



A. A. DICKS FUNERAL HOME

Columbia Area SBDC Client
Minority-Owned and Small Disadvantaged Business; HUBZone
aadicksfuneralhome.com

A Ministry of Comfort

Pastor Anthony A. Dicks first became a client of the SC SBDC in 2016, when Business Consultant Allen Brown helped A. A. Dicks Funeral Home recover from the aftermath of the Great Recession. Years later, Dicks was back on his own, attempting to purchase and renovate a building in hopes of accommodating higher-end, more elaborate funeral services. Unfortunately, the sale didn't go through, and when combined with the economic fallout of the COVID-19 pandemic, Dicks knew he once again needed assistance. That's where Allen Brown stepped in—ready to pick up right where the two had left off.

Industry: Funeral and Memorial Services

Challenge: Unable to attract his target market because his business was too small (in actual size and available services), the client needed help developing and implementing an expansion strategy and obtaining the financing to execute it.

Approach: The consultant helped his client re-structure his business plan, obtain two loans totaling \$138,000, conduct market research and also liaised with the client's PR/Marketing firm to determine the scope and direction of his marketing efforts.

Results:

- EIDL Loan: \$118,000
- PPP Loan: \$20,000
- 2020 - 2021 Net Profit Increase: 530%
- Jobs Retained: 2 full-time; 4 part-time

Like many small businesses, the A. A. Dicks Funeral Home-Sullivan struggled throughout 2020 to generate the same revenue it had before the onset of the pandemic. As a result of COVID-19, Dicks could not offer indoor services and viewings or limousine services. Moreover, many potential clients opted for cremations—which Dicks could not perform due to a lack of necessary equipment and proper licensing.

Although the business was losing revenue, Brown encouraged his client not to despair. He showed Dicks how to adapt to a COVID environment by offering virtual funeral services, helped him restructure his business plan and provided guidance throughout the EIDL and PPP loan application process—which resulted in Dicks being awarded both loans for a total of \$138,000. In November 2021, Dicks purchased a building more than twice the size of his original location. The facility is currently undergoing renovations, but when finished, it will include a full-service chapel, three visitation rooms, spacious gathering and arrangement rooms, expanded embalming facilities, and more.

Dicks expects that a larger layout, which sits on 2.1 acres of well-landscaped grounds, will make the A. A. Dicks Funeral Home more competitive with the larger operations. And, while Dicks is excited about the prospects of growing his business, he said that he also aspires to be 'more than a provider of funeral services.'

Services Provided:

- > Business Plan Development
- > Financial Projections
- > Market Research
- > Loan Application Preparation

"I want to help transform my community," he said. Dicks hopes to achieve this by forming a coalition of churches to offer residents workshops and other resources. On his client's behalf, Brown liaised with City of Columbia councilwoman Tina Herbert to promote Dick's other ambition: developing an unofficial internship program with local schools.

“Allen is a small businessman's best friend. He creates synergy with his clients by freely sharing his expertise with them and is well-versed in how to grow small businesses.”

Anthony A. Dicks, Owner
A. A. Dicks Funeral Home

