Jason Nitschke
Regional Director
Nathan Reiff
Business Advisor/COVID Specialist
Rich Gannon
Rural Business Advisor
Tyler Menzales
Business Advisor

Great Falls Regional SBDC

Spark Architecture

Great Falls, MT



"Before engaging with SBDC I had almost run the firm into bankruptcy, missing some of the most basic points of operating a firm. Architectural education and project experience as an employee had not prepared me for what it takes to run a firm. SBDC assistance helped me dig the firm out of major debt. This year we were able to get out of debt, and are ready to grow as a Public Benefit Corporation."
Sophia Sparklin, *Owner*

Sophia Sparklin has over fifteen years' experience in the field of architecture and has seen how others in her field have struggled with a pervasive burn-out culture. Sophia opened Spark Architecture in 2012 with the drive to maintain a healthy team that provides clients with better designs and finished buildings. Like many business owners, Sophia was excellent at providing architecture services but she needed assistance with overall financial management to sustain operations. Sophia initially turned to the Great Falls SBDC to participate in Profit Mastery to improve her financial literacy. By understanding cash flow, Sophia was able to better plan her sales and marketing strategy, manage her pipeline, manage receivables, more efficiently staff her business, plan for growth, and ultimately take more officer compensation home.

Sophia has participated in seven Great Falls SBDC training events since 2017 and has received 200 hours of counseling in 10 areas of assistance. The primary categories of assistance are in leadership, management, strategic planning, cash flow management, budgeting, marketing, sales, and social media. During the last five years of consistent engagement with the Great Falls SBDC, Sophia has attracted or invested $54k into her business in addition to $20k in COVID-19 stimulus funding.

Great Falls SBDC's services have supported Spark Architecture's creation and retention of five jobs. As a direct result of Spark becoming more financially viable over the last few years, they were able to directly contribute to organizations such as The Great Falls Library Foundation, Great Falls Development Authority, and Neighborworks Montana. They were also able to grow their local team, creating new jobs in Great Falls and moving the firm to downtown.