

MOVING FORWARD TOGETHER—A BRIEF HISTORY AND TIMELINE OF OMEN



**Ideas and Organizing
1997**

A group of small business service providers attends Nebraska AEO Microenterprise conference

Recognizing the need to cooperatively tackle issues of funding, training, messaging and scale, the group agreed to pursue formalizing their efforts into an organization, the Oregon Microenterprise Network



**Humble Beginnings
1998**

OMEN receives its 501(c)(3) status from IRS and is incorporated as an Oregon-based nonprofit organization

OMEN becomes member of AEO and is one of several State Microenterprise Associations (SMA) including Nebraska, Maine, California and Georgia.

The organization is managed by a six-person volunteer Board of Directors. Most operations are headquartered out of the Eugene residence of a Board member, Bill Goldsmith.



**Gaining Momentum
1999**

Statewide VISTA program gains support from Oregon state office, OMEN begins to provide VISTA full-time volunteers to its membership

Organizational website is launched, member guide & directory are produced, and first Annual Meeting of the OMEN membership is held.



**Solidifying Support
2000**

The organization receives first three-year grant from Meyer Memorial Trust, solidifying the organization's mission and capacity to serve Oregon's minority-owned, women-owned and emerging small businesses throughout the state.

OMEN hires first Executive Director, Bill Goldsmith



**Legislative Success
2001**

Passage of Microenterprise Act in 2001 Legislative Session codifies OMEN and microenterprise development as legitimate, effective economic development strategy

Organization's membership grows to over 40 members

Funding sources for the organization begin to diversify, partnerships with financial institutions, foundations and local governments increases



**Expansion and Diversification
2002**

OMEN receives SBA PRIME funds, and matches the grant with State Lottery OECD economic development funds, re-granting the funds to ten (10) organizational members. OMEN is now a State Microenterprise Intermediary (SMI) and State Microenterprise Association (SMA).

The organization launches a state-wide web-based data collection system that allows OMEN to report on service delivery outcomes statewide.

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**In the Trenches
2003**

OMEN holds practitioner trainings for members to share best practices, strategize and network; publishes second Membership Guide & Directory

VISTA Asset Building Corps grows to 10-15 VISTA volunteers annually

Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) funds are utilized by OMEN members in partnership with OECD and local governments

**Growing Pains
2004**

The OMEN moves office from its Eugene residential headquarters of Bill Goldsmith's home to co-locate with the Association of Oregon Community Development Organizations (AOCDO)

Bill Goldsmith retires from OMEN, and Valerie Plummer is hired as Program Manager

OMEN partners with City of Portland Bureau of Housing and Community Development on its Economic Opportunity Initiative

**New Era of Visibility and Performance
2005**

AEO Conference: Over 700 small business practitioners attend national conference held in Portland, OMEN is local host

The OMEN Board of Directors develops a three-year strategic plan and begins its execution; Valerie Plummer hired as Executive Director

OMEN partners with Rural Development Initiatives in *Connecting Oregon for Rural Entrepreneurship* (CORE) with \$2 million grant from W.K. Kellogg

**Growth and Next Steps
2006**

Membership grows to over 70 members

OMEN launches *MarketLink Access* to Markets service for entrepreneurs statewide

Statewide VISTA program continues to be key resource for Asset Building organizations throughout Oregon

In partnership with Aspen Institute, brings MicroTest outcomes evaluation to Oregon

**Executing and Expanding Our Horizons
2007**

OMEN launches *CapitalLink* loan fund in partnership with Meyer Memorial Trust and US Bank – links rural small business service providers to centralized capital access

Individual Development Account (IDA) project launched in partnership with rural OMEN members and CASA of Oregon

OMEN spearheads development of small business legislation during 2007 Legislative Session; hosts Rural Oregon Day in conjunction with several partners

**Stability and Weathering the Storm
2008**

OMEN has a 5-person team and improved capacity

The OMEN Board of Directors adopt a 2009-2011 three-year Strategic Plan

Valerie Plummer elected to national AEO Board of Directors

OMEN hosts *Northwest Summit on Entrepreneurship* in partnership with Washington State Microenterprise Association (WSMA)

**Sky's the Limit!
2009 and Beyond**

OMEN will participate in a collaborative legislative effort in the 2009 session

The organization develops a branding campaign for the field in partnership with its membership

OMEN's Board and staff begin its execution of the 2009-2011 Strategic Plan