



Annual Report 2024



NORTH DAKOTA
**SMALL BUSINESS
DEVELOPMENT CENTERS**

Your Ideas - Our Expertise - Your Success

PARTNER & SUB-AWARD HOSTS



U.S. Small Business Administration



PROGRAM INVESTORS

Adams County Development Corp.

Alerus Financial

Aspire Bank

Bank North

Bell Bank

Benson County JDA

Bowman County

Bravera Bank

Bremer Bank

Capital Credit Union

Cavalier County JDA

Choice Bank

City of Belfield

City of Beach

City of Bowman

City of Grafton

Consolidated Telecom

Conoco Phillips

Cornerstone Bank

Dakota Community Bank & Trust

Dakota Business Lending

Dunn County JDA

Eddy County

First International Bank & Trust

First Western Bank

First State Bank of Golva

Forward Devils Lake

Gate City Bank

Grand Forks County

Grand Forks Region EDC

Greater Fargo Moorhead EDC

Lake Agassiz Development Group

McKenzie County JDA

Minnesota Business Finance Corp.

Mountrail County JDA

NDSU Research & Technology Park

North Dakota Opportunity Fund

Rolette County

Rugby JDA

Starion Financial

Stark Development Corporation

Town & Country Credit Union

Towner County EDC

UND Center for Innovation

US Bank

Vision Bank

Western State Bank

Williston Economic Development

INTRODUCTION



Friends, partners, and colleagues -

Thank you for taking the time to review our 2024 Annual Report! The past year has been a year of innovation – optimizing our processes and systems, leveraging new technologies, and shifting our strategy.

The following pages showcase the impactful work of our program over the past year, reaching communities large and small across North Dakota. You might even recognize a familiar face or business from your own neighborhood in our success stories. We're deeply grateful to the many businesses we've had the privilege to work with, and we take pride in supporting a part of their journey as they grow their businesses, strengthen their communities, and inspire others to follow their lead.

Throughout this report, you will also read a few of the many reasons our staff have devoted themselves to North Dakota's resilient entrepreneurs and small businesses. Their work drives job creation, economic growth, and improved quality of life across our state. By empowering clients with skills and confidence, they help turn entrepreneurial dreams into reality, fostering financial independence and stronger communities. With unwavering dedication, they serve every client with care, respect, and a deep understanding of their challenges, making a lasting difference. The impacts reported would not be possible without the expertise and resourcefulness of this incredible team. If you have the opportunity, take a moment to thank an ND SBDC team member for the remarkable work they do every day. It means the world to them and to the communities they serve.

The past year has brought much change to our network. You will meet new faces in a few of our centers, and you might notice some of the process changes we have implemented to increase our effectiveness and find efficiencies. We are embracing new technologies to transform what we do and how we serve. As we adapt and innovate, our goal remains the same: to ensure that North Dakota remains at the forefront of small business development, setting a standard for excellence in service delivery. We will continue to provide actionable insights and cutting-edge solutions, enabling businesses to leverage stronger data and new technology in ways that meet the emerging needs of our small and medium-sized businesses, and drive growth and success.

We are now one year away from our 40th anniversary as North Dakota's largest and most impactful small business development program. We see incredible opportunities ahead for the ND SBDC and our state's small businesses. Our commitment to our mission remains steadfast: powering the creation, growth and success of small business, which we know strengthens our communities, and drives our state's economic growth. Together with our partners (that's you!), we will continue to build a promising future... because when small businesses thrive, communities thrive, North Dakota thrives.

With gratitude,

TIFFANY FORD
State Director

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PARTNER PROGRAMS



ALAN HAUT
U.S. SMALL
BUSINESS
ADMINISTRATION

Alan Haut, District Director, is responsible for overseeing SBA services across North Dakota. As the nation's go-to resource and voice for small business, the SBA provides counseling, capital, and contracting expertise so businesses can confidently start, grow, expand, or recover. Al's SBA career has included many positions, including Economic Development Specialist, Loan Officer, Lender Relations Specialist, & Deputy District Director. "I'm a strong proponent of the SBDC network seeing first hand what a great resource the SBDC is for small business owners - new business owners and experienced owners. The ND SBDC is a dedicated group of advisors that provide invaluable guidance and support to our small businesses."



**DR. AMY
HENLEY**
UNIVERSITY OF
NORTH DAKOTA

Amy Henley is the dean and a professor of management at the UND Nistler College of Business & Public Administration. She holds a Ph.D. from the University of Texas in Arlington in the area of organizational behavior and psychology. Henley's research interests include distributive and procedural justice, compensation and pay fairness, and intragroup processes. Dr. Henley has co-authored papers that have appeared in numerous top tier academic journals. "The ND SBDC is integral in launching and supporting businesses in our state. We are proud to support these efforts and watch innovation grow," says Henley.



**KAYLEN
HAUSAUER**
BANK OF
NORTH DAKOTA

Kaylen Hausauer is the Financial Institutions Market Manager at Bank of North Dakota where she has worked since 2012. In her role, she is responsible for oversight of all activities related to commercial, agriculture, direct, and other lending areas through the building of relationships with financial institutions, bank holding companies, stakeholders, and individuals. She began as a Finance Associate at BND where she spent a year learning each area of the Bank. She is from Bismarck and has a Bachelor's degree in Accounting from University of Jamestown and Master's degree in Business Administration from University of Mary. "I am grateful to be a part of the Advisory Board. The SBDC plays a very key role supporting new and growing businesses. They are an extremely valuable partner for the entrepreneurs in our state."

STATE ADVISORY BOARD



RAY BERRY
OWNER, OMNIBYTE



CARIE BOSTER
DUNN COUNTY JDA



TERAN DOERR
EDND BOARD PRESIDENT



SHANNON DUERR
CAVALIER COUNTY JDA



MISSY FEIST-ERICKSON
PEOPLE'S STATE BANK OF VELVA



CHERI HARMS
LEONARDITE PRODUCTS



CHERYL KARY
SACRED PIPE RESOURCE CENTER



CHRIS MOEN
ALERUS



AMANDA REMYSE
GREATER ND CHAMBER



NATHAN SCHNEIDER
BISMARCK-MANDAN CHAMBER EDC

Thank you

We extend our heartfelt appreciation to our 2024 advisory board. Your insights from all corners of the state are invaluable, and we deeply value the time, expertise, and wisdom you share with us.

IMPACTS



1,854

Individual Clients Advised



7,254

Hours of Advising

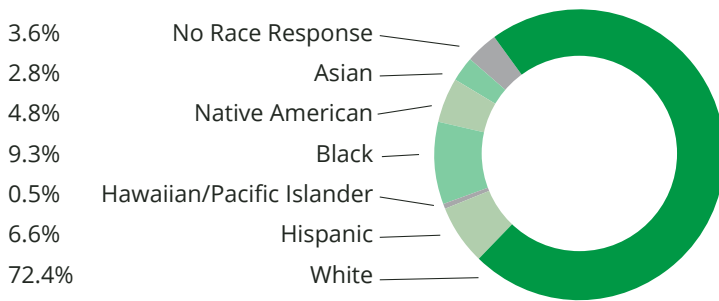


\$90,985,932

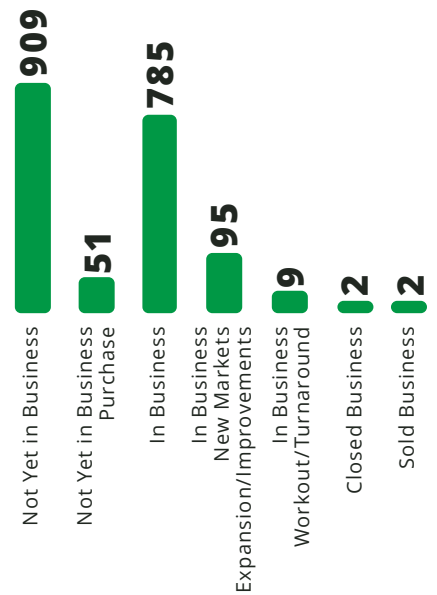
Client Capital Formation

RACE/ETHNICITY

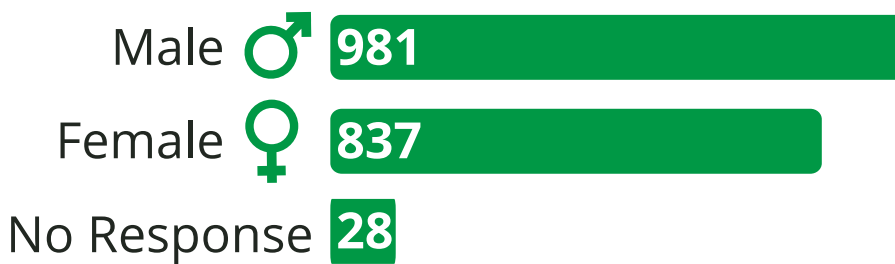
Individuals are able to choose as many categories as are applicable



BUSINESS STATUS



GENDER



INDUSTRY SEGMENT

6

Top 12 categories displayed due to space limitations.



154

New Businesses Created



5,557

Jobs Supported



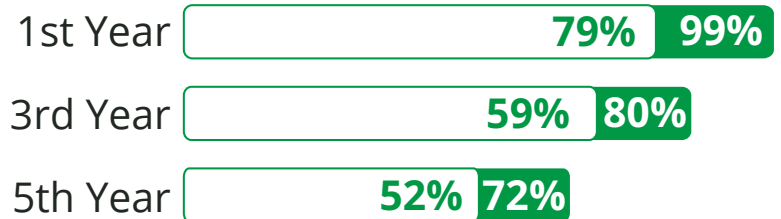
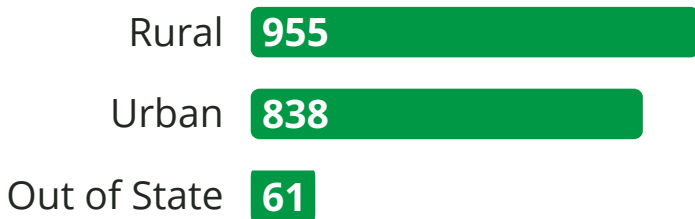
540

Training Attendees

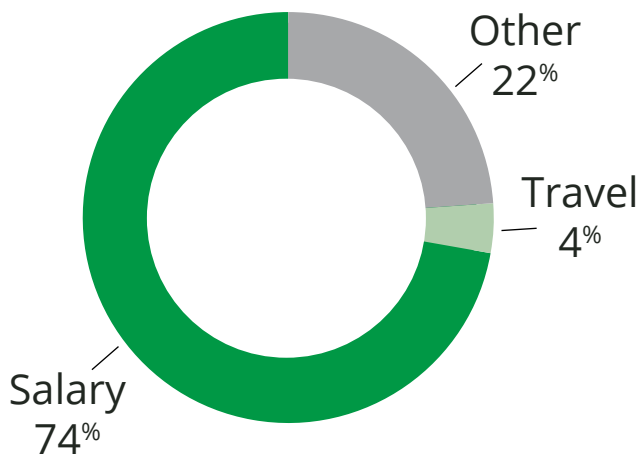
RURAL vs. URBAN SUCCESS RATE

Out of state clients may be assisted if their intent is to locate their business in North Dakota or if they are working with a North Dakota lender.

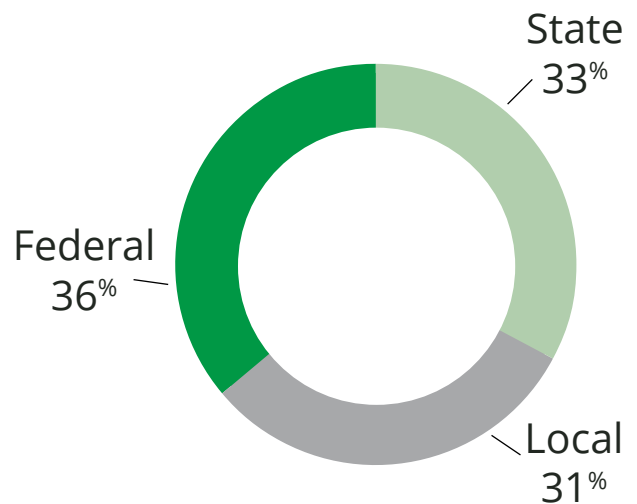
National average of businesses remaining open over time (white bar) as compared with those assisted by the ND SBDC (green bar).



EXPENSES BY CATEGORY



FUNDING SOURCES





BISMARCK CENTER IMPACTS



TYLER DEMARS
MSL, ASBC, ABI
CENTER DIRECTOR

- Originally from Minot, ND
- Started with the ND SBDC in August 2021

Q&A

Looking at the biggest challenges your clients faced this year - how did you help to overcome these?

A critical challenge for our clients is securing access to capital. To overcome the challenge, I leverage the strong financing network in North Dakota by connecting clients with local lenders, state programs, and alternative financing resources. This includes partnerships with organizations like the Bank of North Dakota, local credit unions, and nonprofit lenders offering microloans. Additionally, I help clients prepare robust business plans and financial projections, which increase their chances of securing funding by addressing concerns related to collateral, credit history, or equity.

What resources or tools do you find most effective in supporting your clients?

At the ND SBDC, we subscribe to a number of business intelligence databases. These databases provide valuable insights into market and industry trends, financial benchmarking, and industry peer comparisons. We are expanding our use of AI tools, and the initial results are promising, improving both the quality of our advising and the effectiveness of time management.



7
New Businesses Created



527
Jobs Supported



294
Individual Clients Advised



\$4,047,100
Client Capital Formation

SUCCESS STORY

LOS CAMPEONES GYM

BISMARCK – Jason Locken, one of the owners of Los Campeones Gym, had a clear vision when he decided to open his fitness center in Bismarck. Along with co-owners Dustin Eastgate and Talyn Johnson, Jason wanted to create a gym that catered to serious lifters while also offering a welcoming environment for everyone, from beginners to elite athletes. In June 2024, Los Campeones Gym officially opened its doors.



Despite his passion for fitness and experience in business management and accounting, Jason knew he needed guidance to properly develop and plan for the financial and operational aspects of starting a new business. That's when he turned to the ND SBDC for help.

Jason worked closely with Tyler Demars, Center Director in Bismarck, who guided him through the process of building a solid business plan. With support from the ND SBDC, he gained a deeper understanding of critical business concepts. Jason reflects, "The ND SBDC provided me an opportunity to put our idea on paper and the tools to help work through the technical side of developing the business. It has been a blessing to have that help along the way."

Dustin and Talyn, co-owners of the gym, bring valuable expertise in business and fitness. Dustin owns Iron & Oak Designs, a construction business, while Talyn owns Nutrishop Bismarck and Dane Gainz Transforming. Their combined experience has played a key role

in shaping the gym's development, ensuring a well-rounded approach to its operational success and its emphasis on fitness.

With the assistance of the ND SBDC, Jason, Dustin, and Talyn were able to navigate the complexities of starting the gym, ultimately leading to a successful launch. This guidance gave Jason the clarity he needed to focus on fostering the culture and community at Los Campeones.

Los Campeones Gym has become a valued part of the community, with members sharing how it has helped them improve their fitness and strength. Jason credits the gym's success to a focus on quality services, attention to detail, and maintaining consistency. He also acknowledges the dedication of his staff and the support of loyal members, who have helped establish the gym as a local favorite.

Read this full client success story, along with others, at ndsbd.org/success-stories

BOWMAN CENTER IMPACTS



SARAH NAGEL
BUSINESS ADVISOR



4
New Businesses Created



66
Jobs Supported



40
Individual Clients Advised



\$1,810,926
Client Capital Formation

Q&A

What's a quirky habit you have that helps you stay productive? With all the fancy technology resources out there, I still prefer a pen and paper. Each week, I fill out my planner with my plan for the week and all of the tasks that I need to accomplish. Oh, and everything is color coded of course!

- Originally from Colorado
- Started with the ND SBDC in October 2024

What do you wish more people knew about the ND SBDC? I wish more people knew we are dedicated to building trusting, personalized relationships with each client. Our goal is to provide tailored advice, support, and encouragement to meet the unique needs of every business we serve. Whether you're starting, growing, or managing your business, we strive to be your go-to resource for success.

BOWMAN AUTO PARTS / SUCCESS STORY

BOWMAN – Bowman Auto Parts Company, a small business providing truck and auto parts and accessories, was born from Brandon Hoggarth's parents' dream that began in 2003. Brandon officially purchased the business and formed Bowman Auto Parts, LLC on May 1, 2022, after 19 years of successful operation by his parents, Doug and Jody Rajewsky.

Brandon shares how his parents' supportive upbringing and instilled values have influenced him. "Growing up surrounded by their small businesses, I found inspiration in their dedication, and set my dream to do the same."

The past few years of Bowman Auto Parts have not been without challenges. Inflation and intense retail competition posed hurdles; however, through NAPA's dedicated employees, having a strategic inventory management system and "knowing the customer" not only were these obstacles overcome, but they also tailored the business to meet the specific needs of the local customer base.

A pivotal moment in Brandon's success occurred when he connected with the ND SBDC, following his parents' recommendation. The guidance provided in the sessions proved invaluable, assisting Brandon in crafting a comprehensive business plan, conducting market research, and navigating financial planning.



Understanding the financial projections was key in working with the bank to understand the options available and different ways to approach financing the purchase of

the business. Brandon highlights the role played by ND SBDC in securing the necessary funds to move forward with the business purchase. Today, Bowman Auto Parts has seen growth through an increase in staff and a greater knowledge base has allowed them to serve the customers in a more in-depth way.

Beyond the day-to-day challenges, Brandon emphasizes the vital role of local support. The community's backing has been instrumental in sustaining Bowman Auto Parts, contributing to the local economy by supporting incomes and the well-being of the community. He shares that one of his favorite aspects about being a small business owner is that the people he got to know growing up are now his customers. He says, "It is a full-circle moment that is somewhat nostalgic, and I feel supported in my work and this endeavor."

Read this full client success story, along with others, at ndsbdc.org/success-stories



DEVILS LAKE CENTER IMPACTS



ASHLEY LOUW
CPBA, ABI
BUSINESS ADVISOR

- Originally from Portland, ND
- Started with the ND SBDC in December 2020

Q&A

How do you measure success in your advising services?

I measure success based on my client's success. If they obtain funding, that's a win in my book. I appreciate the surveys clients fill out—the good and the bad. If a client has advice on improving services, I'm open to learning.

I value when previous clients return for assistance. Some have opened another business and sought me out again due to my prior help. Others return to adjust financial projections for new staff. Knowing my clients trust me enough to come back—that's the best!

What advice would you give to businesses looking to adapt to changes in the market?

Take classes if needed. Find local resources to stay informed and up-to-date. Research your target market and the trends in your industry.

What's the best piece of unconventional advice you've ever received?

Smile. It makes people wonder.



6
New Businesses Created



169
Jobs Supported



98
Individual Clients Advised



\$3,516,389
Client Capital Formation

SUCCESS STORY

DISCOVERY PRESCHOOL

DEVILS LAKE - Bethany Narveson opened Discovery Preschool in 2018 with a clear goal to improve early childhood education in Devils Lake. Discovery Preschool offers a range of services, including preschool education, childcare, and early childhood development programs.

As the preschool's popularity grew, Bethany needed to move to a larger facility to accommodate growing demand. This transition involved navigating city codes and managing the construction process, which presented challenges. Even with her experience, Bethany needed specialized support to handle these new complexities.

She learned about the ND SBDC through Forward Devils Lake and reached out for assistance. She was connected with Ashley Louw, business advisor for the region, who provided the expertise Bethany needed to navigate the expansion process.

Louw delivered essential assistance in several areas. She helped Bethany refine her financial projections to ensure the expanded operations would be financially sustainable. She also supported Bethany in updating her business plan to accommodate additional staffing and expenses. Most importantly, Louw facilitated access to two essential financial resources: the Rural Workforce Investment Program (RWIP) grant through the North Central Planning Council, and a loan from Forward Devils Lake.

When asked about the support she received, Bethany shares her

appreciation, stating, "The ND SBDC team is very knowledgeable in all realms of business. They have so many tools and resources to share with business owners." She also highlighted Ashley's role in overcoming obstacles, "Anytime I was having issues, Ashley was right there supporting me with the tools and knowledge!"

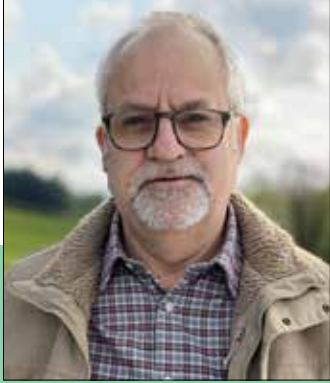


With the ND SBDC's assistance, Bethany successfully navigated the expansion process. Discovery Preschool transitioned from a space serving 20 children in 900 square feet to a much larger facility that accommodates 49 children, including infants, toddlers, preschoolers, and elementary students. The staff also grew to eight members, enhancing the quality of education and care provided.

Bethany's expansion was further supported by the local community, including Discovery families and Forward Devils Lake, who provided vital resources and donations. Her advice to other entrepreneurs is to have a clear plan, save diligently, and remain dedicated to their goals, even when faced with challenges.

Read this full client success story, along with others, at ndsdbc.org/success-stories

DICKINSON CENTER IMPACTS



PETE LENO
CENTER DIRECTOR

- Originally from Kennedy, MN
- Started with the ND SBDC in December 2024



12

New Businesses Created



163

Jobs Supported



124

Individual Clients Advised



\$3,295,519

Client Capital Formation

Q & A

What's the best piece of unconventional advice you've ever received?

My grad school advisor often said, 'Of all the people in the world, you are one of them.' It was his way of reminding us that life isn't meant to be lived alone and that we are all part of something greater than ourselves. The 'whole' truly is

greater than the sum of its parts. At its core, life is about being a 'good teammate'—supporting others, fostering collaboration, and ensuring we never let our neighbors down.

If you weren't an advisor, what other profession do you think you would pursue? I would likely explore opportunities in continuing education or collaborate with professionals in movement science, such as physical therapists, trainers, and biomechanists.

EASY SWEETS BAKERY

SUCCESS STORY

DICKINSON - Shawna DeShazo launched Easy Sweets Bakery from her home in Dickinson in 2022, specializing in small-batch, regular, and gluten-free baked goods. What began as a therapeutic activity she shared with her son quickly blossomed into a passion for creating delicious treats. With her baking experience, learned from both her grandmother and her time working in a bakery, Shawna was ready to take the next step by opening a brick-and-mortar location. However, transitioning from a home-based business to a full-scale bakery came with its own set of challenges, and that's where the ND SBDC came in.



Shawna discovered the ND SBDC through a friend who had a positive experience with the program. Motivated by her friend's success, she reached out for assistance to understand the necessary steps for starting and growing her business. The ND SBDC provided crucial guidance, helping her find the resources she needed to launch and expand Easy Sweets Bakery.

The ND SBDC helped Shawna through crucial stages of her business development, offering guidance on creating a detailed business plan, formalizing processes, and understanding key financial information for her growing bakery. With their support, she successfully

transitioned Easy Sweets from an online operation to a physical storefront, ensuring a smooth expansion while maintaining her focus on delivering quality products.

"They helped me find the helpful resources that I needed to get started,

and also expand," Shawna stated, highlighting the significant impact their support had on her journey. Through her advising sessions, she gained valuable insights into the local market and learned how to position her bakery effectively.

Since the start, Easy Sweets Bakery has experienced impressive growth. Shawna has skillfully expanded her customer base, relying primarily on word-of-mouth referrals and a steadfast commitment to delivering high-quality, delicious desserts. As her product offerings have evolved, so too has her business, cultivating a loyal community of customers who value her exceptional baked goods.

As Shawna reflects on her journey, she offers valuable advice to other aspiring entrepreneurs: "Don't give up, even through the hard times." She acknowledges that running a business is filled with ups and downs, but the ability to continue thriving has been a fulfilling experience.

Read this full client success story, along with others, at ndsbdc.org/success-stories



FARGO/SOUTHEAST CENTER IMPACTS

Q&A

PAUL SMITH
MS, EDFP,
CVGA, ABI
CENTER
DIRECTOR



- Originally from Chicago, IL
- Started with the ND SBDC in June 2015

How do you measure success in your advising services?

Success is evident in my clients' progress and achievements, such as business launches, securing funding, revenue growth, and job creation. Equally important is their development of knowledge and skills for long-term sustainability, along with client satisfaction, lasting relationships, and referrals.

What trends do you foresee in the industry over the next year, and how should business prepare for them?

The biggest shift will be AI adoption. Small businesses should streamline operations, partner with experts, and train employees to stay competitive.

CHRIS ERWIN
MBA, MSML,
CBA®, ABI
BUSINESS
ADVISOR



- Originally from Fremont, CA
- Started with the ND SBDC in January 2022

What's one piece of advice you wish all businesses would follow?

Dream big, but start small. Avoid burnout by breaking your vision into steps and celebrating milestones. Perseverance and planning will take you far.

If you had to choose a theme song for your advising practice, what would it be?

Don't Stop Believin' by Journey. It's an anthem for the entrepreneurial spirit, reminding us to hold onto dreams and push through challenges. Building a business is tough, but determination makes great things possible, inspiring my belief in resilient entrepreneurs.



61
New Businesses Created



1,466
Jobs Supported



575
Individual Clients Advised



\$11,319,200
Client Capital Formation

SUCCESS STORY

BE MORE COLORFUL

FARGO – Be More Colorful, co-founded by husband-and-wife team Matt and Katie Chaussee, is at the forefront of workforce development with immersive technology. Based in Fargo, North Dakota, the company has been making waves since its establishment in 2016, offering cutting-edge media solutions designed to help individuals make informed decisions about their careers and future.

The path to success was not straightforward. The Chaussees faced significant challenges in defining their market focus and establishing themselves in the emerging field of immersive technology.

This is where the ND SBDC played a crucial role. Since 2017, the ND SBDC has been a key partner in Be More Colorful's journey. The center assisted with developing a comprehensive business plan, refining financial projections, and navigating the complex landscape of funding. Their support was particularly crucial during the COVID-19 pandemic, helping the company secure PPP loans and maintain operations despite severe financial setbacks.

"Paul was so helpful, available, and free! After almost 8 years, we still keep the relationship going. We would not have Be More Colorful today without the assistance from the ND SBDC. They were there to help when we needed it the most," Katie notes.

Paul's guidance extended beyond

immediate financial needs. He assisted in identifying resources and preparing the company to apply for significant state funding, including \$500,000 from the ND Legacy Investment for Technology (LIFT) program, and a \$725,000 loan from the ND Development Fund in 2022. Be More Colorful's innovative work also earned them a semifinalist position for a \$1 million Yass grant, resulting in a \$200,000 award and increased national visibility.



Central to Be More Colorful's success is their flagship product, CareerViewXR. This immersive career exploration platform addresses critical workforce challenges by providing interactive and engaging experiences for students. CareerViewXR is now available in every high school and middle school in North Dakota.

Through their commitment to solving real-world problems, Be More Colorful continues to drive meaningful change in workforce development.

Read this full client success story, along with others, at ndsfdc.org/success-stories

GRAND FORKS CENTER IMPACTS



13

New Businesses Created



435

Jobs Supported



218

Individual Clients Advised



\$4,024,000

Client Capital Formation



NICOLE EVANS

CBA®, ABI

CENTER DIRECTOR

- Originally from West Fargo
- Started with the ND SBDC in January 2017

Q&A

What resources or tools do you find most effective in supporting your clients?

Because I am a small business owner myself, I heavily rely on my BAIL team as a resource and share what I learn. Our ecosystem is also another great resource as it contains many organizations with a wealth of knowledge and more resources as well.

What's one piece of advice you wish all businesses would follow?

I always advise to not rush the process. Do the research, ask questions, talk with resources. Doing this will ensure more certainty and confidence in making decisions.

If you had to choose a theme song for your advising practice, what would it be?

From the direction of me owning small businesses and knowing what it's like *Bills* by LunchMoney Lewis. For my advising style: *Hey Look Ma, I Made It* or *One Call Away*.

ARC METAL FORMING SUCCESS STORY

GRAND FORKS - ARC Metal Forming began with a clear vision and a desire to meet the demand for high-quality metal fabrication and pipe cutting services. Established in October 2018 by Ryan Barstad and Ales Kubat, the company specializes in fabricating steel products, which includes flat steel plasma cutting, precision plasma pipe cutting, and steel forming.

The journey began when Ryan and his business partner Ales identified a significant gap in the local market. They worked in the industry and were seeing significant delays in getting the metal products needed to complete projects on time. Recognizing a need for their services and how they could benefit the region, they set out to fill that gap.

Nicole Evans played a pivotal role in helping ARC Metal Forming navigate financial challenges and secure crucial funding for their operations. She also assisted them in development of their business plan. Their financial package came together through Choice Financial with an SBA loan guarantee.

Starting a business is never easy, and ARC Metal Forming faced its first major challenge just months after opening its doors - the pandemic. With many of their customers shutting down or scaling back, there was a ripple effect that was very tough for the new business.

Ryan recalls, "After the pandemic we were able to use our financial plan and strategic plan to guide us to where we needed to be successful.



Without those things in place we would have had a hard time getting back on track after the pandemic and back to seeing growth in our company."

Despite the setback, ARC Metal Forming has expanded its customer base and enhanced its service offerings. Recently, they launched ARC 3D Composites, a division specializing in 3D printing for manufacturing applications—an innovative step that underscores their commitment to staying ahead in the industry.

Reflecting on their ND SBDC experience, Ryan emphasizes the benefits of their advising sessions. "They offer honest, non-biased advice. And by that I mean they are honest with you about setting real goals and are up front about how to get your start up off the ground and growing."

Read this full client success story, along with others, at ndsbd.org/success-stories

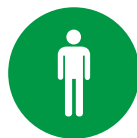


MINOT CENTER IMPACTS



12

New Businesses Created



255

Jobs Supported



122

Individual Clients Advised



\$1,926,465

Client Capital Formation

Q&A

What's one piece of advice you wish all businesses would follow?

Have a business plan or at least a business model as a road map and have a forecast or a budget.

What trends do you foresee in the industry over the next year, and how should business prepare for them?

AI is going to be used in every kind of business and industry to streamline processes. I'm working to learn how to use AI in my business advising and guiding clients on utilizing AI.

If you could describe your advising style in three words, what would they be? Listening, goals, achievement.

ALAN GOHARY

ASBC, CERTIFIED QUICKBOOKS PRO,
CERTIFIED LIVEPLAN

BUSINESS ADVISOR

- First-gen Egyptian American, lived in CA/MT for 28 years
- Started with the ND SBDC in Sept 2024 (with 20 yrs SBDC experience in other networks)

NEW BEGINNINGS IMAGING

MINOT - In July 2023, New Beginnings Imaging opened, introducing a unique and personalized perspective to ultrasound services. Founder Amanda Olson, an experienced ultrasound technologist, envisioned a redefined pregnancy ultrasound experience. Her vision wasn't just about providing medical services; it was a commitment to offering calmness, easing worries, and creating special moments for expectant families within the comfort of their homes.

The range of services at New Beginnings Imaging includes listening to the baby's heartbeat, revealing the baby's gender, and capturing the baby's movements in either 3D or 4D. Amanda, equipped with a portable ultrasound machine, conducts the sessions in the clients' homes. The machine connects to the TV, enabling real-time viewing for family members or live streaming for those unable to attend.

Entering the world of entrepreneurship, Amanda faced various challenges in establishing her business. One significant hurdle was navigating the complexities of social media for brand visibility

and community engagement. Recognizing the importance of utilizing recommendations from family and friends, Amanda sought support from the ND SBDC.

Amanda began working with her advisor, Mary Beth, in 2022 when she was considering multiple business ideas. Over 18 months, they crafted a detailed business plan, created a proforma budget for a bank loan proposal, and addressed logistics such as legal structure, licensing, website development, and pricing.

The ND SBDC became an invaluable resource for Amanda.



SUCCESS STORY

It wasn't only about providing advice; it was a comprehensive partnership that offered support, constructive feedback, financial projections, market analysis, and growth strategies to navigate the complexities of launching and growing a new business. Amanda emphasized the ND SBDC's role, stating, "The ND SBDC provided moral support when needed, gave constructive feedback that was essential even when challenging, and guided me through the process of starting my own venture."

The business has seen a significant increase in brand awareness and growing clientele, leading to exciting new opportunities such as collaborations with a local midwife and a new service for pregnancy and gynecology ultrasounds interpreted by a radiologist. Additionally, Amanda has partnered with a non-profit to provide essential services for expectant mothers in the community.

Read this full client success story, along with others, at ndsbd.org/success-stories

WILLISTON CENTER IMPACTS



39

New Businesses Created



2,470

Jobs Supported



379

Individual Clients Advised



\$61,046,333

Client Capital Formation



Q & A



**KEITH
OLSON**

*CBEC, BCA, CVGA,
PMC, CEPA, CBA®,
ABI, MCMEA, EDFP,
SMPS, CEB, APBA*

CENTER DIRECTOR

- Originally from Adams, ND
- Started with the ND SBDC in March 2003

What advice would you give to businesses looking to adapt to changes in the market?

Prioritize continuous learning and regularly evaluate your market. Analyze your numbers monthly and compare year-over-year trends. Watch your competition and assess how your business measures up. Flexibility is key—don't become so set in your ways that adapting to change becomes difficult. Markets evolve, and businesses that stay flexible and proactive thrive.

If you could describe your advising style in three words, what would they be? Committed, driven, open minded



**KAYCEE
LINDSEY**

CBA®, ABI
**BUSINESS
ADVISOR**

- Originally from Hazen, ND
- Started with the ND SBDC in 2010

What common misconceptions do clients have about the advising process?

While we offer support to businesses in many areas, it's important to note that we are not a grant-making organization and do not provide legal or tax accounting services.

If you weren't an advisor, what other profession do you think you would pursue?

If I weren't an SBDC advisor, I would pursue a career in math education.

COYOTE PUPS LEARNING DEN

SUCCESS STORY



WILLISTON – Kenzi Brown opened the doors to Coyote Pups Learning Den in August 2020. She wasn't just starting a business—she was answering a critical call for reliable childcare in her community. She was determined to create a space where local families could feel confident leaving their children.

Kenzi's educational background provided her with the necessary skills to navigate the complexities of running a childcare facility. However, starting a business during the COVID-19 pandemic presented significant challenges. Kenzi had to adapt to rapidly changing regulations while ensuring that her new business could operate safely and effectively.

Kenzi learned about the ND SBDC through local business owners and quickly recognized the value of their services. She stated, "There is so much value in the expertise they provide and questions they asked." With their guidance, she gained valuable insights into the local market, refined her business plan, and connected with funding opportunities through the STAR Fund, which was instrumental in securing the startup costs for Coyote Pups.

With the support of the ND SBDC, Coyote Pups Learning Den opened its doors to exciting success, achieving

full enrollment almost immediately. Within a short time, Kenzi expanded her operation from 30 licensed spots to 140 licensed spots across two locations: LifeChurch and the CHI Center.

This year, at the joint event between the Williston Economic Development and Williston Regional SBDC, Coyote Pups Learning Den was recognized as the SBDC 2024 Women-Owned Business of the Year. The award highlights the business's growth and its positive impact on the local economy.

Read this full client success story, along with others, at ndsbd.org/success-stories



**CYRENA
WEEKS**
BUSINESS
ADVISOR

- Originally from Williston, ND
- Started with the ND SBDC in 2021

The biggest challenges either you or your clients faced this year. How did you help to overcome these?

In Western ND, it's finding affordable real estate. I encourage clients to work with a realtor and let others know they're looking for space. Many spaces become available before our office hears about them, so having people on the lookout is essential.

If you had to choose a theme song for your advising practice, what would it be?

Let's Get It Started by The Black Eyed Peas



NEWS & AWARDS

NATIONAL PROGRAM IMPACT



SMALL BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT CENTERS

America's Small Business Development Centers (SBDCs) have been pivotal in driving small business growth and revitalizing local economies. The 2023 America's SBDC Annual Report, themed "Reimagining Main Street," highlighted the network's profound impact in helping entrepreneurs navigate an ever-evolving business landscape.

According to the latest national survey, America's SBDCs have delivered substantial economic benefits, including:

- **85,094 jobs created**
- **\$10.1 billion in sales growth**
- **\$7.7 billion in capital investments**
- **14,487 new businesses**

Remarkably, SBDC clients experienced significantly fewer job losses (3.1%) compared to the national average of 14% during challenging economic times. SBDCs helped create a new job every 6.2 minutes, emphasizing their role as catalysts for economic resilience and development.

The report also showcases nearly 700 success stories spanning 11 categories, reflecting the diverse and tailored support SBDCs offer. These stories highlight the network's commitment to inclusivity, innovation, and sustainability, ensuring small businesses across all sectors and demographics receive the guidance they need to thrive.

In our state, SBDCs have played a vital role in fostering economic development through personalized advising, training, and resources for small business owners and aspiring entrepreneurs. By aligning with the national SBDC mission, our centers have contributed significantly to job creation, business expansion, and community growth.

Looking ahead, the SBDC network remains dedicated to adapting its services to meet the evolving needs of the small business community. By fostering innovation and embracing sustainable practices, SBDCs will continue to drive the transformation of Main Streets across America. The full 2023 America's SBDC Annual Report is available at sbdcimpact.org. The 2024 report publishes at the end of January 2025 at the same website.

ASBDC Annual Report:



ASBDC Annual Report - ND page:



2024 ND SBDC STATE STAR

Nicole Evans, Center Director in Grand Forks, has been awarded the 2024 State Star for the ND SBDC, the highest recognition for individual achievement within the program's national network, America's SBDC.

Every year, the America's SBDC State Star is presented to individuals who demonstrate exemplary performance, make significant contributions to their networks, and are dedicated to the success of America's small businesses. Evans and the other State Stars were celebrated nationally at the annual America's SBDC conference in Atlanta, Georgia, in early September.

Tiffany Ford, State Director, praised Nicole's dedication, stating, "Nicole was



nominated by her peers, which speaks volumes about the respect she has earned within our organization. Her dedication to the success of small business has left a lasting impact on the small business community. We are fortunate to have her as part of our team, and we look forward to her continued contributions to the success of the ND SBDC and the businesses we serve."

Evans, who was raised in a family with small businesses of their own, joined the ND SBDC in January 2017 and has become a valuable member of the ND SBDC team. Her areas of expertise include start-up logistics, operations, and technology. She brings

a wealth of experience, particularly as a small business owner herself. In addition to holding a degree from Mayville State University, Evans is a Certified Business Advisor, QuickBooks Pro Advisor, Certified Exit Planning Advisor, and Advanced Business Intermediary.



Pictured: Tiffany, Nicole, and Marnie at the ASBDC State Star Recognition event at the Georgia Aquarium

CLIENT SUCCESS



TACHO MAN
GRAND FORKS

Amaziah Adams, known locally as the “Tacho Man,” built a successful business in Grand Forks, evolving from a pushcart vendor to the owner of a food truck and a brick-and-mortar location at the Grand Forks Air Force Base.

At the ND SBDC, Amaziah worked closely with his advisor, Nicole Evans, who provided business planning and financial management guidance. She helped him refine his business plan, secure permits, and navigate business regulations.

Amaziah encourages other aspiring entrepreneurs to seek out the ND SBDC. “I would recommend them. If people truly look into and take the guidance given, anyone with a goal or dream can be successful.”



THE RANGE
FARGO

Tim Brown, a former United States Army Medic and Fargo Police officer, fulfilled a lifelong dream of starting his own business in November 2023.

Working closely with his ND SBDC business advisor Chris Erwin, Tim received assistance in building a business plan and creating financial projections.

To fund his business, Tim leveraged the micro-loan program through Lake Agassiz Development Group. Tim kept expenses minimal, resulting in a quick loan approval. Within two months, The Range began showing a profit. Tim attributes this rapid success to his solid understanding of business basics, thanks to the guidance provided by Chris and the ND SBDC.



SUNDBAKES
MINOT

Elizabeth Sund, owner of Sundbakes, has blended her love for art and baking into a thriving business. Specializing in luxury hand-painted cakes, cookies, and macarons.

To navigate the complexities of starting and growing her business, she turned to the ND SBDC, where Mary Beth Votava’s support and guidance helped build Elizabeth’s confidence.

Today, Sundbakes is celebrated in the Minot community for its one-of-a-kind, personalized confections. With the ongoing support of local customers and the ND SBDC, Elizabeth has built a business that reflects both her artistic vision and personal goals



SIGNAL MEDIA LINKS
FARGO

Olasunkanmi Olanrewaju, founder of Signal Media Links, turned his passion for socio-cultural development and event planning into a growing business. Starting in 2003, he created a platform to highlight student achievements. By 2006, he registered his company in Nigeria and expanded to South Africa and Liberia. In 2022, he established his U.S. headquarters in Fargo to grow globally.

Despite initial challenges securing funding, Olasunkanmi’s vision for community-based events gained support from local businesses, thanks in part to the guidance he received from the ND SBDC. Chris Erwin helped him navigate the U.S. business landscape, providing

crucial resources and connecting him to valuable local networks. This support enabled him to successfully execute events like the All African Festival USA, which not only showcased his company’s ability to unite diverse communities but also strengthened its reputation for creating inclusive experiences.

Olasunkanmi’s journey highlights the positive impact of immigration in North Dakota. By celebrating diversity, he unites communities and fosters understanding. Signal Media Links continues to thrive, focusing on cultural enrichment and community engagement, while expanding its reach in the U.S. market.



TESTIMONIALS



Tyler is very **KNOWLEDGEABLE** from start to finish regarding business structure, analysis, strategy, and planning.



T.Z
Bismarck



The **PERSONAL** experience and knowledge of my advisor was **BEYOND** what was expected. This is an **INVALUABLE** experience!



Cassie Campbell
Grand Forks



Keith provided me with solid **INFORMATION** as well as a sense of **ENCOURAGEMENT** as an aspiring first-time business owner.



Janna Roloff
Tioga



My advisor has been **AMAZING** to work with, her **EXPERTISE** in all aspects was needed and she provided it without hesitation.



Jacklynn Tanberg
Minot



Thanks to the ND SBDC, I will be **EXPANDING** my small business, and I will be able to offer my Daycare services to more families in our community.



Marta Munoz
Dickinson



I cannot say enough about how **HELPFUL** Chris was and responsive to our request!! Top notch individual that is a **HUGE** asset to the organization!



Melissa Kuntz
Fargo



Ashley is very **WELCOMING** and knowledgeable. I trust her professional opinion and without her **KNOWLEDGE** I would have no idea where to start.



Malorie O'Connell
Devils Lake



My advisor was such an **ASSET** and was so **GREAT** to work with!



Cheryl Dix
Hettinger



I would not be able to afford to get the help that I have been given by Nicole Evans. She has been **AMAZING**. Her help has been such a **BLESSING** as a free resource to help me create a successful business.



Julie Wharam
Grand Forks

NETWORK PROGRAMS

U.S. SMALL BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION



The Veterans Business Outreach Center (VBOC) program is a one-stop-shop for service members, veterans and military spouses looking to start, purchase, or grow a business. VBOCs provide training workshops, including Boots to Business (B2B) and Boots to Business Reboot, as well as business development assistance such as training, advising, and resource referrals. B2B and Reboot are entrepreneurial education and training programs open to Service members, National Guard and Reserves, Veterans of all eras, and their spouses. VBOC of the Dakotas provides services in both North and South Dakota.



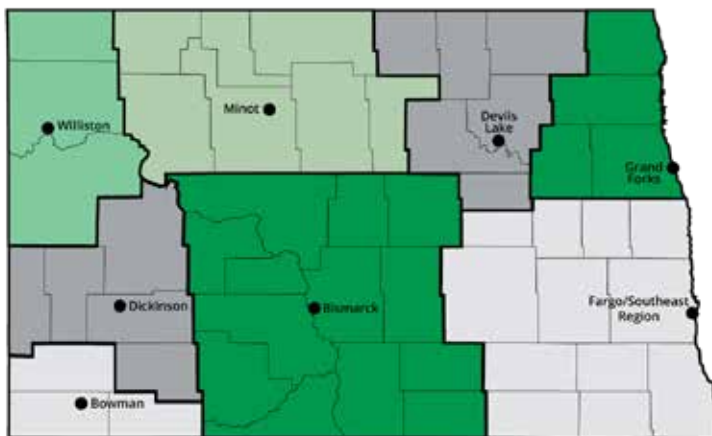
The North Dakota APEX Accelerator is a resource for assisting ND businesses in obtaining federal, state, and local government contracts. Advisors work with businesses to identify government contracting opportunities. They provide confidential, no cost, one-on-one counseling on how to obtain, manage, and comply with contracting requirements for the Department of Defense (DoD) and other federal agencies, state and local governments, as well as businesses with government prime contracts.



U.S. Small Business Administration



Funded in part by a cooperative agreement with the U.S. Small Business Administration.



**Location information can be found at:
ndsbdc.org**



A black and white photograph of a city street. The street is wide with a double white line down the center. On the left side, there are several cars parked or driving. On the right side, there are more cars parked along the curb. The buildings are multi-story with various architectural styles, including brick and stone. There are awnings over the storefronts. The sky is overcast with clouds. A large green rectangular overlay covers the top left portion of the image, and a smaller, semi-transparent green rectangle is positioned over the middle left portion, containing the text 'ndsfdc.org'.

ndsfdc.org