

HAWAII SBDC SUCCESS STORY - O'AHU CENTER

So Ono Food Products, LLC (So Ono) was established in 2001 and currently employs over 130 people in their Honolulu manufacturing facility. Their products include fresh, ready-to-eat sandwiches, freshly prepared salads, and prepared fresh fruits and vegetables. So Ono customers include super-market chains, big box retailers, convenience store chains. They are also an approved military manufacturing facility.



Due to limited production capacity, So Ono was unable to supply increasing demand for their products. Although they identified a suitable space for expansion, the move would require financing for a complete renovation of the new facility such as: new utility systems, extensive structural improvements, and new production lines. So Ono turned to the O'ahu SBDC and Center Director Joe



Burns, who worked with them over the course of 10 months including the restructuring of their financial statements to better reflect the value of the company, creating financial projections for use in applying for debt financing, and assistance with the loan application process.

So Ono was approved for a seven-figure SBA guaranteed loan from a lending institution introduced by the O'ahu SBDC. They have recently moved into their beautiful new facility, and are now positioned to take advantage of increasing demand. Current engagements with the O'ahu SBDC are focusing on exporting and on integrating their production system software with their financial re-reporting system.

Curtis Wheeler, Managing Partner said, *"As I think back to all our meetings and conversations with your organization, what I will remember is your personal interest in our situation, your knowledge and contacts, your practical financial advice including the positive and negative factors in dealing with lenders, and the sense of urgency that you employ."*