



# Success Stories

## **Fabian Lopez Landscaping business MERIT Training**

Fabian Lopez has worked in family run business his whole life, so the idea of having his own business was nothing new. Despite having previous experience running a business, he still wanted help, so he came to MERIT. At MERIT was introduced to a foundation of what was needed to run his own business successfully, "instead of jumping in blind." Fabian always enjoyed the outdoors and always envisioned working for himself. It was natural for him to consider starting a landscaping business. In February 2012 this became a reality. His landscaping business serves residential and commercial clients and has expanded to highway medians and parks. The business has flourished and continued to operate successfully, and he has been able to hire two employees. "I didn't expect to have this much business." Fabian is proud that he has been able to grow his business in this economy. He is dedicated to his business and his clients..

## **Angelita Sanchez Owner of Angel's Rock N' Roll Construction, Inc. MERIT training and formal IDA client**

"It took me nearly three years to accomplish this goal, but I have finally secured a Business Line of Credit" When my friend started her business #islandgirlslunchbox & #sosasmimosas, she told me about this wonderful program that she was involved in called MERIT. I immediately looked them up and found they offer so many business resources and classes. I soon participated in their small business training where I was able to learn how to save, learn more business skills and set some tough goals. A line of credit was one of those goals because I knew credit, is something every business usually needs and it's such a burden at times and a Receiving MERIT guidance and training made my process so easy! I just am so proud! And I am onward and upward to bigger things.

## **Bonnie Andrews Owner of Melting Pot Candy MERIT training**

Melting Pot Candy began with Grandma's buttery toffee recipe that she learned from her mother. It has been in our family for over 100 years. When I lost my job to the recession in 2009, I started selling our family recipe toffee. Up until then, we used to give it away to friends and neighbors only at Christmas. Everyone loved it so much, they told me I should sell it full time. Encouraged by my friends, I decided to make my dream of becoming a small business owner a reality. I started to sell at farmers markets in Salem, McMinnville, Milwaukee and Lincoln city which we continue to participate in. I later decided to open up a brick and mortar located in downtown Independence. MERIT helped us start this business by giving classes that helped us be successful. Because of their classes we learned how to manage money, how to put together a business plan and other aspects of operating our business. Going through MERIT's programs has been essential to our business.