



SUCCESS STORY
Think better.
UnBar Café

Ohio | Small Business Development Centers

SBDC HELPS CLEVELAND BUSINESS OWNER

When gathering information about different resources available, Melissa came across her local Small Business Development Center (SBDC) in Cleveland and grew a relationship with the Center Director, Shashonna Duckworth. Although Melissa had previous experience in finance, she knew it can be hard for small business owners to understand how to access necessary materials. The SBDC was able to put complicated processes into terms she could understand.

To learn more about UnBar Café, visit UnBarCafe.com.



Ohio | Development Services Agency

Mike DeWine, Governor
Jon Husted, Lt. Governor

Lydia L. Mihalik, Director

POWERED BY
SBA
U.S. Small Business Administration

Have you ever wondered what a social atmosphere would look like with no alcohol in sight? A fun visit to UnBar Café in Cleveland allows you to be drawn into an upbeat lounge area open to all ages, whether you're enjoying a coffee when studying or hosting a birthday party in the event space.

Melissa Garrett, the owner and founder of UnBar Café, had a heavy background in finance and consumer product goods. She was constantly surrounded by people wanting to engage in Happy Hours and realized she wanted to create a social place where people could have fun without the alcohol.

The goal was to create a space that encouraged people to live a healthier lifestyle in all aspects of life: physically, mentally, and spiritually. Melissa knew that she needed a for-profit model that would allow her business idea to sustain itself in the long run.

While my business numbers were good, I was not getting any money to help me get started," Melissa said. "Not only was the SBDC always keeping me up to speed on what resources were available to me, but they also helped me secure capital, which is crucial.

The SBDC helped her get the money she needed to open her business, and the capital allowed her to efficiently open UnBar Café in January 2020. The space is used as a contemporary café on one side and a meetings/event room on the other. The café offers an extensive menu of baked goods and delicious drinks, such as smoothies, lattes, and non-alcoholic cocktails.

Additionally, UnBar offers entertainment in the coffee shop through karaoke, board games, and conversation; the event space allows for parties, workshops, and fairs. UnBar also was able to team up with [Spirit Adherent](#) to provide yoga and meditation classes twice a week.

The busy coffee shop is accented with positive artwork, plants, and lofty ceilings. The vibrant, open space lets Melissa maintain a close relationship with her customers. She said that when she gets in the door, she can hardly get to the back of the room without being stopped by people to talk – and that is her favorite part of the job.

In the long-run, Melissa would love to "see UnBar Café expand to multiple locations and explore joint ventures." She has a growth strategy in place and will continue to focus on her available resources to help her achieve that goal.

In the meantime, make sure to swing by the café and check out all it has to offer. Melissa and UnBar are just getting started.