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## **SKED Launches Training Program at OFN Conference**

### *Be Boss Online Helps Region's Entrepreneurs: Own Their Digital Presence*

SOMERSET, KY – Whether you operate your business from a building on the corner of Main and Second streets or your kitchen table, an effective social media presence can make or break it. In today's global economy, it's important to: own your digital presence.

That's the idea behind Southeast Kentucky Economic Development Corporation (SKED's) small business social media training course: Be Boss Online, formerly called SMARTS 2.0. SKED rolled out Be Boss Online (BBO) at the Opportunity Finance Network Conference in Chicago, Ill. in October.



BBO was developed by SKED Small Business Training Director Amanda Kelly and Small Business Training Specialist Kyle Smith. Kelly and Smith had been teaching this 12-hour digital marketing course SMARTS 2.0, a follow-up to SKED's highly successful entrepreneurship training program called: Entrepreneurial SMARTS, for a year when staff came to the conclusion the program was marketable to other organizations like SKED and U.S. Department of the Treasury Community Development Financial Institutions (CDFIs).

She describes BBO as: An always current, turn-key digital marketing curriculum that allows you to help clients grow their bottom line by owning their presence on the internet. "Our simple, innovative and comprehensive curriculum will help business owners feel as confident about using the internet and social media as marketing tools as they are about managing their business — and will position CDFIs as the leader in this expertise," Kelly explains.

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During the 12-hour training, clients master: Google business search and services, Google and Facebook advertising, building a simple website, understanding analytics and using social media.

The BBO curriculum is customizable and includes four courses, each three hours long, packed with valuable digital marketing how-to information that will produce results for small businesses. But clients are not limited to that lineup: The curriculum modules can be separated into one-hour lunch-and-learn sessions, or even two-hour specialty courses on social media. It's completely customizable to meet each client's needs.

The BBO curriculum has already been sold to a number of CDFIs across the country, but the valuable training continues to be taught to small business owners right here in Southeast Kentucky, as well.

Kelly says the program was designed to assist entrepreneurs and small business owners in the hills and "hollers" of Southeast Kentucky market their products and services, without having to leave their hometowns. The fact that it can be utilized by organizations and businesses across the country is simply a bonus.

"Our mission compels us to develop and design training programs that would best benefit the men and women living out their small business dreams here at home in Southeast Kentucky," she said. "We design our training programs with their best interest and needs in mind. Building our economy here at home: locally, regionally and globally, is our paramount focus, but why not help other CDFIs teach their clients as well?"

"We want them to operate on the same "playing field" as businesses across the country. Be Boss Online has the potential to give our small business owners the same growth potential as others in more populated areas, because we're teaching them the tools to market their products and services in ways they once could only dream of."

SKED Executive Director Brett Traver calls BBO a natural evolution of the training that SKED is proud have developed and now manage and market across the country.

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“Through the years, SKED has become a trusted resource for business owners across the region,” he said. “Be Boss Online is an extension of our mission. Now we want to give other CDFIs a tool and the knowledge to directly impact their clients, just like we have.”

For more information about BBO, contact Kelly at [Amanda@bebossonline.com](mailto:Amanda@bebossonline.com) , by phone at (606) 677-6119 or visit the website: [www.bebossonline.com](http://www.bebossonline.com).

SKED is a nonprofit economic development organization and has been designated a CDC by the U.S. Small Business Administration. The organization was formed 32 years ago by Fifth District Congressman Hal Rogers to create jobs in Southeast Kentucky.

Its corporate office is based in Somerset and serves a 45-county service region. A staff of nine professionals works with business owners, small and large, to identify financing solutions to fund their location, expansion and working capital needs, and provide them the technical assistance and training they need to succeed.

For more information about SKED, visit our website: [www.southeastkentucky.com](http://www.southeastkentucky.com).