

YOUR GAZETTENET SUBSCRIPTION

[Login/Subscribe](#) : [Account Center](#) : [Forgot/change password](#) : [Problems](#) : [FAQs](#) : [Log Out](#) / [What's Free on GazetteNET?](#)

gazettenet
DAILY HAMPSHIRE
GAZETTE



Business by the bootstraps Would-be entrepreneurs chase their commercial dreams, with a little help from the Valley CDC

BY SANAM GHAI

 EMAIL THIS WRITEP

He used to play at the CBGBs club in Manhattan. He came up with his own album in 2005 called 'Sneaking Into My Dreams.' He has his own band in Northampton. David Weidenfeld, school adjustment counselor and musician, is a man with many interests.

And he was one of about 25 people who attended a recent series of business development workshops this summer sponsored by the Valley Community Development Corp., at the Easthampton Fire and Safety Complex. All were looking for ways to turn interests into economic reality.

Titled 'Business Dream,' the workshops were devoted to business planning and business plan development.

In the last two years, the Valley CDC conducted one-on-one technical assistance counseling for more than 200 clients from Northampton, Easthampton, Hadley and Amherst, says Gene Talsky, director of small business development at the Valley CDC.

Stacy Kontrabecki, coordinator of development at the Valley CDC, said she and Talsky developed the courses from their experience working with individual businesses. 'With 200 micro-business clients who have come to us for help in the past two years for counseling, Gene and I see the gaps in many entrepreneurs' skills and we are trying to close that gap with hands-on learning,' she says.

All small business development efforts are directed to help low- and moderate-income entrepreneurs start new businesses and to help existing small businesses to survive and prosper, creating new jobs and retaining existing ones. The funding for the courses is provided by community development block grants from the cities of Northampton and Easthampton. Help also comes from Massachusetts Small Business Technical Assistance grants and donations from financial institutions, businesses, individuals and other organizations.

Taught by Howard Bronstein, president of ODT Inc., an Amherst-based publisher, the workshop series was designed to help participants explore the market potential of their proposed venture - and identify their next steps.

On this page today, we profile three participants.