scale fees based on household income
- ❖ Bookable meeting rooms for local businesses and organizations
- ❖ Space for periodic pop-up events
- ❖ Workshop series for community and business skill building

## Retail and Meeting Space

*Combination of retail marketplace and meeting space to support ongoing commerce and business networking.*

**Square Footage:** 2,500 sq. ft.

**Features:**

- ❖ Reception area, modular classroom space, and shared retail space with a variety of businesses showcased
- ❖ Sliding scale fees based on household income
- ❖ Individual retail spaces for artisan products
- ❖ Meeting space for workshops and consulting

## **Retail, Meeting Space, Flexible Co-Working, and Business Center**

*Comprehensive business hub offering retail, meeting, co-working, and business services.*

**Square Footage:** 4,000 sq. ft.

### **Features:**

- ❖ Sliding scale fees based on household income
- ❖ Retail marketplace for artisans
- ❖ Dedicated meeting rooms
- ❖ Co-working space with desks, Wi-Fi, and office equipment
- ❖ Business center with consulting services (e.g., marketing, legal, financial)

## **Recommended Model**

The Retail and Meeting Space offers an innovative and versatile approach that caters to the evolving needs of businesses and consumers alike. By integrating retail and collaborative spaces, this model fosters dynamic environments where shopping, networking, and productivity converge. It capitalizes on the growing demand for experiential retail, blending traditional storefronts with modern spaces that encourage engagement, creativity, and interaction. This hybrid approach increases revenue potential by diversifying income streams but also enhances customer experience, creating vibrant hubs that attract a wide range of clientele.

In a thoughtfully designed 2,500-square-foot model for flexible retail spaces and meeting areas, a vibrant ecosystem of businesses thrives. The layout is structured to maximize utility, collaboration, and community engagement, fostering an innovative environment for small enterprises and creative professionals. The model features:

## Micro-spaces for Vending (1,500 square feet)

- ❖ Five 100-square-foot spaces: These compact spaces are optimized for vending businesses, equipped with space for a point-of-sale system and flexible shelving and storage. Secure vending space is necessary to ensure the safety of inventory when the vendor is not present. These spaces are ideal for entrepreneurs offering small, unique products or specialty items, enabling them to operate efficiently and securely.
- ❖ Five 200-square-foot spaces: These slightly larger vending spaces provide additional room for businesses with more extensive inventory or display needs. Like the smaller spaces, they are equipped with flexible display options and can be securely locked when unattended, offering peace of mind to business owners.

“

“I have an Etsy page, but putting one piece up there is so laborious...

I have stockpile of art and not enough places to sell it”

FOCUS GROUP PARTICIPANT,  
OCTOBER 15, 2024

## Reception Area (500 square feet)

- ❖ This centralized space serves as the heart of the facility, hosting art exhibitions, product showcases, and community events. It doubles as a reception area, welcoming visitors and fostering connections between businesses and the broader community. With the capacity to accommodate showcasing up to 15 businesses, this retail store functions as a creative and networking hub.

## Classroom and Modular Workspace (500 square feet)

- ❖ Designed for adaptability, this room supports workshops, training sessions, and co-working opportunities. The modular furniture and layout ensure it can be reconfigured to suit a variety of needs, from educational classes to collaborative projects.
- ❖ This space will host popup events as an expansion of the centralized retail store. These popup events provide opportunities for entrepreneurs to test ideas, connect with potential customers, and gain valuable exposure.

# Implementation Plan

## **Phase 1: Secure Seed Funds (0–8 Months)**

Municipal or county government will secure funding to source a host organization that can support a pilot local micro-business incubator in the Snoqualmie Valley. Estimated funding needed for Year 1 is \$175,000. Seed funding will fund a Program Strategy Consultant and Grant Writer.

## **Phase 2: Secure a Host Organization (6–10 Months)**

Program Strategy Consultant will publish a Request for Proposals for a host organization for the business incubator and undergo a selection process. Potential partnerships between local social service organizations and regional business development organizations should be considered and encouraged. The financial model includes ten percent (10%) of the revenue earned to support the host organization's administrative fees. Month six of the financial model budgets the hiring of a full-time Program Director to oversee the site selection, refine business model, conduct outreach, and manage Grant Writer.

## **Phase 3: Site Selection and Lease Secured (12–18 Months)**

Identifying and securing a suitable site for the incubator is a critical milestone that sets the foundation for its successful implementation. This phase involves a detailed evaluation of potential locations based on established criteria, stakeholder engagement to ensure alignment with community needs, and finalizing lease agreements to move the project forward. Based on the Comparable Rental Summary in the 2024 Appraisal of the City Hall Building in Carnation by Witherell & Associates, Inc., retail rent per square foot in the Snoqualmie Valley ranged from \$12.08 to \$21.00. Models in this feasibility plan use \$18.00 per square foot. Available retail locations that meet these requirements are limited and this phase might take a significant amount of time.

As part of Phase 3, a location analysis will identify adequately served vacant industrial land to ensure the incubator site aligns with strategic goals, community needs, and logistical requirements. The analysis will review zoning regulations to confirm that potential sites are designated for industrial use and comply with local land use policies. Sites will be evaluated for their accessibility to critical infrastructure, including transportation networks, utilities, and broadband services, which are essential for supporting small

businesses and fostering economic growth.

Proximity to key amenities such as public transportation, parking facilities, and local business hubs will also be assessed to ensure that the incubator location supports accessibility for entrepreneurs, employees, and clients. Sites located near underserved or high-potential areas will be prioritized to maximize the incubator's impact on economic development and community revitalization.

Environmental considerations will play a vital role in this analysis, with assessments conducted to ensure that selected sites have minimal ecological impact and comply with sustainability goals. This includes evaluating potential risks related to flooding, pollution, and resource constraints, as well as exploring opportunities for green development initiatives.

By examining other adequately served vacant industrial land in the region, the incubator project can identify a site that balances operational feasibility with community and environmental priorities. This location analysis will guide informed decision-making and set a strong foundation for the incubator's long-term success.

## Overview of the Implementation Plan

### **PHASE 1**

Secure funding (0-8 months)

### **PHASE 2**

Find a host organization (6-10 months)

### **PHASE 3**

Site selection (12-18 months)

### **PHASE 4**

Pre-development & pilot program

### **PHASE 5**

Build-out & outreach 24-36 months)

### **PHASE 6**

Soft launch (36-40 months)

### **PHASE 7**

Full-scale launch (40+ months)

## **Phase 4: Pre-Development Planning and Pilot Programming (12–24 Months)**

The pre-development phase involves several critical steps to ensure the successful build-out and operational readiness of the incubator. The process begins with assembling a skilled team to oversee these efforts, including hiring or onboarding a project manager and forming a pre-development team responsible for managing the build-out process and operational planning. This team will act as the driving force behind the transition from planning to execution.

A key focus during this phase is the design and permitting of the incubator space. The team will finalize the layout to accommodate retail, meeting, and co-working spaces, ensuring the design is functional and flexible. Compliance with building codes, safety standards, and accessibility requirements will also be prioritized to create an inclusive and legally compliant space.

The launch of a pilot business training program aimed at building a cohort of creative business owners in Snoqualmie Valley. This program will provide targeted training designed to equip creative entrepreneurs with skills such as business planning, financial management, marketing, and operational strategies. By offering hands-on support and mentorship, the program will help participants navigate challenges and prepare them to take full advantage of the resources the incubator will offer.

In addition to the pilot training program, the incubator organization could host business-focused workshops to provide valuable information, build awareness about the incubator, and foster connections with local business owners. These workshops will serve as both educational opportunities and outreach initiatives, ensuring that the broader community understands the incubator's goals, benefits, and means of participation. Workshops could cover topics such as entrepreneurship basics, accessing funding and leveraging local resources, with an emphasis on inclusivity and support for underserved populations.

The pilot program and workshops will also serve as a tool to refine the incubator's future programming by gathering feedback from participants. Insights gained from these events will inform the development of long-term services and ensure that the incubator meets the unique needs of Snoqualmie Valley's diverse entrepreneurial community.

Stakeholder engagement remains a cornerstone of this phase. Potential tenants, the advisory committee, and community members will continue to be involved in the process to ensure the incubator's design and operational plans align with the needs and expectations identified during earlier phases. This collaborative approach will help build trust and ensure the incubator is tailored to serve its intended audience effectively.

Simultaneously, the funding plan will be refined to account for renovations and operational expenses. The pre-development team will develop a detailed budget and continue building the case statement to attract funders, investors, and sponsors. Securing these financial resources is vital to ensure the project's sustainability and long-term success.

### **Phase 5: Build-Out and Launch Preparation (24–36 Months)**

The build-out and preparation phase focuses on transforming the incubator from a vision into a functional and vibrant space ready to serve the community. This process begins with renovations and setup, ensuring that the physical space aligns with the business strategy. Necessary renovations and upgrades will be conducted to create retail areas for artisans, meeting spaces for workshops and networking, and co-working areas for entrepreneurs and small business owners. The infrastructure will be designed with flexibility and accessibility in mind to foster an inclusive and collaborative environment.

Equally important is equipping the space with the tools and resources needed for smooth operations. Technology, furniture, and other equipment that is essential for operations will be procured and installed to ensure the incubator is fully functional and capable of meeting the needs of its tenants and participants.

To build excitement and attract tenants, participants, and program partners, a marketing and outreach campaign will be launched. This effort will leverage partnerships with local organizations and media outlets, as well as outreach through social media and community networks, to promote the incubator's offerings and mission. By engaging the community and raising awareness, the campaign will help establish the incubator as a central hub for economic opportunity and collaboration.

Simultaneously, this timeline will incorporate program development, ensuring that the incubator offers a robust slate of programs, services, and workshops tailored to the community's needs. These offerings will be informed by the findings of the feasibility study, addressing key areas such as business coaching, financial literacy, e-commerce training, and networking opportunities. By aligning programs with community needs, the incubator can maximize its impact and foster long-term success.

### **Phase 6: Soft Launch and Pilot Testing (36–40 Months)**

The initial phase of operations will focus on onboarding tenants and participants, piloting programming, and refining processes. The tenant and participant onboarding process for the first cohort of entrepreneurs, artisans, and small business owners involves providing initial support and orientation. Early engagement with this group will set the tone for a

collaborative and supportive environment, creating a foundation for long-term success.

During this period, the incubator will implement pilot programming, offering a limited schedule of workshops, events, and services. These programs will be designed to address the core needs identified in the feasibility study, such as business coaching, financial literacy, and networking opportunities. The pilot phase will allow the team to gather valuable feedback from participants, ensuring that the programs are relevant, impactful, and responsive to the unique challenges faced by local entrepreneurs.

As the incubator begins operations, ongoing evaluation and adjustment will be a key priority. Data collection may include participation rates, tenant satisfaction, and program impact to identify areas for improvement. Feedback will inform necessary adjustments to programming, operations, and overall strategies, ensuring the incubator is fully optimized before the full-scale launch. By embracing this iterative approach, the incubator can refine its offerings and establish itself as a cornerstone for business growth and community empowerment in the region.



“Any artist needs help in marketing and promotions because, as an artist, the last thing you want to do is toot your own horn. It’s just not part of the skill set generally. Having ways that people could have free or grant [supported] marketing help would seem huge...especially social media.”

FOCUS GROUP PARTICIPANT,  
OCTOBER 25, 2024

## **Phase 7: Full-Scale Launch and Operations (40+ Months)**

The launch of the incubator will commence with a grand opening event to introduce the space and its mission to the community. This event will build awareness, engage stakeholders, and celebrate the incubator’s role in supporting local businesses and economic growth.



Following the launch, the incubator will roll out expanded programming, offering a full schedule of services, workshops, and events tailored to the needs of entrepreneurs, artisans, and small business owners. Topics such as financial management, marketing, and e-commerce will help participants build skills, while networking and mentorship opportunities will foster collaboration and professional connections.

To measure its effectiveness, the incubator will implement ongoing monitoring and evaluation, tracking metrics like the number of businesses supported, jobs created, and participant feedback. Adjustments will be made as needed to improve programming and ensure alignment with community needs.

Finally, the incubator will focus on sustainability planning to secure long-term funding and partnerships. By engaging with funders, local businesses, and community organizations, the incubator will work to establish a stable foundation for continued operations and growth.

## Funding and Financial Modeling

We have identified nineteen (19) grant funding sources that are strong prospects and an additional eighteen (18) that are a moderate fit for funding the launch or operation of an arts-focused business incubator in eastern King County. To raise dollars from private and public grant funding sources, we recommend that the incubator host organization translate this list into a grant application calendar that aligns with the timeline of program development and launch. Most funders will not be willing to fund until there are detailed project plans, including items such as a budget, timeline, intended outcomes, and projected funding sources.

The financial model for the 2,500-square-foot business incubator underscores calculated approach to sustainability and growth. It combines diverse income streams, strategic funding assumptions, and targeted resource allocation over a three-year horizon to support its mission of fostering local entrepreneurship and innovation.

The model requires seed funding of \$175,000 in Year 1, which establishes the foundation for infrastructure development and initial operational activities. This funding diminishes strategically in subsequent years, with \$75,000 allocated in Year 2 and \$50,000 in Year 3, signaling a planned transition to financial self-sufficiency.

Funding Contributions to complement the seed funding, the model incorporates funding from two distinct prospect tiers in the end of the first year, applying calculated success probabilities:

- **Strong fit funder prospects:** Assumes a fifteen percent (15%) success rate in Year 1 through Year 3. The percentage is based on median funding amount per funder. This strategy requires donor cultivation and outreach that would be done by the Program Director and Grant Writer.
- **Moderate fit funder prospects:** Budgeted at a five percent (5%) success rate in Year 1 through Year 3, this is conservative as success rate is anticipated to be higher with the growing network and increasing grant acquisition capabilities.

Some of the funders we identified are federal agencies like the U.S. Small Business Administration. These will require that the host organization obtain eligibility for federal grants such as registration in the federal System for Award Management. Other funding prospects are regional foundations and corporations which will require capacity to build and steward relationships, both before and after grants are awarded.

Governments, foundations, and philanthropic organizations recognize the potential of business incubators and are increasingly open to fund these initiatives due to their economic and social benefits. By supporting incubators, these stakeholders play a critical role in fostering economic development, advancing social equity, and building sustainable entrepreneurial ecosystems.

One of the most compelling reasons to invest in incubators is their capacity to drive economic development. Incubators create jobs, stimulate innovation, and strengthen local economies by empowering small businesses and startups to succeed. These businesses, in turn, generate employment opportunities and contribute to regional economic growth. Incubators have the potential to address systemic challenges by reducing barriers to entrepreneurship, particularly for minority and women-owned businesses, as well as additional underrepresented demographics. By focusing on inclusivity, these programs can open doors to economic opportunities for groups historically excluded from traditional business networks. Foundations and philanthropies are especially drawn to incubators with a mission of equity, as they align with broader goals of fostering diversity and leveling the playing field in entrepreneurship. Through targeted technical assistance, mentorship, and access to capital, incubators empower underrepresented entrepreneurs to turn their ideas into sustainable ventures.

The social impact of incubators is another key driver of funding. By providing economic opportunities for individuals often left out of mainstream systems, incubators help build more equitable and resilient communities. Many funders view incubators as tools for social change, enabling individuals and families to achieve economic mobility and

stability. These goals align closely with the priorities of philanthropic organizations seeking to address poverty, unemployment, and economic disparity. One example of an equitable business practice is to offer a sliding scale participation fee structure based on household income. The financial model assumes rental income from businesses that have retail space in the incubator accounts for fifty percent (50%) of the rental costs. The remaining funds need to be fundraised through various funding sources.

*Table 1: Three-Year Projected Income and Expenses*

	<b>Year 1 Total</b>	<b>Year 2 Total</b>	<b>Year 3 Total</b>	<b>3 Year total</b>
<b>Income</b>				
Startup Grant	\$175,000	\$75,000	\$50,000	\$300,000
Grants and Donations	\$403,225	\$406,225	\$407,225	\$1,216,675
Program Income	\$0	\$13,750	\$26,000	\$39,750
<b>Total Income</b>	<b>\$578,225</b>	<b>\$494,975</b>	<b>\$483,225</b>	<b>\$1,556,425</b>
<b>Expenses</b>				
Payroll Expenses (including taxes and benefits)	\$81,735	\$230,354	\$230,354	\$542,442
Operating Expenses	\$127,223	\$359,348	\$308,173	\$794,743
<b>Total Expenses</b>	<b>\$208,957</b>	<b>\$589,701</b>	<b>\$538,526</b>	<b>\$1,337,185</b>
<b>Net Profit/Loss</b>	<b>\$369,268</b>	<b>-\$94,726</b>	<b>-\$55,301</b>	<b>\$219,240</b>

# Potential Host Organizations of the Incubator

Selecting an appropriate host organization is a crucial step in the development of the Snoqualmie Valley micro-business incubator, as it will provide the foundation for effective operations and community impact. Finding a host organization for the incubator requires a strategic partnership that offers mutual benefits, ensuring the initiative aligns with the organization's mission and strategic plan while enhancing its capacity to support local entrepreneurs. A successful host organization should have a proven track record of supporting businesses through technical assistance, business coaching, and inclusive programming and adequate administration, financial infrastructure, staff support and established leadership to manage the project. Utilizing a host organization to run the incubator would reduce the need for duplicate operational, administrative, or human resource staff members. The host must also demonstrate a commitment to fostering economic growth across the Snoqualmie Valley while addressing the unique challenges faced by local entrepreneurs, particularly those from underserved and underrepresented groups.

The partnership must be financially sustainable, ensuring that the host organization has the necessary resources to effectively support the incubator while also securing additional funding for long-term viability. The incubator financial model builds in funding for fundraising efforts to secure, monitor, report, and evaluate grant funding, ensuring long-term financial sustainability. While the financial model allocates ten percent (10%) of all income toward administrative fees to support the host organization's operations, additional fundraising will be essential to maintain compliance with funding requirements and sustain the incubator's programs and impact.

In addition to selecting a business development organization as the primary host, a partnership model could be highly effective in maximizing the incubator's impact. Pairing a business development organization with a local organization already providing services in Snoqualmie Valley would bring together complementary strengths. The business development organization could contribute technical expertise, access to capital, and established entrepreneurship programs, while the local organization would offer deep community ties, cultural understanding, and an existing network of trust among residents.



“An incubator wouldn't stay the same always, right? The types of businesses would switch around and then what's required to help those businesses would change, or even just the maturity of the businesses involved in the incubator. Then their needs would change. So whoever's maintaining that incubator has to be flexible and aware of what the changing needs are.”

FOCUS GROUP PARTICIPANT,  
OCTOBER 15, 2024

This collaborative approach could ensure that the incubator is both strategically grounded in proven business support models and authentically connected to the local community's unique needs. Such a partnership would also facilitate co-delivery of services, enhance outreach to underserved populations, and create opportunities for innovative programming tailored specifically to Snoqualmie Valley. The selected host organization or a partnership of organizations must possess the capacity to design and execute a comprehensive marketing strategy that raises awareness, engages key stakeholders, and ensures broad accessibility. The ability to market the incubator effectively requires expertise in outreach, resource management, and strategic planning.

Several potential host organizations have been identified based on their expertise, regional presence, and alignment with the incubator's goals. These organizations bring experience in providing technical assistance, mentoring, and training, while emphasizing equity and inclusivity in their programs. The following host organizations provide a profile of organizations that should be considered for their ability to deliver meaningful support to local entrepreneurs, foster community connections, and create a sustainable and inclusive economic ecosystem in Snoqualmie Valley.

## Potential Host Organizations with Business Development Focus

### Business Impact NW

Business Impact NW specializes in supporting underserved entrepreneurs, including women, veterans, and people of color, by providing a range of resources designed to foster their success. These offerings include business coaching, technical assistance, and access to capital through innovative lending solutions and Small Business Administration (SBA) programs. Based in the Seattle area serving the Pacific Northwest.

- ❖ **Strengths:** Proven record in supporting underserved entrepreneurs, robust technical support services and business lending programs.
- ❖ **Potential Challenges:** Limited local presence; requires partnership with local groups.
- ❖ **Capacity:** 74 individuals employed in 2023 and annual revenue of \$6.8 million (source 2023 990 Seattle Economic Development Fund dba Business Impact NW)

### Center for Inclusive Entrepreneurship (CIE)

CIE is dedicated to empowering individuals from underserved and underrepresented communities to start and grow successful businesses. Its tailored programs are designed to emphasize sustainable and community-oriented business models. By offering hands-on coaching, mentorship, and guidance on business fundamentals, the organization provides crucial support, particularly for first-time entrepreneurs navigating the challenges of starting a business. With a strong emphasis on equity and inclusion, it seeks to level the playing field and create opportunities for diverse entrepreneurs to succeed.

- ❖ **Strengths:** Proven record in supporting underserved entrepreneurs, robust technical support services.
- ❖ **Potential Challenges:** Limited local presence; requires partnership with local groups.
- ❖ **Capacity:** 11 individuals employed in 2022 and annual revenue of \$1.2 million<sup>13</sup>

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<sup>13</sup> 2022 990 Center for Inclusive Entrepreneurship

### SnoValley Innovation Center

Locally based in North Bend, the SnoValley Innovation Center provides business coaching and support to entrepreneurs, startups, and small businesses.

- ❖ **Strengths:** Local organization connected to the regional economic ecosystem and Snoqualmie Valley.
- ❖ **Potential Challenges:** Limited capacity and resources.
- ❖ **Capacity:** 2022 annual revenue less than \$50,000<sup>14</sup>.

### **Additional Organizations that could partner to provide business resources**

#### Local Initiatives Support Corporation (LISC)

- ❖ **Strengths:** Nationally recognized organization supporting community development through grants, loans, and technical assistance.
- ❖ **Partner Opportunity:** Partners with nonprofit organizations implementing The Rural Hub model, developed by the Center on Rural Innovation (CORI)<sup>15</sup>
- ❖ **Potential Challenges:** While the organization has a local chapter, it is part of a larger national network with multiple programs, which may impact the level of resources and attention available for the incubator initiative.

#### SCORE (Service Corps of Retired Executives)

- ❖ **Strengths:** Provides free business mentoring and resources for startups and small businesses. Large network of experienced business professionals and retired executives.
- ❖ **Partner Opportunity:** Utilization of expertise network to provide businesses support.
- ❖ **Potential Challenges:** Volunteer-based organization.

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<sup>14</sup> Tax Year 2022 Form 990-N, source Sno-Valley Innovation Inc.

<sup>15</sup> <https://www.lisc.org/rural/our-work/access-capital/rural-innovation-hubs-and-incubators/>

### Economic Development Council (EDC) of Seattle and King County

- ❖ **Strengths:** Strong network of local businesses, government, and nonprofits.
- ❖ **Partnership Opportunity:** Could provide business assistance and access to resources in the region and could connect the incubator with local economic development initiatives and funding.
- ❖ **Potential Challenges:** Competition within organization for resources with multiple initiatives.

### Local Chambers of Commerce

- ❖ **Strengths:** Established business-oriented organizations.
- ❖ **Partnership Opportunity:** Valuable networking opportunities with local business leaders. Access to community events, sponsorships, and collaboration opportunities. Support for promoting incubator participants and their ventures.
- ❖ **Potential Challenges:** Most require membership for business to access their resources and support.

### Community Development Financial Institutions (CDFIs)

- ❖ **Strengths:** Focused on providing financial assistance to underserved communities and supporting inclusive economic growth.
- ❖ **Partnership Opportunity:** Could expand funding opportunities for incubator participants by providing access to capital and financial expertise.
- ❖ **Potential Challenges:** Availability of funds and alignment with specific incubator needs may vary by institution.

### A Supportive Community For All

- ❖ **Strengths:** Strong commitment to fostering an equitable Snoqualmie Valley by engaging, connecting and supporting local people and organizations.
- ❖ **Partnership Opportunity:** Could support the incubator's mission by leveraging community connections and resources to serve underserved business owners.
- ❖ **Potential Challenge:** Limited capacity due to existing projects that may affect the ability to fully engage in new initiatives.



## Partnering with Social Service Organizations

The 2021 Nonprofit Center Feasibility Study identified several key nonprofits operating in Snoqualmie Valley, including Hopelink, Empower Youth Network, and the Snoqualmie Valley Food Bank, which are deeply embedded in the community and provide critical social services. Partnering with these organizations could strengthen the incubator's reach and impact. Their expertise in addressing community needs, coupled with the business development skills of a host organization like Business Impact Northwest or the Center for Inclusive Entrepreneurship, would create a comprehensive support system for entrepreneurs.

Additionally, the study highlights potential for collaborative governance models and shared services, such as back-office support, which could reduce costs and enhance operational efficiency for both the incubator and its partners. By integrating these insights into the incubator's planning and site selection process, the project can leverage existing resources and networks to build a robust foundation for long-term success.

“

“I think for me the biggest thing that's coming up is I'm an artist first and foremost. And so my mind does not think in terms of money and dollars.”

FOCUS GROUP PARTICIPANT,  
OCTOBER 25, 2024

# Indicators for Success

Monitoring and evaluation will be critical components of this incubator project to ensure accountability, measure progress, and maximize impact. By systematically tracking key metrics and outcomes, the incubator can not only demonstrate its value to stakeholders but also refine its strategies to better serve participants and the broader community. Incorporating a robust monitoring and evaluation program will ensure the program is responsive to needs, delivering quality programs and also has data to support rationale for funding the incubator.

## Importance of Monitoring and Evaluation

The incubator project seeks to foster economic growth, empower underrepresented entrepreneurs, and strengthen the local business ecosystem. Monitoring and evaluation provide the tools to:

- ❖ **Measure Success:** Establish clear benchmarks and track progress toward meeting the incubator’s goals.
- ❖ **Enhance Accountability:** Ensure transparency and effective use of resources by reporting outcomes to funders and stakeholders.
- ❖ **Drive Continuous Improvement:** Use data-driven insights to identify what works, address challenges, and refine programming.
- ❖ **Demonstrate Impact:** Showcase the incubator’s role in supporting businesses, creating jobs, and contributing to community development.

## “What metrics do you use for success?”

- ☒ Financial security
- ☒ Being profitable
- ☒ Expanding reach
- ☒ Paying my bills and not stressing about it
- ☒ Owning property or a home in the area
- ☒ Triple bottom line model:
  1. Are you profitable financially?
  2. Do you give back to the community?
  3. And, do you get back to the environment or protect and be a steward of the environment?

Focus group participants  
October 25, 2024

## Success Metrics

The incubator's success will be measured through the following key indicators:

- ❖ **Number of Businesses Supported Annually:** Reflects the scope and reach of the incubator's services.
- ❖ **Percentage of Low-Income, Underrepresented, and Minority-Owned Businesses Assisted:** Highlights the incubator's focus on equity and inclusivity.
- ❖ **Revenue Generated and Jobs Created by Incubator Participants:** Demonstrates immediate economic impact on participants and the community.
- ❖ **Long-Term Outcomes:** Tracks business longevity, sustained revenue growth, and long-term job creation to assess enduring success.

## Data Collection Plan

To ensure robust data collection and analysis, we recommend utilizing the following methods:

- **Quarterly Surveys of Incubator Participants:** Collect timely feedback on program effectiveness, financial performance, and challenges faced by businesses.
- **Regular Reporting on Financial Performance and Community Impact:** Monitor trends in revenue, job creation, and demographic representation.
- **Annual Long-Term Outcomes Survey:** Assess the sustained impact of the incubator on businesses, focusing on longevity, growth, and job creation.

## Participant Feedback to Ensure Value and Relevance

It will be essential for the micro-business incubator to obtain direct feedback from participants to ensure the incubator's services meet their needs and provide tangible value. This feedback loop allows the incubator to refine its offerings and maintain its impact by addressing specific areas of improvement, enhancing services, and validating its contributions to business growth.

By regularly gathering both qualitative and quantitative input, the host organization and other contributors to the micro-business incubator can identify opportunities to improve the effectiveness of workshops, mentorship programs, and resources. Feedback also informs adjustments to programming, such as tailoring training sessions to address emerging challenges, enhancing networking opportunities, or expanding access to capital resources. Monitoring participant satisfaction rates and promptly addressing concerns fosters high levels of engagement and trust, ensuring a positive and meaningful experience

for all participants. Moreover, feedback serves as clear evidence of the incubator's value, demonstrating its role in driving business growth and success.

To facilitate this feedback loop, we recommend implementing several mechanisms:

- ❖ **Regular Focus Groups:** These sessions provide a platform for a diverse group of participants to share their experiences, discuss challenges, and highlight successes in a collaborative setting.
- ❖ **Post-Event Surveys:** Surveys distributed after workshops, events, and mentorship sessions capture immediate impressions and assess the effectiveness of these activities.
- ❖ **Participant Advisory Board:** A dedicated advisory group, composed of current and past participants, offers ongoing insights and recommendations to guide program design and implementation.

Through these efforts, the incubator can ensure that it remains responsive to the evolving needs of its participants, delivering impactful services that directly contribute to their business success. This commitment to feedback-driven improvement underscores the incubator's dedication to empowering entrepreneurs and fostering sustainable community development.

## Reporting Schedule

To maintain transparency and meet stakeholder expectations, the incubator should adhere to a structured reporting schedule. The schedule should include the following:

- ❖ **Progress Updates to Stakeholders:** Provide updates as required in funding agreements, ensuring ongoing accountability and stakeholder engagement.
- ❖ **Annual Report:** Publish a comprehensive report detailing progress, outcomes, and success metrics, showcasing the incubator's impact over the year.

By implementing a strong monitoring and evaluation framework, the micro-business incubator will remain mission-driven, responsive to client needs, and results-oriented. Regularly collected data and transparent reporting will not only strengthen relationships with funders and community partners but also create a foundation for long-term sustainability and growth.

# Economic Impact

A phased approach to developing the combined retail and meeting space model promises to generate significant economic benefits for Snoqualmie Valley and the broader King County region.

## Job Creation and Wages

The project is expected to create approximately three and a half (3.5) Full-Time Equivalent (FTE) positions during its full launch, with positions including Director, Manager, and hourly associates. These new positions are estimated modeled using the King County Nonprofit Wage and Benefit Survey<sup>16</sup> from 2023 budgeting wages at the 50-percentile rate for positions. For the hourly staff, this is \$25.85 per hour while the salaried positions are budgeted between \$67,677 and \$91,790 per year. This ensures that the incubator's jobs are competitive within the local labor market while remaining accessible to a diverse pool of workers. Employees would receive competitive benefits, including healthcare, retirement plan options, and professional development opportunities through the host organization. These benefits reflect the incubator's commitment to creating a supportive and growth-oriented workplace that fosters employee retention and wellbeing. Fringe rates for these benefits are modeled at twenty-five percent (25%) of wages.

The incubator is estimated to support the maintenance of sixty-five (65) full-time jobs, consisting of business owners and their immediate teams. This is modeled at fifteen (15) businesses served in the retail space and fifty (50) businesses participating in pop-ups, workshops and other services. Additionally, with a projected twenty-five percent (25%) of these businesses hiring at least one additional person, the model is expected to create 16.25 full-time equivalent (FTE) jobs, bringing the total employment impact to approximately eighty-one (81.25) FTEs.

## Regional Labor Market Context

King County's three-year average unemployment rate of 4.3% is slightly below Washington State's average of 4.6%, highlighting the need for targeted job creation initiatives. Over the past five years, King County's population has grown by approximately 7%, underscoring the importance of expanding local economic opportunities to match the region's

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<sup>16</sup> <https://www.501commons.org/resources/putting-people-first/2023-nonprofit-wage-benefits-survey-report>

demographic shifts.<sup>17</sup> The creation of 84.75 FTEs represents .007% of the county's labor force of approximately 1.28 million workers. These jobs represent .16% of the estimated 54,571 unemployed workers in King County, directly contributing to local employment and addressing gaps in the job market.

## **Impact and Investment**

The new incubator in the Snoqualmie Valley is poised to become a powerful economic engine, catalyzing growth and prosperity in the region by investing an estimated \$1.9 million in three years into the local economy. This investment will create opportunities for small businesses, provide stable employment for residents, and generate significant tax revenue to support community services.

The incubator will serve as a launchpad for sixty-five (65) local businesses each year, offering them access to resources, mentorship, and space to grow. In conservatively estimating \$10,000 average revenue per business, the incubator is projected to support businesses in generating \$650,000 in annual sales, demonstrating the vital role small enterprises play in the region's economic vitality. The program is designed to not only help businesses thrive but also to create a ripple effect of economic activity across Snoqualmie Valley.

## **Generating Tax Revenue for the Community**

The incubator's economic contributions extend beyond direct business and employment support. The projected \$650,000 in annual sales will yield:

- ❖ \$59,800 in sales tax revenue based on a 9.2% sales tax rate.
- ❖ \$3,061 in Business and Occupation (B&O) tax at a 0.471% rate for retail sales.

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<sup>17</sup> <https://esd.wa.gov/jobs-and-training/labor-market-information/reports-and-research/labor-market-county-profiles/king-county-profile>

# Feasibility and Recommendations

The feasibility study for the micro-business incubator project demonstrates that the initiative is not only viable but has the potential to impact the local community, provided key elements such as funding, stakeholder engagement, and site development are addressed. Through careful planning, robust community input, and a structured approach to implementation, this project can foster economic opportunity and entrepreneurship in the region.

## Feasibility Determination

The project is deemed feasible based on its alignment with community needs and the strong interest shown by local stakeholders, but hinges on the availability of potential seeding funding sources. By leveraging targeted funding and securing a host organization the incubator can provide critical support to small businesses while enhancing the local economic ecosystem.

## Challenges and Risks

While the project has considerable potential, it is not without challenges:

- ❖ **Securing Sufficient Funding:** Adequate funding and runway for implementation is necessary, a strong business case and alignment with regional economic goals will be essential to attract funders.
- ❖ **Ensuring Long-Term Stakeholder Engagement:** Maintaining engagement from key stakeholders, including artisans, local businesses, and community organizations, is critical to sustaining operations and fulfilling the incubator's mission.
- ❖ **Finding a Suitable Host Organization:** Identifying a host organization that is both local and possesses the necessary business development and incubation expertise poses a unique challenge. The organization must not only be committed to supporting the project but also have a proven track record in managing incubator operations and fostering entrepreneurial growth. Potential partners that have business development expertise have been identified but most are not local to the Snoqualmie Valley.

## Recommendations

- ❖ **Secure Seed Funding Through Dedicated Source:** A comprehensive plan should be developed to secure seed funding for multi-year support of the business incubator project.

- ❖ **Find a Qualified Host Organization:** Partner with a local organization that has the necessary business development and incubation expertise. This organization should have a proven track record of supporting entrepreneurs, fostering economic growth and administrative capacity to add staff. The host organization will provide operational support and access to existing networks.
- ❖ **Establish a Robust Business Plan and Partner with a Host Organization:** With seed funding and a host organization in place, the incubator should prioritize finalizing a comprehensive business plan. This plan should outline operational logistics, marketing strategies, and participant engagement efforts. Partnering with a host organization—such as a local nonprofit or business incubator—will ensure administrative support and provide access to existing networks and resources.
- ❖ **Move forward with an incubator model that includes Retail and Meeting Space:** This model is recommended for its ability to provide both economic opportunity and community-building benefits. This model combines retail space for artisans to sell their products with meeting space that fosters networking, mentorship, and business skill development. It addresses immediate economic needs while providing a platform for long-term business growth and community cohesion. The Retail and Meeting space model provides a strategic, cost-efficient solution, serving as a balanced alternative to the more comprehensive and expensive Retail, Meeting Space, Flexible Co-Working, and Business Center model.
- ❖ **Implement Monitoring and Evaluation Systems:** To track the incubator’s impact and ensure continuous improvement, a robust monitoring and evaluation framework should be implemented. Quarterly surveys, annual outcome assessments, and feedback from participants will help refine services and validate the incubator’s value to funders and stakeholders.

By prioritizing seed capital acquisition, identifying a qualified host organization, and fostering community interest, the incubator project will lay a solid foundation for success. Moving forward with the Retail and Meeting Space model offers the greatest potential to meet the project’s objectives. This model balances immediate economic benefits with long-term community development by creating a hub for artisans to sell their products and providing meeting spaces to foster collaboration, mentorship, and skill development for the greater entrepreneurial ecosystem.

Through strategic planning, strong partnerships, and sustained community engagement, the incubator can become a vital resource for empowering underrepresented entrepreneurs, creating jobs, and revitalizing the local economy. This initiative represents an opportunity to build a vibrant, inclusive, and sustainable business environment that supports the entire community.



# Snoqualmie Valley Small Business and Community Survey

\* Indicates required question



**Thank you for shaping the future of small business support in the Valley by filling out this survey!**

The organization, A Supportive Community For All, is researching the feasibility of a small business incubator center in Carnation or another Snoqualmie Valley location with funding from the City of Carnation through a grant from the Community Economic Revitalization Board (CERB). Your answers to this survey will provide important information on business needs and will identify priorities for this incubator plan. If you have any questions or would like alternative formats or an additional language of this survey, please contact Malia Pownall at [malia@asupportivecommunityforall.org](mailto:malia@asupportivecommunityforall.org) or (425) 326-8437.

Estimated time to complete this survey is 4 to 9 minutes. Please click Submit at the end of the survey. If you complete the survey, you can choose to enter a drawing for a \$50 VISA gift card (one entry will be randomly selected from all participants who opt in to the drawing). Your privacy is a priority. If you chose to provide any contact information, it will not be shared, sold, rented or traded.

*Snoqualmie Valley includes incorporated or unincorporated communities from Duvall to North Bend including Duvall, Carnation, Fall City, Preston, Snoqualmie, and North Bend.*

*A business incubator helps early-stage businesses and entrepreneurs develop their companies by providing resources and services. These resources can include workspace, a marketplace with shared vending spaces, training, networking opportunities, production space or shared administrative services.*

1. Are you a: \*

*Mark only one oval.*

- ☐ Business owner with business based in Snoqualmie Valley      *Skip to question 2*
- ☐ Business owner with business based outside of Snoqualmie Valley and a resident of Snoqualmie Valley  
*Skip to question 2*
- ☐ Not a business owner but interested in starting a business in Snoqualmie Valley      *Skip to question 31*
- ☐ Resident of Snoqualmie Valley and not a business owner      *Skip to question 51*
- ☐ None of the above      *Skip to question 51*

## Business Owner Questions - Business Incubator Feasibility Survey

2. Your Name (First and Last): \*

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3. Business Name: \*

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4. What is the primary type of business you operate? \*

*Mark only one oval.*

- ☐ Agriculture and Farming
- ☐ Crafts and Artisan Goods
- ☐ Design (graphic, fashion, interior)
- ☐ Education and Training
- ☐ Entertainment and Recreation
- ☐ Food and Beverage
- ☐ Health and Wellness
- ☐ Manufacturing and Production
- ☐ Media and Film
- ☐ Nonprofit and Community Services
- ☐ Performing Arts (theater, music, dance)
- ☐ Personal Services
- ☐ Professional Services
- ☐ Retail and E-commerce
- ☐ Technology and Innovation
- ☐ Visual Arts (painting, sculpture)
- ☐ Writing and Publishing
- ☐ Other

5. If you selected "Other" please specify:

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## 6. Business entity type \*

Mark only one oval.

- ☐ Sole Proprietorship
- ☐ Partnership
- ☐ LLC
- ☐ C-Corp
- ☐ S-Corp
- ☐ Cooperative
- ☐ Nonprofit
- ☐ I don't know
- ☐ I don't have a formal business structure
- ☐ Other

## 7. If you selected "Other" please specify:

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## 8. Where is your primary physical business location, if online where does your business operate out of? \*

Mark only one oval.

- ☐ Duvall
- ☐ Carnation
- ☐ Fall City
- ☐ Preston
- ☐ Snoqualmie
- ☐ North Bend
- ☐ Other

## 9. If you selected "Other" please specify:

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10. Is the primary business location a: \*

*Mark only one oval.*

- ☐ Farm or Agricultural Land
- ☐ Retail Storefront or Restaurant (including coffee shop, bar)
- ☐ Retail Pop-up, Booth or Kiosk
- ☐ Office space
- ☐ Industrial location (including manufacturing space or warehouse)
- ☐ Studio
- ☐ Home based
- ☐ Other or more than one

11. If you selected "Other or more than one" please specify:

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12. Is your business primarily online? \*

*Mark only one oval.*

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No
- ☐ Other: 

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13. Is your business (optional - select all that apply):

*Check all that apply.*

- ☐ Female owned?
- ☐ Veteran owned?
- ☐ Minority owned?
- ☐ LGBTQIA+ owned?
- ☐ Affiliated with a tribe?
- ☐ None of the above
- ☐ Other: 

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14. What year did your business begin operating? \*

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15. How many employees do you have? (not including yourself)

*Mark only one oval.*

- ☐ No paid employees
- ☐ 1-4
- ☐ 5-9
- ☐ 10-19
- ☐ 20-49
- ☐ More than 50

16. Do you have employees that fall into each of the following categories?

*Check all that apply.*

- ☐ Seasonal
- ☐ Part-Time

17. What services or support have been most helpful to your business growth in the past? (Select all that apply) \*

*Check all that apply.*

- ☐ Self-study
- ☐ Networking
- ☐ Mentorship and/or coaching
- ☐ Workshops and/or classes
- ☐ Securing funding and/or grants
- ☐ Marketing and/or branding support
- ☐ Access to affordable workspace
- ☐ Legal and/or accounting services
- ☐ Production, makerspace or manufacturing space
- ☐ Market access (retail/wholesale)
- ☐ Event and/or practice space
- ☐ None
- ☐ Other: \_\_\_\_\_

## 18. What are the main challenges your business is facing? (Select all that apply) \*

*Check all that apply.*

- ☐ Access to funding/capital
- ☐ Marketing and visibility
- ☐ Finding and retaining employees
- ☐ Affordable workspace
- ☐ Networking opportunities
- ☐ Business planning and strategy
- ☐ Technology and equipment
- ☐ Legal and regulatory compliance
- ☐ Access to production and manufacturing space
- ☐ Access to markets (retail/wholesale)
- ☐ Access to storage or warehousing
- ☐ Other: \_\_\_\_\_

## 19. What are your pressing needs as a business owner in the next 2 years? (Select all that apply) \*

*Check all that apply.*

- ☐ Expansion of business operations
- ☐ Increasing revenue and/or increasing profitability
- ☐ Hiring, training and retaining employees
- ☐ Enhancing marketing efforts
- ☐ Accessing new markets (retail/wholesale)
- ☐ Developing new products/services
- ☐ Upgrading technology/equipment
- ☐ Securing additional funding
- ☐ Finding new or larger production/manufacturing space
- ☐ Other: \_\_\_\_\_

## 20. Would you be interested in joining a business incubator in the Snoqualmie Valley area? \*

A business incubator helps early-stage businesses and entrepreneurs develop their companies by providing resources and services. These resources can include workspace, a marketplace with shared vending spaces, training, networking opportunities, production space or shared administrative services.

*Mark only one oval.*

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No
- ☐ Maybe

## 21. What services would be most beneficial to you in a business incubator? (Select all that apply) \*

*Check all that apply.*

- ☐ Office or studio space
- ☐ Physical location to sell products or display products year-round and full time
- ☐ Physical location to sell products or display products seasonally
- ☐ Physical location to sell products or display products year-round but part time
- ☐ Physical location to sell products with other vendors
- ☐ Gallery space
- ☐ Event space
- ☐ Business mentoring and coaching
- ☐ Networking events
- ☐ Collaborative workspaces
- ☐ Shared commercial kitchen
- ☐ Cold food or beverage storage
- ☐ Access to funding/grants
- ☐ Shared resources (e.g., high-speed internet, printing services)
- ☐ Professional services such as legal, marketing and accounting services
- ☐ Equipment rental
- ☐ Workshops and training (e.g., digital marketing, business planning)
- ☐ Production and manufacturing space
- ☐ Access to retail and wholesale markets
- ☐ Marketing identity for valley-based businesses
- ☐ None
- ☐ Other: \_\_\_\_\_

22. How important are the following spaces in a business incubator? (Rate on a scale of 1-5, 1 being NOT important and 5 being VERY important)

Mark only one oval per row.

	1 not important	2	3 neutral	4	5 very important
<b>Studio space</b>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<b>Office space</b>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<b>Shared retail space</b>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<b>Own retail space</b>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<b>Art gallery or exhibit space</b>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<b>Production and manufacturing space</b>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<b>Storage</b>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<b>Cold food or beverage storage</b>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<b>Loading Dock</b>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>



23. How important are the following shared spaces in a business incubator? (Rate on a scale of 1-5, 1 being NOT important and 5 being VERY important)

Mark only one oval per row.

	1 not important	2	3 neutral	4	5 very important
<b>Shared front desk, reception area</b>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<b>Shared office equipment (printer and office supplies)</b>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<b>Shared small meeting space (seating up to 4 people)</b>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<b>Shared medium meeting space (seating up to 10 people)</b>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<b>Shared large meeting space (seating up to 25 people)</b>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<b>Shared shipping and postage meter</b>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

24. How important are the following features in a business incubator? (Rate on a scale of 1-5, 1 being NOT important and 5 being VERY important)

Mark only one oval per row.

	1 not important	2	3 neutral	4	5 very important
<b>High-speed internet</b>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<b>Central location</b>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<b>Vehicle parking</b>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<b>Bike parking</b>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<b>Proximity to other similar businesses</b>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<b>Access to public transportation</b>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<b>Proximity to childcare services</b>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<b>Pet-friendly building</b>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

25. What additional features or services would you like to see in a business incubator?

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26. What would be your preferred location for a business incubator in the Snoqualmie Valley area? (Select all that apply)

*Check all that apply.*

- ☐ Carnation  
☐ Duvall  
☐ Fall City  
☐ Preston  
☐ Snoqualmie  
☐ North Bend  
☐ Other: \_\_\_\_\_

27. Do you have any other comments or suggestions regarding the establishment of a business incubator in the Snoqualmie Valley area?

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28. Do you live in the Snoqualmie Valley (includes incorporated or unincorporated communities from Duvall to North Bend including Duvall, Carnation, Fall City, Preston, Snoqualmie, and North Bend)? \*

*Mark only one oval.*

- ☐ Yes  
☐ No

29. Please provide your email below if you would like to stay informed about this feasibility study of a small business incubator:

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30. Please provide your email below if you would like to be entered into a drawing for \$50 VISA gift card for completing this survey. One person will be randomly selected from all entries from this survey. Your survey responses will not be linked back to your personal information.

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Please click "Submit" to ensure your responses are recorded! Thank you!

Survey for those interested in starting a business in Snoqualmie Valley

31. Your Name (First and Last): \*

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32. What is the primary type of business do you plan to operate? \*

*Mark only one oval.*

- ☐ Agriculture and Farming
- ☐ Crafts and Artisan Goods
- ☐ Design (graphic, fashion, interior)
- ☐ Education and Training
- ☐ Entertainment and Recreation
- ☐ Food and Beverage
- ☐ Health and Wellness
- ☐ Manufacturing and Production
- ☐ Media and Film
- ☐ Nonprofit and Community Services
- ☐ Performing Arts (theater, music, dance)
- ☐ Personal Services
- ☐ Professional Services
- ☐ Retail and E-commerce
- ☐ Technology and Innovation
- ☐ Visual Arts (painting, sculpture)
- ☐ Writing and Publishing
- ☐ Other

33. If you selected "Other" please specify:

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34. Where do you anticipate your primary physical business location, if online where does your business operate out of? \*

*Mark only one oval.*

- ☐ Carnation
- ☐ Duvall
- ☐ Fall City
- ☐ Preston
- ☐ Snoqualmie
- ☐ North Bend
- ☐ Other

35. If you selected "Other or more than one" please specify:

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36. Is your business (optional - select all that apply):

*Check all that apply.*

- ☐ Female owned?
- ☐ Veteran owned?
- ☐ Minority owned?
- ☐ LGBTQIA+ owned?
- ☐ Affiliated with a tribe?
- ☐ Other identity representation? (please specify):
- ☐ None of the above

37. What services or support have you used to plan your business? (select all that apply) \*

*Check all that apply.*

- ☐ Self-study
- ☐ Networking
- ☐ Mentorship and/or coaching
- ☐ Workshops and/or classes
- ☐ Securing funding and/or grants
- ☐ Marketing and/or branding support
- ☐ Access to affordable workspace
- ☐ Legal and/or accounting services
- ☐ Production, makerspace or manufacturing space
- ☐ Market access (retail/wholesale)
- ☐ Event and/or practice space
- ☐ None
- ☐ Other: \_\_\_\_\_

38. What are your pressing needs as a business owner in the next 2 years? (Select all that apply) \*

*Check all that apply.*

- ☐ Expansion of business operations
- ☐ Increasing revenue and/or increasing profitability
- ☐ Hiring, training and retaining employees
- ☐ Enhancing marketing efforts
- ☐ Accessing new markets (retail/wholesale)
- ☐ Developing new products/services
- ☐ Upgrading technology/equipment
- ☐ Securing additional funding
- ☐ Finding new or larger production/manufacturing space
- ☐ Other: \_\_\_\_\_

39. Would you be interested in joining a business incubator in the Snoqualmie Valley area?

*A business incubator helps early-stage businesses and entrepreneurs develop their companies by providing resources and services. These resources can include workspace, a marketplace with shared vending spaces, training, networking opportunities, production space or shared administrative services.*

*Mark only one oval.*

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No
- ☐ Maybe

40. What services would be most beneficial to you in a business incubator? (Select all that apply) ★

*Check all that apply.*

- ☐ Office or studio space
- ☐ Physical location to sell products or display products year-round and full time
- ☐ Physical location to sell products or display products seasonally
- ☐ Physical location to sell products or display products year-round but part time
- ☐ Physical location to sell products with other vendors
- ☐ Gallery space
- ☐ Event space
- ☐ Business mentoring and coaching
- ☐ Networking events
- ☐ Collaborative workspaces
- ☐ Shared commercial kitchen
- ☐ Cold food or beverage storage
- ☐ Access to funding/grants
- ☐ Shared resources (e.g., high-speed internet, printing services)
- ☐ Professional services such as legal, marketing and accounting services
- ☐ Equipment rental
- ☐ Workshops and training (e.g., digital marketing, business planning)
- ☐ Production and manufacturing space
- ☐ Access to retail and wholesale markets
- ☐ Marketing identity for valley-based businesses
- ☐ None
- ☐ Other: \_\_\_\_\_

41. How important are the following spaces in a business incubator? (Rate on a scale of 1-5, 1 being NOT very important and 5 being VERY important)

Mark only one oval per row.

	1 not very important	2	3 neutral	4	5 very important
<b>Studio space</b>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<b>Office space</b>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<b>Shared retail space</b>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<b>Own retail space</b>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<b>Art gallery or exhibit space</b>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<b>Production and manufacturing space</b>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<b>Storage</b>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<b>Cold food or beverage storage</b>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<b>Loading Dock</b>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

42. How important are the following shared spaces in a business incubator? (Rate on a scale of 1-5, 1 being NOT important and 5 being VERY important)

Mark only one oval per row.

	1 not important	2	3 neutral	4	5 very important
<b>Shared front desk, reception area</b>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<b>Shared office equipment (printer and office supplies)</b>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<b>Shared small meeting space (seating up to 4 people)</b>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<b>Shared medium meeting space (seating up to 10 people)</b>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<b>Shared large meeting space (seating up to 25 people)</b>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<b>Shared shipping and postage meter</b>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>



43. How important are the following features in a business incubator? (Rate on a scale of 1-5, 1 being NOT important and 5 being VERY important)

Mark only one oval per row.

	1 not important	2	3 neutral	4	5 very important
<b>High-speed internet</b>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<b>Central location</b>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<b>Vehicle parking</b>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<b>Bike parking</b>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<b>Proximity to other similar businesses</b>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<b>Access to public transportation</b>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<b>Proximity to childcare services</b>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<b>Pet-friendly building</b>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

44. What additional features or services would you like to see in a business incubator?

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45. What would be your preferred location for the business incubator in the Snoqualmie Valley area? \*

*Mark only one oval.*

- ☐ Carnation
- ☐ Duvall
- ☐ Fall City
- ☐ Preston
- ☐ Snoqualmie
- ☐ North Bend
- ☐ Other

46. If you selected "Other" please specify:

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47. Do you have any other comments or suggestions regarding the establishment of a business incubator in the Snoqualmie Valley area?

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48. Do you live in the Snoqualmie Valley (includes incorporated or unincorporated communities from Duvall to North Bend including Duvall, Carnation, Fall City, Preston, Snoqualmie, and North Bend)? \*

*Mark only one oval.*

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

49. Please provide your email below if you would like to stay informed about this feasibility study of a small business incubator:

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50. Please provide your email below if you would like to be entered into a drawing for \$50 VISA gift card for completing this survey. One person will be randomly selected from all entries from this survey. Your survey responses will not be linked back to your personal information.

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Please click "Submit" to ensure your responses are recorded! Thank you!

Resident of Snoqualmie Valley (includes incorporated or unincorporated communities from Duvall to North Bend including Duvall, Carnation, Fall City, Preston, Snoqualmie, and North Bend)

51. Your Name (First and Last): \*

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52. Age Group: \*

*Mark only one oval.*

☐ Under 18

☐ 18-24

☐ 25-34

☐ 35-44

☐ 45-54

☐ 55-64

☐ 65+

53. Where is your primary residence? \*

*Mark only one oval.*

☐ Duvall

☐ Carnation

☐ Fall City

☐ Preston

☐ Snoqualmie

☐ North Bend

☐ Other:

54. If you selected "Other" please specify: \*

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55. How often do you shop at locally owned businesses in the Snoqualmie Valley? \*

Mark only one oval.

- ☐ Daily
- ☐ Weekly
- ☐ Monthly
- ☐ Occasionally (2-11 months a year)
- ☐ Rarely (once a year)

56. What types of local businesses do you frequently support? (Select all that apply) \*

Check all that apply.

- ☐ Farmers' markets
- ☐ Gift, jewelry and artisan shops
- ☐ Local restaurants, breweries, wineries, cafes and coffee shops
- ☐ Bookstores
- ☐ Art galleries
- ☐ Music venues, entertainment, performing arts
- ☐ Clothing, apparel and accessory stores
- ☐ Specialty food stores (bakeries, cheese shops)
- ☐ Wellness and beauty services (spas, gyms, salons)
- ☐ Native or traditionally produced goods
- ☐ Professional services (legal, accounting)
- ☐ None
- ☐ Other: \_\_\_\_\_

57. What motivates you to shop at local businesses? (Select all that apply) \*

Check all that apply.

- ☐ Supporting the local economy
- ☐ Unique and/or high-quality products
- ☐ Personalized customer service
- ☐ Community connection
- ☐ Convenience
- ☐ Environmental sustainability
- ☐ Not applicable or none of the above
- ☐ Other: \_\_\_\_\_

58. How likely would you visit a Snoqualmie Valley business incubator market that features local businesses? \*

Mark only one oval.

	1	2	3	4	5	
Very	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Very Likely

59. What types of products and service would you be interested in purchasing at a Snoqualmie Valley business incubator market that features local businesses? (Select all that apply) \*

Check all that apply.

- ☐ Handmade crafts and artisan goods
- ☐ Local artwork
- ☐ Jewelry and accessories
- ☐ Home decor items
- ☐ Albums or apparel by local musicians or artists that perform at local music venues
- ☐ Locally produced food and beverages
- ☐ Clothing and textiles
- ☐ Books and stationery
- ☐ Health and wellness products
- ☐ Health and wellness services
- ☐ Not applicable or not interested
- ☐ Professional Service (legal, accounting)
- ☐ Other: \_\_\_\_\_

60. What additional features would make you more likely to visit and shop at a business incubator or market? (Select all that apply) \*

Check all that apply.

- ☐ Events and workshops
- ☐ Live demonstrations and performances
- ☐ Food and drink vendors
- ☐ Child-friendly activities
- ☐ Community gatherings and social spaces
- ☐ Seasonal or holiday-themed markets
- ☐ Loyalty programs and discounts
- ☐ Not applicable or not more likely with any features
- ☐ Other: \_\_\_\_\_

61. What locally produced goods do you wish were more available in the Snoqualmie Valley? (Select all that apply)

*Check all that apply.*

- ☐ Fresh produce and groceries
- ☐ Dairy and meat products
- ☐ Baked goods and confections
- ☐ Handcrafted home goods
- ☐ Personal care and wellness items
- ☐ Art and cultural items
- ☐ Clothing and fashion accessories
- ☐ Specialty food and beverages (jams, sauces, kombucha)
- ☐ None of the above
- ☐ Other: \_\_\_\_\_

62. How important is it to you to have access to locally produced goods?

*Mark only one oval.*

1   2   3   4   5  
 Not ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ Very Important

63. Please provide your email below if you would like to stay informed about this feasibility study of a small business incubator:

\_\_\_\_\_

64. Please provide your email below if you would like to be entered into a drawing for \$50 VISA gift card for completing this survey. One person will be randomly selected from all entries from this survey. Your survey responses will not be linked back to your personal information.

\_\_\_\_\_

Please click "Submit" to ensure your responses are recorded! Thank you!

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