

## Montana Adventure Shuttle

Missoula, MT



“Working with Jennifer has been invaluable. As an entrepreneur without a business degree or MBA, having been all ‘self-taught’ in the ways of starting and growing a business, and a moderate business plan to start with, I found her to be a wealth of information, ideas and inspiration.”

**Sheila Cornwell, Owner**

After moving to Montana to study Resource Conservation at the University of Montana and following her education into the professional world, Sheila Cornwell decided that office life wasn't for her. Her love for the outdoors was fostered by the love of exploring and adventuring. She hikes, bikes, and swims in Montana's beautiful mountain lakes. Realizing that she was an entrepreneur at heart, Sheila understood that all the skills she had refined throughout her working life had set her up perfectly for her new dream. With a vision for sustainable transportation options in the outdoor recreation sector of Montana's tourism industry, Sheila turned to the Missoula SBDC for startup assistance.

Knowing that if she wanted to make this new dream a successful venture, Sheila was going to need someone with a business-savvy mind to help her get off the ground. The idea of offering a means of sustainable group transportation, in-town or out-of-town including outdoor recreation, sight-seeing adventures, event shuttling, and essential services was an incredibly unique business model. Jennifer Stephens, Missoula SBDC Regional Director, helped Sheila look at the business with a more objective eye and from a real financial perspective. The assistance from the SBDC allowed the lending institution to be more confident in Sheila's unique business plan and the overall feasibility of the prospect.

In June 2017, Sheila launched Montana Adventure Shuttle in Missoula. Sheila's one-woman operation and 11-passenger van has taken her across the state and turned her into an ambassador for Montana. The process of refining her services has been a work-in-progress, much like the process of refining marketing and pricing strategies, to not only stay afloat as a new business but to forge ahead into sustainability and profitability. With the continued help of Jennifer, Sheila has upgraded her services by becoming certified by the U.S. Department of Transportation, allowing her to broaden her services. Since then, the certification has allowed her to take trips into Idaho, Washington, South Dakota, and even into Canada. Sheila is currently working with the SBDC to explore ideas of expansion, and the feasibility of adding another vehicle and driver to continue growing sustainable transportation for both basic shuttle transportation and the outdoor recreation industry.