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Alexis Tubman wants to bring a nonexistent business to Augusta, but like many entrepreneurs, she needs funding and needs to know how to get it.

Tubman and about 100 others attended a small-business forum Thursday at the Salvation Army Kroc Center in hopes of getting advice on starting and growing enterprises from a panel of area bank personnel and local, state and regional directors with the U.S. Small Business Administration.

“With most small businesses, the money, that's the most frustrating part,” said Tubman, who has worked with a friend for an arts-related venture. “You don't have what you need in order to go forth with your ideas. We're both retired. We don't have an awful lot of money. We do have a little bit, but it won't be enough to start a business and to keep it going until we can build the clientele.”

Tubman said that in previous years, she and her friend have tossed around several ideas for new businesses, but a lack of funding has always hindered their plans. The newest business concept, which Tubman described only as “in the arts,” was discovered on a recent trip to Atlanta.

“I don't think this business will be quite as costly,” she said. “With this one, we know it'll be a hit if we can get it going.”

The economic workshop, sponsored by the Small Business Administration and U.S. Rep. John Barrow's office, spanned three hours and covered business startups, capital access and federal procurement opportunities.

At the beginning of the event, the panel fielded questions from audience members,

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looking to expand their baby apparel/baby shower business, Precious Little Things, into the digital realm. Parris said they've launched a Facebook business page but to need to create a Web site with ordering capabilities.

“Neither one of us has any marketing skills,” Parris said. “It's just been word of mouth for two years or so. She does well here and there, but we want something that's going to be constant.”

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