

House Workforce, Labor, and Economic
Development Finance and Policy Committee
Centennial Office Building
St. Paul, MN 55155

March 27, 2025

Dear Chair Baker, Chair Pinto and Members of the Committee,

We represent some of the 41 organizations that are current program partners with the Department of Employment and Economic Development (DEED) to deploy technical assistance to entrepreneurs and small businesses through the Small Business Assistance Partnerships program. For 14 years, this proven program has been helping small businesses succeed and it has a huge economic return on investment for local communities and the state as a whole.

Collectively, we are writing to ask for your support for the Small Business Assistance Partnerships program at the Department of Employment and Economic Development (DEED). Because the base funding for this program is significantly lower than the investment made in 2023, \$7.4 million will fill the funding gap for the 2026-2027 biennium. This funding is critical to the continuation of delivering free, high-quality technical assistance to small businesses across Minnesota.

Small Businesses helped by the Small Business Assistance Partnerships program funding include grocery stores, small farms, construction companies, childcare businesses, dentists, restaurants, event centers, salons, veterinarian clinics, indoor play centers and so many more. We believe in this program because of its statewide impact, job creation and economic growth.

- **Statewide Impact:** Because our organizations are located throughout Minnesota collectively, we are able to serve every corner of the state. Our organizations are trusted community partners with unique relationships and skills that understand how to best meet the needs of our communities.
- **Job Creation:** In 2023 alone, this program helped create or preserve over 20,000 jobs.
- **Economic Growth:** In addition to supporting Minnesota Jobs, the technical assistance delivered through this program helped leverage \$158 million in public and private financing in 2023.

Thank you for your leadership on the committee and your consideration, we hope that you recognize the value of this program in supporting small businesses and entrepreneurs all across our great state. Please reach out to Kari Johnson (kjohnson@mccdmn.org), with the Minnesota Consortium of Community Developers should you need any further information.

Sincerely,

Advance Thief River, Michelle Landsverk
Entrepreneur Fund, Shawn Wellnitz
Greater Bemidji, David Hengel
Greater St. Cloud Development Corporation, NeTia Bauman
IgniteMN, Randii Waddell

Initiative Foundation, Brian Voerding
Itasca Economic Development Corporation, Tamara Lowney
Kandiyohi County Economic Development, Michelle Marotzke
Lake Street Council, Allison Sharkey
Owatonna Area Business Development Center, Sean Williams
Minnesota Africans United, Basil Ajuo
Minnesota Consortium of Community Developers, Elena Gaarder
Northside Economic Opportunity Network, Warren McLean
Redesign, Inc., Andrew Hestness
Scott County CDA-Center for Entrepreneurship, Jo Foust
Southeast Regional Small Business Development Center, Mark W. Thein
Southwest Minnesota Small Business Development Center, Christine Fischer
Springboard for the Arts, Laura Zabel
Stevens County Economic Improvement Commission, Cheryl Kuhn
The Beta Group, Cihan Behlivan
WomenVenture, LeeAnn Rasachak