

THE FLOWER INSTITUTE

CONSULTANT: RICK VANDER WEELE



TONEISHA BUSH

RESULTS:
\$62,400
CAPITAL INVESTMENT

—
BUSINESS EXPANDED

PLANTING THE SEED

When Toneisha Bush, a speech-language pathologist and founder of The Flower Institute in North Augusta, decided to expand her pediatric therapy practice, she faced a familiar small-business challenge: limited capital and no clear path to secure funding. Her clinic specializes in pediatric feeding and swallowing disorders—critical but often underfunded services. With demand growing, Bush needed to either renovate or relocate her current space, hire two additional therapists and strengthen her financial projections. Yet, without formal financial projects or a detailed business plan, securing funding became a major hurdle.

NURTURING GROWTH

In 2024, Bush launched The Flower Institute after years of part-time work in pediatric speech therapy, turning her passion for helping children into a full-time business. Despite her clinical expertise, the business side of growth

posed new challenges. Referred to the SC SBDC by an SBA lender, Bush began working with consultant Rick Vander Weele, who helped her develop a comprehensive business plan and multi-year financial projections. With Vander Weele's guidance, she built a sustainable growth strategy, established sound online bookkeeping practices and gained confidence in presenting her business to lenders. "Rick connected me to SC SBDC accounting and bookkeeping resources that have completely transformed how I manage my business finances. Before that, I was doing it all by hand," said Bush.

A BLOOMING BUSINESS

With support from Vander Weele and the SSBCI program, Bush developed financial statements and a bank-ready loan package that included a comprehensive business plan and detailed three-year financial projections. This preparation enabled her to secure a \$35,000 loan, which she supplemented with a personal investment of \$27,400. Together, the \$62,400 enabled Bush to upgrade her facility and fund marketing initiatives.

"Working with the SC SBDC helped me prepare my business to seek funding to expand and grow my business, and I am happy to report that as of the end of September 2025, we were able to close on funding," Bush explained. The SSBCI process not only positioned The Flower Institute for expansion but also provided Bush with the tools to manage future growth independently; "we are currently working to expand by attending job fairs and connecting with local graduate schools," said Bush. Today, her clinic is thriving—poised to hire new therapists, serve more families and strengthen access to pediatric speech and feeding therapy in her community.



"My SBDC advisor, Rick Vander Weele, has been a true blessing to my business. He has helped me create a more in-depth business plan and develop financial statements and projections."

**- Toneisha Bush
Owner, The Flower Institute**

SERVICES PROVIDED:

- Business Plan Development
- Financial Projections
- Loan Packaging
- Accounting System Set-Up
- Market Research