Yarn and Honey

Carrie Jensen was raised in an entrepreneurial household, with board meetings often taking place around the family dining table. Inspired by that environment, she pursued an accounting degree and spent years working for others before realizing she wanted to carve her own path. When the local yarn shop — where she had been a loyal patron since her teenage years — went up for sale, Jense n saw an opportunity to blend her lifelong passion for fiber arts and her professional expertise. Drawing on experience from her accounting career and her enthusiasm for knitting, she decided to take the leap into business ownership.

At the outset, Jensen sought guidance from the Montana Small Business Development Center to navigate the often-challenging process of purchasing a shop. The SBDC also helped her access vital resources like brownfield and lending programs. Jensen also partnered with the Great Falls Development Alliance team, benefiting from their constructive feedback on her website and moving her business closer to economic success. The SBDC invited her to join the downtown business cohort — a network of fellow business owners — which quickly became a source of support, ideas and actionable insights for running her shop.

Guided by the expertise at the SBDC, Jensen successfully secured $220,000 in State Small Business Credit Initiative funding along with another $220,000 from bank financing. These funds allowed her to make significant improvements to her building and expand her operations. More than just a business owner, Jensen has become a community connector in Great Falls. She sources products from a variety of vendors, thereby supporting other small entrepreneurs, and she regularly hosts OpenTable events where community members can gather, knit and connect. Her collaboration with other businesses for events like Local Yarn Day has increased foot traffic downtown while fostering a spirit of partnership among local entrepreneurs.

Regional Director Deb McGregor stated, “Carrie shows real care for her community. Her collaboration with local business owners and vendors brings them together and not only makes her business successful, but her community, too!”

ECONOMIC IMPACT

- **Business Start**
- **Secured $220,000 in SSBCI Funding**
- **$220,000 Additional Financing**

Great Falls DEVELOPMENT ALLIANCE
MONTANA
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT CDFI

Deb McGregor
Regional Director

Rich Gannon
Business Advisor

Christian Nichols
Business Advisor



“When I was first purchasing the business and going through the purchasing process, the Small Business Development Center helped me navigate the intricacies of purchasing the business. I also participated in one of the cohorts the Great Falls SBDC provided, which gave me a stronger sense of community and connection to Great Falls.”

Carrie Jensen, owner of **Yarn and Honey**