

Frequently Asked Questions About SCORE

What is SCORE?

SCORE, America's premier source of free and confidential small business advice for entrepreneurs and small businesses, is a nonprofit association with over 300 SCORE offices across the country offering free business mentoring and low-cost workshops.

For 50 years, SCORE's more than 11,000 working and retired business professionals have volunteered to support the success of small business nationwide. SCORE business mentoring is free and confidential.

SCORE is a resource partner with the U.S. Small Business Administration (SBA).

What kind of mentoring does SCORE provide?

SCORE's experienced business mentors provide general business advice on every aspect of business planning, start-up, management and growth. SCORE provides both in-person and online mentoring to entrepreneurs just getting started or in need of a seasoned pro as a sounding board for their existing businesses.

Does SCORE offer services other than business mentoring?

Yes. SCORE chapters provide business workshops and seminars on topics customized to the needs of the local business community. In all communities, SCORE offices advocate the need for business planning and offer an introduction to the fundamentals of a business plan.

For established businesses, SCORE offers in-depth training on topics such as customer service, hiring practices, using the Internet for business, marketing, home-based business operations and many other issues.

What qualifies SCORE volunteers to give business advice?

The key qualification SCORE mentors bring is real-world business experience. They are working and retired business owners, executives and managers who have been through the same challenges and decisions that many entrepreneurs are facing today. In addition, SCORE business mentors offer valuable expertise in specific industries. All SCORE volunteers receive specialized training offered by the association.

Are business secrets safe with SCORE?

Yes. All SCORE mentors honor the client's right to proprietary and confidential information. All discussions and documents remain confidential. Each year, SCORE mentors reaffirm their commitment to protecting the privacy of client information by signing the association's code of ethics.

What resources are available on SCORE.org?

Since 1997, SCORE has offered a leading online business resource for entrepreneurs – www.score.org. This site is a comprehensive small business resource that includes SCORE's 24/7 email mentoring service. Entrepreneurs can use email mentoring available at www.score.org/mentors to search a database of hundreds of SCORE online mentors with a combined knowledge of more than 600 business backgrounds.

SCORE's website also offers "how-to" guides, small business quizzes, online workshops, LIVE Webinars, and the SCORE Small Business Blog with info on current trends in entrepreneurship.

How can I contact SCORE for business assistance?

1. Visit www.score.org and enter your ZIP code in the "Get Free Business Advice Near You" search field to find the nearest SCORE offices.
2. Visit www.score.org and click "Mentoring" to search for a mentor by specialty that can provide online advice.
3. Call 1-800-634-0245 and ask for the phone number of your nearest SCORE office.
4. Email webmaster@score.org with your location or ZIP code, and SCORE will reply with local contact information.

Whether connecting with a mentor online or face-to-face in one of our chapters, simply provide information on your business question, and our mentors will work with you to get the answers you need. You can meet with a mentor as few or as many times as needed to solve your business challenges – and mentoring is always free.

How does one become a SCORE Mentor?

If interested in becoming one of our volunteer business mentors, visit www.score.org/volunteer and complete an application. Your application will be sent to the local SCORE leader for review. The SCORE leader will contact you for an interview and if volunteering seems a good fit for you and SCORE, you'll be asked to complete our training and onboarding process. This process includes a 3-month probationary period where you'll complete 2-3 online training modules, review and agree to our standard operating manual and code of ethics, shadow experienced mentors, and participate in team mentoring.

In addition to mentoring, there are other roles for which you may volunteer, including workshop facilitator, community outreach, marketing and administrative roles. Each role requires an application, onboarding & training, and code of ethics agreement. Contact services@score.org for more information.