



Small Business Assistance Act

Cumulative Report for Fiscal Year 23 and Fiscal Year 24

Nebraska Small Business Assistance Act Biennial Report

Prepared for
Nebraska State Legislature
and
Governor Jim Pillen

By
Nebraska Department of Economic Development
September 27, 2024

Pursuant to Nebraska Revised Statute § 81-12, 235:

81-12-235. Reports (1) On or before October 1, 2024, and on or before October 1 of each even-numbered year thereafter, the department shall submit a report to the Governor and the Legislature that includes, but is not limited to:

- (a) A description of the demand for grants and counseling services under the Small Business Assistance Act from all geographic regions in Nebraska;
- (b) A listing of the grant recipients and the amounts of grants awarded pursuant to the act in the previous two fiscal years;
- (c) A listing of the recipients of counseling services under the act in the previous two fiscal years;
- (d) The impact of the grants provided under the act, including information on:
 - (i) The number of jobs created;
 - (ii) The economic impact on the area where the grant recipient is located;
 - (iii) The impact on state and local tax revenue; and
 - (iv) The types of businesses created, listed by industry.

(2) The report submitted to the Legislature shall be submitted electronically.

(3) The department may require the private entity described in section [81-12,234](#) and any recipients of grants or counseling services to provide periodic reports and information to enable the department to fulfill the requirements of this section.

(4) The report shall contain no information that is protected by state or federal confidentiality laws.

Source

- [Laws 2022, LB450, § 14.](#)

Small Business Assistance Act Program overview

Upon signing of LB450 by Governor Pete Ricketts on April 18, 2022, the Small Business Assistance Act ("Act") – LB450 §11-16, was enacted and assigned to the Department of Economic Development ("Department"). The intent of the Legislature was to appropriate five million annually to the Department each fiscal year to carry out the Act. The purpose of the Act is to provide grants to qualified individuals looking to start a small business and qualified individuals with eligible early-stage small business in existence no more than five (5) years, and professional business counseling services to individuals looking to start a small business or have started a small business in the previous five (5) years.

The Department issued Request for Proposal (RFP) Number 113737 O3 for the purpose of selecting a qualified Bidder to provide services necessary to carry out the functions of the Act, which was posted December 7, 2022. Three bids were received, evaluated, and scored. On February 8, 2023, the Department issued Notification of Intent to Award the contract to Grow Nebraska (Grow).

The term of the contract is a two (2) year period commencing upon the execution of the contract by the State and Bidder, with the option to renew for eight (8) additional one (1) year periods upon mutual agreement of the Parties. The State reserves the right to extend the period of this contract beyond the termination date when mutually agreeable to the Parties. The Department and Grow executed an Instrument of Signing and Clarification (Contract) 23-01-0238 on Feb 27, 2023, with the term commencing March 1, 2023, and ending February 28, 2025.

The minimum program aid prescribed by the Legislature available for distribution to conduct the Act in Appropriation Bill LB 450A was as follows:

Fiscal year 2022-2023: \$4,230,810.00

Fiscal year 2023-2024: \$4,214,050.00

Fiscal year 2024-2025: \$4,214,050.00 Funds from third fiscal year are now available but not yet distributed as it requires continuation of the agreement between the Department and Grow. This is anticipated to execute before Dec 31, 2024.

Report from Contractor – Grow Nebraska

Grow Nebraska designed the program, Nebraska Small Business Assistance Act (NSBAA), from scratch and established a statewide reach through core partnerships with the two Grow Nebraska entities: Grow Nebraska (Kearney) and the Grow Nebraska Women’s Business Center (Omaha); and two CDFI lenders: Nebraska Enterprise Fund of (Oakland/Omaha) and Center for Rural Affairs (Lyons). The Nebraska Business Development Center and SourceLink Nebraska are invited advisory partners.

As part of the agreement between Grow and the Department, the contractor will provide a quarterly report to the Department including information on the status of the program development and implementation, including administrative costs and beneficiaries.

As part of this report to the Governor and Legislature please refer to **Appendix A** – the second quarter 2024 Report submitted by Grow to the Department. This document contains a cumulative review of program activities, description of demand, narrative on program development and program iteration, and listing of beneficiaries (amounts and locations) from inception through June 30, 2024.

Notable information from the Grow report – as of June 30, 2024

- Total clients – 1594: Formal Application 866; Inquiries of interest – 728
- Program benefits have reached 58% of all counties
- The program has used all funds from the first fiscal year appropriation (FY 23) and began using funds appropriated in fiscal year FY24
- Benefits awarded through June 30, 2024 ¹
 - 195 beneficiaries: 16 Professional Services, 148 New Business Grants, 30 Existing Business grants
 - \$3,553,108 in benefits awarded as of June 30, 2024
- \$250,000 of FY23 funds reserved for new Business Planning Service benefit to begin Q3 2024
- Over 73% of program aid funds provided as direct benefit
- Less than 27% of program aid funds used for overhead and administration by Grow Nebraska

¹ This total includes some awards made but still in process and not yet requested or dispersed by the Department

Program Impact Analysis

The Department secured the services of the University of Nebraska- Lincoln, Bureau of Business Research (BBR) to conduct a preliminary Impact analysis of the Act. The complete report is provided in **Appendix B**.

Post Reporting Period update through FY25 Quarter One - addendum

Since the close of the reporting period for this report, June 30, 2024, the pace of delivering program benefits has increased during Q1 of Fiscal Year 2025. As of September 23, 2024, Grow Nebraska reported 230 Grants and 44 Professional Services awards issued. The Department has delivered \$4,531,232.01 and \$138,368.96 to Grow Nebraska for NSBAA Grant Benefits and for Professional Services rendered on behalf of benefit recipients, respectively.

The application pipeline has 143 applicants currently assigned to a partner to complete grant eligibility, 450 applicants graded as “Business Plan Deficient, or “Other Issue” – this cohort is the intended clientele for the new Business Planning Assistance benefit. The proposed Business Planning Assistance benefit has commenced but not yet passed a reporting benchmark to date. The Business Planning program has \$250,000 committed from the first fiscal year funds and Grow’s intent is to commit \$250,000 of each funding cycle to this benefit. This service will greatly expand the number of program beneficiaries.

168 applicants have been denied due to ineligibility or non-viable business proposal.

Contractor overhead and program administrative cost update: \$1,423,834 has been expensed by Grow to the Department for Core Partner commitments, Technology Services, Grow NSBAA Program Administration, NSBAA Program Consultant, and Indirect Overhead Costs.

The program budget has \$2,351,424.87 remaining from FY23 and FY24 funding. The Department has expressed the intent to exercise the option of extending the agreement one (1) year to enable Grow access to funds appropriated for the line item SBAA from the FY25 general budget.

**Appendix A –
Second Quarter 2024 report from Grow Nebraska
Cumulative from March 2023 – June 2024**

Second Quarter¹ 2024 Report to the Department of Economic Development *Cumulative Reporting*² *Nebraska Small Business Assistance Act Program*

07.31.2024

For More Information

Janell Anderson Ehrke, CEO and Founder
GROW Nebraska Foundation
308.962.6767 – janell@grownebraska.org – www.grownebraska.org

Background and Introduction

In 2022, the Nebraska Legislature enacted Legislative Bill 450 that included Sections 11 through 16 creating the ***Small Business Assistance Act***³. Section 12 (1) authorized the Nebraska Department of Economic Development⁴ to design and implement the Act. In turn, the Department issued a request for proposals selecting the GROW Nebraska Foundation⁵ to design and operate a program⁶. The agreement between the Department and GROW requires a quarterly report including information on the status of the Program’s development and implementation. This agreement was executed in April 2023. The Program and the Department have worked closely in the design and rollout of the Program⁷. This quarterly report is for the ***Second Quarter 2024*** including cumulative data from the start of the Program in March 2023.

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¹ Second Quarter 2024 includes the months of April, May, and June.

² Our Program quarterly reports to the Department are cumulative beginning with the start of the Program in March 2023.

³ Hereinafter: “Act”

⁴ Hereinafter: “Department”

⁵ For more information: <https://grownebraska.org/>

⁶ Hereinafter: Either the “Program” or “NSBAA Program”

⁷ For more information, checkout the “Program Guide”. The Department has elected to not use its Rule Making authority as authorized by Section 15 of the Act. Consequently, the Program Guide provides an equivalent for Program rules and regulations.

Section 1 - Progress Benchmarks

Important Timing – A Surge in Business Creation

*In the May 18, 2024 edition of **The Economist** a story ran titled “Business creation... Go get ‘em.” The subtitle reads... “America is in the midst of an extraordinary startup boom.”*

Prior to the World Health Pandemic alarm bells were sounding as new business startups in the United States were declining or very stagnate when compared to earlier time periods. There were fears, highlighted by the Ewing Marion Kauffman Foundation in Kansas City that America was losing its entrepreneur energy, and action was required to restart it.

During and following the Pandemic, new entrepreneurial energy was activated and there is a surge in new business startups. The underlying drivers for this significant pivot in new business startups are still under study. But two likely causes are increasingly clear. First, the Pandemic drove serious reflection on the part of many Americans regarding how they wanted to make a living. Many chose to leave the stressful job market and strike out on their own. Second, there is a likely structural shift occurring related to fundamental changes in the wage and salary employment market. Even good jobs are becoming transactional with uncertainty and weak career tracks. Talented people are going into business for themselves as a result.

For the Program, the timing is excellent given the likely surge in nascent small business startups and expansions occurring in Nebraska.

GROW Nebraska, with active guidance from the Department, and in partnership with strategic partners,⁸ has realized the following progress benchmarks as of the close of June 2024:

Over 73% of Year 1 Program Funding Flowed to Small Businesses

- Phase 1 and Phase 2 Rollouts Completed
- Phase 3 or the “Public” Rollout launched March 2024 and fully in process.
- Program Strategic Partners have onboarded additional Program staff increasing capacity.

⁸ By design GROW Nebraska has engaged the following strategic partners including GROW Nebraska, the Omaha Women’s Business Center (part of GROW Nebraska), the Center for Rural Affairs, the Nebraska Enterprise Fund, the Nebraska Business Development Center including SourceLink Nebraska.

- The rate of application processing has increased and the delay from time of application to screening to preliminary determinations has shortened dramatically.
- Year 1 Program funding was fully deployed.
- Over 73% of Year 1 Program⁹ funding was provided as benefits to Nebraska entrepreneurs.
- Application screening has improved in its effectiveness.
- ***The Miren Client Relations Management System*** is now largely operational. However, the continues to be cleanup work, and fine-tuning.
- Effective operationalization of the “Shovel Ready” criteria¹⁰
- Program Review Committee (hereinafter: “PRC”) is processing applications every two weeks (20 to 30 awards every month on average)
- There is a growing commitment to Program quality control ensuring every inquiry and applicant is addressed within 60 to 90 days.
- Up to 50% of all applications are found to be unqualified because of non-existent, weak, or incomplete business plans. A new Program is under development to provide business planning assistance which will be rolled out in August/September 2024.

This Act and Program is challenging because first it is new and requires a “from scratch” startup coupled with the unique issues associated with giving away assistance. Not only must this program equitably distribute benefits to qualified individuals across Nebraska, ensuring fraud and abuse is controlled. Program design is essential including scaled rollout to ensure strong systems and onboard client staff.

⁹ Excluding the \$800,000 per year in Department overhead.

¹⁰ More on criteria is shared later in this Report.

Section 2 – Dashboard Indicators

Cumulative from March 2023 through the end of June 2024

Within the Miren CRM the Program is fine-tuning real time dashboard indicators. As the Program fully deploys over the next 18 months, the Miren Performance Dashboard should enable more accurate, complete, and timely reporting. Figure 1 summarizes key progress and performance dashboard indicators:

Figure 1. Program Dashboard Indicators through June 30, 2024

Total Clients – 1,594			
Formal Applications – 866 – 54%		Inquiries of Interest – 728 – 46%	
Formal Applications			
Awards 195 – 23%	In Progress 329 – 38%	Other ¹¹ 229 – 26%	Denials 113 - 13%
Awards			
Beneficiaries 195	Benefits Awarded \$3,553,108 – 73%	Program Costs ¹² 27% vs 52%	Reach 58% of All Counties
Program Awards by Benefit Area			
Business Planning ¹³ \$0.00 0%	Professional Services \$81,739 2.3%	New Business Grants \$3,142,542 88.4%	Existing Bus. Grants \$328,827 9.3%

Analysis...

- **Program Application Trends.** By May 2024, the Program realized a steady pattern of new applications and application processing. The backlog of applications being curated in a timely manner. Figure 2 provides the trend line in applications increasing from under 600 in April 2024 to over 800 by the end of June 2024 representing a 33% increase. Note the surge

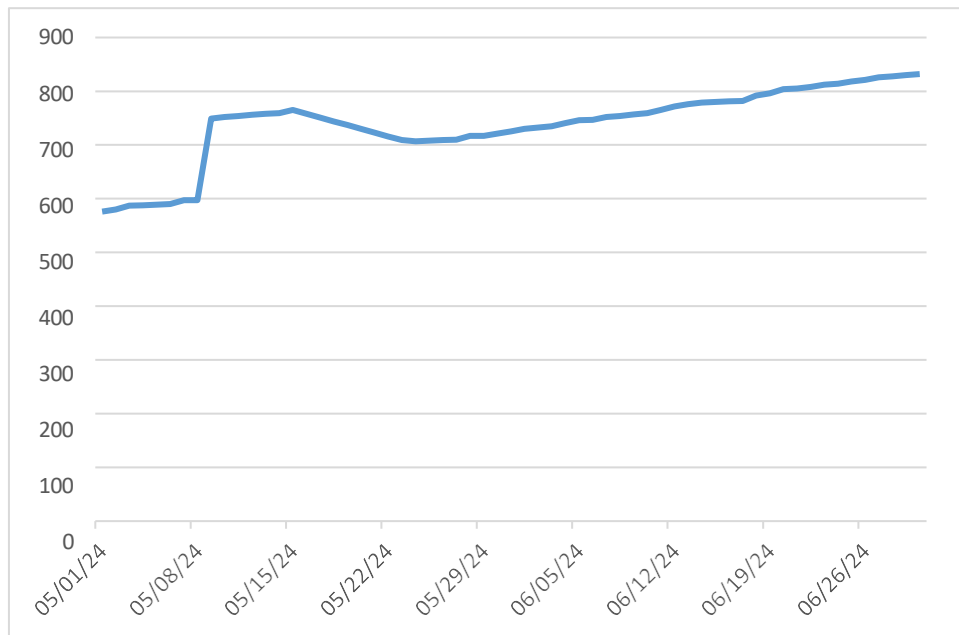
¹¹ Other includes abandoned and duplicative applications. This process of cleaning up the CRM continues.

¹² The Year 1 Program budget, excluding Department overhead, provided for up to 52% of all funds to support Program development and implementation. The actual program costs are 27% representing nearly a 50% savings.

¹³ \$250,000 has been set aside from Year-1 funding to provide business planning support, but none of these funds have been spent as of June 30, 2024. This need-based assistance will start in August 2024.

in mid-May. This surge was due to importing earlier applications from the old Miren CRM. During the late May timeframe, these earlier applications were reviewed, and duplications eliminated resulting in reduced application numbers. Some of this decline was offset by new applications. All applications received during Phases 1 and 2, entered into the older Miren CRM, were requested to make new applications with the Phase 3 public rollout in March 2024.

Figure 2 – Program Applications Received, May 1 through June 30, 2024



- ☐ **Year 2 Funding.** Year 2 Program Funding is now being employed to cover both Program costs and benefits to applicants. A new Year 2 Funding Budget has been established. The 2024 Unicameral has provided the Department an additional \$5 million in Program funding that will extend the life and reach of the **Nebraska Small Business Assistance Act** and Program.
- ☐ **Business Planning Assistance.** Upwards to one-third of all Program applications are deficient due to incomplete or weak business plans. Financials and market feasibility are two areas of deficiency. As a result, the Program is working with the Department and its strategic partners¹⁴ to develop and deploy focused assistance to enhance small businesses shovel readiness. This targeted program is scheduled for activation early in Quarter 3, 2024.

¹⁴ GROW Nebraska, GROW Omaha Women’s Business Center, Nebraska Business Development Center, Nebraska Enterprise Fund, and the Center for Rural Affairs.

Section 3 - Program Benefits Distribution

The Program is required by the Act and the Department to report benefits awarded including the name of the beneficiary, their geographic location, the nature of the benefit received¹⁵ and the amount of the award. Figures 3 through 6 provide these reporting details through June 30, 2024.

Figure 3. Program Benefits Awarded through June 30, 2024.

Benefit Area	Awards	% Total	Amount	Average	% Total
Business Planning Assistance	0	0.00%	\$0.00	\$0.00	0.00%
Professional Services	16	8.25%	\$81,739.00	\$5,108.69	2.30%
New Business Grants	148	76.29%	\$3,142,541.53	\$21,233.39	88.44%
Existing Business Grants	30	15.46%	\$328,827.13	\$10,960.90	9.25%
Total	194	100.00%	\$3,553,107.66	\$18,314.99	100.00%

Analysis...

- ☐ There is a significant ramp up of Program assistance awards throughout Nebraska since the Quarter 1 2024 report.
- ☐ Nearly \$3.6 million in assistance has been provided.
- ☐ New business grants dominate the assistance being provided, including over 76% of all awards and over 88% of all funding assistance.
- ☐ New business grants are running 4.9 times stronger when compared to existing business grants. Unusual statutory criteria are complicating the Program’s ability to qualify individuals for existing business grants.
- ☐ While funding for professional services and customized technical assistance is below targets, activity is increasing. In some cases, Professional services funding is preceding grant funding, and in other cases it is following grant funding. We anticipate increased levels of professional services assistance in the coming year.
- ☐ Effective August 2024, the Program will offer a “lean” professional services assistance focusing on customized business planning, business feasibility analysis, and financial projections. Upwards to 50% of all applicants are (1) slowed down or (2) unable to secure assistance because of non-existent, weak, or incomplete business plans.
- ☐ All of year-one funding was effectively allocated by the end of the State Fiscal Year or June 30, 2024.

¹⁵ There are three Act authorized Program benefits including new small business startup grants, existing small business grants and funding for professional services.

Figure 4. Professional Services Awards through June 30, 2024

#	Last Name	First Name	Business Name	County	Award
1	Alcuria	Regla	Gonzalez and Alcuria LLC	Hall	\$2,260.00
2	Cannon	JaNeshia	Family First Early Childcare, LLC	Douglas	\$3,750.00
3	Carbaugh	Lydia	Lakeside Rental Adventures LLC	Dawson	\$3,580.00
4	Christenson	Charles	Kool Kapz LLC	Douglas	\$10,000.00
5	Cline	Raeschia	No Buzz	Kearney	\$764.00
6	Colfack	Stefani	Double Play Apparel & Engravingm, LLC	Holt	\$2,655.00
7	Cox	DeForrest	My personal Agent	Douglas	\$10,000.00
8	Gideon	Sara	Sara G Handcrafted Jewelry	Garfield	\$5,350.00
9	Gonzalez	Julissa	Auburn's Wishing Well	Nemaha	\$7,830.00
10	Hall	Celine	The Simple Co	Morrill	\$1,200.00
11	Kammerer	Eva	The Salvy Lady	Douglas	\$8,400.00
		Claudia			
12	Pinto	Patricia	Tree in a silo farm LLC	Douglas	\$5,700.00
13	Rogers	Quentin	Mobile Gearhead LLC	Douglas	\$4,600.00
14	Skeen	Preston	308 Calls	Lancaster	\$1,200.00
15	Thayer	Jenna	Love Ewe Candle Company	Clay	\$9,650.00
16	Lupercio	Nancy	Pioneer Package LLC	Dakota	\$4,800.00
				Total	\$81,739.00
				Average	\$5,108.69

Figure 5. New Business Grants through June 30, 2024

#	Last Name	First Name	Business Name	County	Award
1	Adamson	Aaron	AA Tint, LLC	Cheyenne	\$25,000.00
2	Adelson	Andrew	Top Wash LLC	Polk	\$24,614.00
3	Alcuria	Regla	Gonzalez & Alcuria LLC	Hall	\$22,739.00
4	Allen	Karen	EyeLookGood! LLC	Chase	\$24,902.28
5	Anderson	Savannah	Savannah Berlyn Photo & Design	Thurston	\$24,954.00
6	Armstrong	Kaelyn	Saved by the Well, LLC	Keith	\$25,000.00
7	Baker	Michael	Max B Drywall & Contracting LLC	Lancaster	\$8,616.50
8	Baldwin	Whitney	The Butte Bakery	Box Butte	\$12,454.00
9	Barrett	Natalie	Natty B's Bar & Grill	Seward	\$25,000.00
10	Baumgartner	Cara	Esthetique West	Scotts Bluff	\$17,000.00
11	Benton	Breeanna	Art by Breeanna	Keith	\$21,922.00
12	Bergman	Jeff	Blended Light, LLC	Buffalo	\$19,172.00
13	Blickenstaff	Kelly	Hex and Hive	Harlan	\$25,000.00
14	Bourg	Brad	Ag Above the Line	Phelps	\$24,997.39
15	Broders	Katelynn	I Wet My Plants, LLC	Wayne	\$21,984.73
16	Bryant	Adonna	Liit Ladies in Information Technology Pathways llc	Douglas	\$18,652.00

17	Cannon	JaNeshia	Family First Early Childcare, LLC	Douglas	\$24,657.65
18	Carbaugh	Lydia	Lakeside Rental Adventures LLC.	Dawson	\$24,946.85
19	Chaviano	Neilin	Neilin Style LLC	Hall	\$24,815.80
20	Clark	Ronald	RJ's BBQ Sauce	Douglas	\$17,030.00
21	Cochrane	Angela	Legandairy Rolled Ice Cream	Scotts Bluff	\$22,950.00
22	Colfack	Stefani	Double Play Apparel & Engravingm, LLC	Holt	\$18,551.85
23	Cox	Leta	The Sage Barn Flowers & Gifts	Box Butte	\$23,925.00
24	Cox	DeForrest	My Personal Agent	Douglas	\$16,500.00
25	Cox	Deborah	Sabbiatos Pasta	Hooker	\$25,000.00
26	Crawford	Makayla	Crawford Counseling	Keith	\$21,746.00
27	Danielson	Austin	All American Concrete & Excavation LLC	Dawes	\$25,000.00
28	Davis	Nisha	Successful Little Scholars Learning Center and Childcare	Douglas	\$24,255.00
29	Davis	ShaQue	Davis D'elegance & Co Collections LLC	Douglas	\$16,530.00
30	Dawe	Riley	Curbside Construction	Seward	\$25,000.00
31	Deibler	Dawson	Coffee Vault	Brown	\$25,000.00
32	Dominguez	Merari	Carolinas Antojitos LLC	Hall	\$22,320.00
33	Dowdy	Julia	D & S Sprinklers	Keith	\$25,000.00
34	Ellis	Marshall	Carpentry and Some, LLC	Keith	\$15,977.93
35	Erington	Tatyana	EnchantInk	Hall	\$25,000.00
36	Evans	Leontyne	Explore the Evans Experience	Douglas	\$25,000.00
37	Frazier	Sara	Mellow Grind LLC	Lincoln	\$24,820.00
38	Friesen	Karley	Coverly Boutique	York	\$24,997.86
39	Furtado	Richard	Squared Away Laser Engraving	Lincoln	\$24,876.52
40	Gamboa	Ivan	Rocket Creative LLC	Hall	\$15,486.82
41	Gibson	Richard	Second Chapter Brewing, LLC	Keith	\$25,000.00
42	Gonzalez	Julissa	Auburn's Wishing Well	Nemaha	\$25,000.00
43	Goreham	Samuel	IAM PRODUCTIONS LLC	Douglas	\$21,765.28
44	Graves	Brent	Brent Graves Tree Service	Dawson	\$25,000.00
45	Green	Krista	Little Blessings Childcare LLC	Cuming	\$25,000.00
46	Greiman	Rylee	The Wandering Lilac LLC	Dawes	\$24,700.00
47	Griffith	Baily	Dirty Pop	Box Butte	\$25,000.00
48	Guerrero	Paula	La Rox Rox Boutique	Hall	\$24,889.98
49	Hahn	Tonja	Fabulous Brews	Buffalo	\$6,000.00
50	Hanna	Selena	Hitching Post Motel	Arthur	\$24,696.50
51	Hansen	Grant	Double H Construction LLC	Thayer	\$24,926.58
52	Harimon	Michael	Al's Market, LLC	Morrill	\$6,000.00
53	Heitritter	Jason	Grunt Worx & Equipment Rental	Saunders	\$24,979.00
54	Helzer	Danielle	Rooted Books & Gifts LLC	Hall	\$24,237.00
55	Hinde	Alicia	Holistic Haven LLC	Lincoln	\$24,445.00
56	Horne	Becky	Prime Fifteen Professional Studio Suites	Scotts Bluff	\$25,000.00

57	Howell	Joshua	Game Knights LLC	Lincoln	\$25,000.00
58	Issa Mjadji	Fouad	KOPONI GROUP LLC	Hall	\$24,874.52
59	Jackson	Xavier	Local Art Plug	Douglas	\$24,960.56
60	Kasaty	Brenda	Rose Cat Coffee Company	Lancaster	\$25,000.00
61	Keith	Lauren	Breakthrough Fitness & Nutrition LLC	Douglas	\$25,000.00
62	Kercher	Kenton	Kercher Contracting, LLC	Keith	\$25,000.00
63	Kielian	Eric	JEK Investments DBA Big Blue Bike Company	Gage	\$24,405.33
64	Kissell	Michelle	Dawn's Light Energy	Platte	\$5,387.32
65	Klein	Matthew	MCK Radon Mitigation	Phelps	\$18,911.36
66	Knote	Sara	Sara's Pet Salon LLC	Box Butte	\$11,229.07
67	Kolbo	Zach	Kolbo Ag, LLC	Dodge	\$25,000.00
68	Kovarik	Darcia	Pony Hill Glamping LLC	Garfield	\$18,000.00
69	Kramer	Cherie	Tousled Curls	Logan	\$25,000.00
70	Kresl	Samantha	Flourishing Farms LLC	Box Butte	\$25,000.00
71	Krueger	Cameron	Rexius Nutrition	Buffalo	\$24,949.00
72	Lako	Leah	Rhino Medical Transportation Service, LLC	Douglas	\$25,000.00
73	Lee	Erick	EM Enterprises, LLC. dba Lee's Crossroads Cafe	Furnas	\$18,600.85
74	Lewis	Mishala	MECHEE LLC	Douglas	\$22,230.00
75	Licking	Anna	Cactus Flower Design	Sheridan	\$25,000.00
76	Lopez	Susana	Taqueria y Antojitos Susy LLC	Buffalo	\$20,229.00
77	Lopez	Irma	Sabor Costeno LLC	Dodge	\$12,123.00
78	Loveless	Alexandra	BlackOut Blush LLC	Hall	\$15,700.00
79	Loza	Josafina	Lozafina, LLC	Douglas	\$12,424.00
80	Lupercio	Nancy	Pioneer Package LLC	Dakota	\$23,150.00
81	Martinez-Rodriguez	Yessica	El Sazon Taquizas, LLC	Dawson	\$25,000.00
82	McAleese	Andrea	Mighty Tidy	Harlan	\$25,000.00
83	McNelis	Mikki	Legacy Coffee Collective	Hall	\$25,000.00
84	Mendoza	Carlos	Tutto's Transport LLC	Hall	\$24,469.00
85	Michka	Teri	Bloomin Daisies Floral & Gifts	Holt	\$17,800.00
86	Miller	Abby	Pat On Tap	Saunders	\$23,457.77
87	Moe	Jaden	MOE's Electric LLC	Keith	\$10,000.00
88	Murphy	Britni	Elite Bookkeeping Services, LLC	Cherry	\$5,549.65
89	Murray	Laryn	The Crossing Pub and Grub, LLC	Seward	\$25,000.00
90	Namuth	Brooke	Chief Sign Company	Keith	\$25,000.00
91	Nelson	Chad	Nelson Drone Solutions	Adams	\$24,697.00
92	Nesbit	Tierra	I AM Curvy Red	Douglas	\$24,965.00
93	Neu	Mckenna	Brand Neu LLC	Phelps	\$25,000.00
94	Newmann	Trevon	Modern Moves Fitness & Dance Studio	Cheyenne	\$19,100.00
95	Niles	Julie	Air Excellence OMT, LLC	Dawson	\$24,960.55
96	Norman	Laura	Stages Boytique	Douglas	\$21,699.81
97	Olson	Joseph	Black Sheep LLC	Phelps	\$14,249.00

98	Padron	Ismary	El Sazon De Mima LLC	Madison	\$19,972.00
99	Parsons	Brenda	Boondock Designs, LLC	Deuel	\$24,660.00
100	Phillips	Jobeth	Funicular Strategy	Lancaster	\$20,961.99
101	Powers	Jessica	Power Body Sculpting LLC	Lancaster	\$17,050.00
102	Railsback	Hannah	Cradles & Crayons Childcare	Saline	\$19,865.40
103	Rask	Nicole	Local Roots & Gifts LLC	Furnas	\$24,868.00
104	Rawn	Amanda	Level Up Bookkeeping	Red Willow	\$4,747.20
105	Reynolds	Arthur	Old Styles	Knox	\$25,000.00
106	Reynolds	Lola	Sewing Stars Quilting and Gifts	Knox	\$25,000.00
107	Rogers	Quentin	Mobile Gearhead LLC	Douglas	\$17,186.14
108	Rollman	Staci	SLAK'R Repair LLC	Platte	\$24,400.00
109	Root	Mandy	Color Crete Creations	Buffalo	\$3,527.00
110	Rosemond	Dekyah	Bold Beauty Hair and Beauty Supply	Douglas	\$22,215.99
111	Rosenthal	Gail	F.U.E.L.	Dodge	\$24,870.45
112	Runyan	Nicholas	Gift of Peace Booklets L.L.C.	Clay	\$1,947.24
113	Sarmiento	Raul	Amparitos Market	Lancaster	\$25,000.00
114	Sauder	Jillana	Savor and Grace	Cheyenne	\$24,950.00
115	Saul	Gary	Woknipi LLC	Sarpy	\$25,000.00
116	Sayre	Jesse	Capital Z INC	Buffalo	\$12,454.55
117	Scheer	Sarah	Curio LLC	Lancaster	\$23,831.00
118	Schleicher	Sara	Hug In A Mug	Box Butte	\$25,000.00
119	Scott	Ivory	Aster's Foods	Cheyenne	\$24,869.00
120	Scott	Keilah	True North Investments	Douglas	\$24,708.00
121	Sell-Grove	Jodi	GLOW Counseling, Coaching & Consulting, LLC	Valley	\$16,932.97
122	Sheridan	Fletcher	Golden Hour Barbeque, LLC	Box Butte	\$23,437.00
123	Shonka	Megan	Happy Mango Bakery LLC	Sarpy	\$12,427.00
124	Skeen	Preston	308 Calls	Lancaster	\$2,685.62
125	Slocum	Kandi	Country Chaos LLC DBA Triple C Coffee	Hamilton	\$22,906.54
126	Steed	Alecia	Busy Vegan	Douglas	\$20,297.69
127	Steinbrook	Crystal	The Spa	Buffalo	\$4,203.00
128	Stephenson	Mikaela	Tripods and Tails LLC	Perkins	\$11,877.76
129	Stritt	Kristine	Country Chill Bodysculpting LLC	Red Willow	\$24,763.13
130	Taylor	Christina	WeBBoiken, LLC	Kimball	\$25,000.00
131	Uher	Chase	White oak custom contracting	Lancaster	\$24,999.56
132	Underwood	Lauren	CNH - Inspections LLC	Adams	\$22,328.00
133	Urdiales	Jennifer	The Dugout	Scotts Bluff	\$25,000.00
134	Utra	Yoanny	Utra's Caribbean Food LLC	Lancaster	\$24,742.77
135	Vazquez Medrano	Oscar	Vazquez Music Studio	Platte	\$23,750.00
136	Walker	Lavina	Native Made Pizzeria	Thurston	\$22,424.52

137	Walmsley	Katie	Penny Hill Creative, LLC	Valley	\$24,166.00
138	Walnofer	Mark	Atkinson Rental Properties LLC	Holt	\$25,000.00
139	Waterman	Lisa	Sit N Pretty Pet Grooming	Keith	\$24,536.00
140	Webber	Brittany	Webber Hospitality LLC dba Geno's Steakhouse & Lounge	Wayne	\$24,622.41
141	Wells	Kayla	Dalton, NE 69131, USA	Cheyenne	\$25,000.00
142	White	William	Serenity Towing	Keith	\$25,000.00
143	White	Chelsea	Onsite Property Appraisals, LLC	Keith	\$24,916.99
144	Wilcox - Probst	Heather	CWP Cleaning LLC	Valley	\$25,000.00
145	Winer	Pam	Trailer of Terror LLC	Holt	\$24,839.04
146	Wood	Taryn	The Auto Oasis LLC	Box Butte	\$24,995.26
147	Wright	Taylor	Wright Elevate Health LLC	Red Willow	\$21,700.00
148	Zounon	Kodjovi	Crowned Warriors LLC	Douglas	\$24,900.00
				Total	\$3,142,541.53
				Average	\$21,233.39

Professional Services Analysis...

- ☐ Qualified applicants can receive up to \$10,000 in financial support to access professional services and/or customized technical assistance like an attorney's help in setting up and filing a LLC with the Secretary of State.
- ☐ \$81,739 in Program benefits dollars have been awarded with an average assistance of \$5,108.69.
- ☐ Interest in this part of the Program has been below projections, but activity is picking up and we anticipate higher demand in the months ahead.
- ☐ Qualified applicants can receive both grant and professional services support through separate applications.

New Business Grants Analysis...

- ☐ Over \$3.1 million in new business grants have been awarded through June 30, 2024.
- ☐ The average new business grant is \$21,233.39 or below the maximum grant of \$25,000 allowed by the Act.
- ☐ The Program is ensuring that applicants do not simply ask for the maximum grant but demonstrate critical needs ensuring strong funding asks.

Existing Business Grants Analysis...

- ☐ Existing business grant applicants can receive up to \$12,500.
- ☐ There are 30 existing business grant awards totaling \$328,827.13 with an average grant of \$10,960.90.

Figure 6. Existing Business Grants Awarded through June 30, 2024

#	Last Name	First Name	Business Name	County	Award
1	Atkins	Destiny	D ATKINS ENTERPRISES LLC	Douglas	\$12,483.43
2	Bradley	Theresa	Lady Bradley's Salon	Douglas	\$12,500.00
3	Bruce	Jamaal	N S Development LLC	Lancaster	\$8,087.50
4	Covey	Lacy	Valor's General Store, LLC	Box Butte	\$12,500.00
5	Crawford	Jessalyn	Hey Honey Boutique, LLC	Valley	\$12,500.00
6	Feldman	Clarissa	Setting D Ranch	Sherman	\$12,500.00
7	Fletcher	Jessica	SAME24 FITNESS	Custer	\$12,500.00
8	Foster	Corey	Foster Quality Painting and Hauling LLC	Douglas	\$12,500.00
9	Haller	Brittany	Sandhills Shirt Company	Sheridan	\$12,473.75
10	Hernandez	Deshawn	Island Chill	Douglas	\$12,452.78
11	Holloway	Kenneth	Western Tactical Rifles, LLC	Box Butte	\$6,195.00
12	Jackson-Moore	Sheri	Valincia's Daughter, LLC.	Douglas	\$11,323.71
13	Kammerer	Eva	The Salvy Lady	Douglas	\$1,095.00
14	Keifer	Tracey	The Gal and Goat	Frontier	\$12,500.00
15	Lee	Cecilia	Cilia By C.Lee,LLC	Douglas	\$6,612.39
16	Macias Lopez	Alejandro	Old Barrel Grocery & Liquor, Inc.	Dakota	\$12,405.00
17	Nelson	Hannah	Rural Way Promotions	Lincoln	\$4,704.94
18	Norgard	Melissa	MKSE Norgard LLC Boss City Brewing Co.	Cheyenne	\$12,500.00
19	Page	William	DAP Trucking	Sarpy	\$12,403.00
20	Page, Jr.	William	Military Outcasts	Sarpy	\$12,454.49
21	Parker	Mandy	Total Graphics	Wayne	\$11,522.98
22	Pinto	Claudia Patricia	Tree in a Silo Farm LLC	Douglas	\$12,500.00
23	Sanders	Terri	Omaha Star, LLC	Douglas	\$10,635.26
24	Sanoe	Mariem	Let US Talk About It Coaching LLC	Sarpy	\$12,453.14
25	Scott	Kayla	Kayla Scott's Childcare	Keith	\$12,500.00
26	Shaner	Jamie	Smokin Double D's	Dawson	\$6,565.70
27	Skibinski	Seth	2-SKi Welding, LLC	Sherman	\$12,459.47
28	Tracey	Keifer	The Gal and Goat	Frontier	\$12,500.00
29	Veik	Heather	River Mill Coffee Co. LLC	Antelope	\$12,500.00
30	Zambrano	Tatiana	Kribe Distributor LLC	Madison	\$12,499.59
				Total	\$328,827.13
				Average	\$10,960.90

Figure 7. Program Benefits Awarded by Region

Region	Population	% Total	Beneficiaries	% Total	Ratio
Metro	833,162	42.50%	43	22.05%	51.88%
Southeast	495,730	25.29%	22	11.28%	44.61%
Northeast	155,356	7.93%	22	11.28%	142.36%
Central	304,655	15.54%	50	25.64%	164.99%
Mid-Plains	89,048	4.54%	30	15.38%	338.68%
Western	88,469	4.51%	28	14.36%	318.17%

Analysis...

- ☐ Figure 6 provides how the 195 Program awards are distributed by region. We are employing the Community College service area regions that correspond to the Governor's and Department's new development areas.
- ☐ There is increasing reach and equitable distribution of Program benefits regionally when compared to previous quarterly reports.
- ☐ There continue to be material differences, based on relative populations between these six Nebraska regions.
- ☐ The ratio (last column in the Figure) divides the share of benefit awards by relative population. Values below 100% indicate an underserved situation. Values above 100% indicate an overserved situation.
- ☐ Rural regions (i.e., Northeast, Central, Mid-Plains, and Western) are being served and by this standard are overserved. However, rural areas tend to have a higher concentration, relative to their population, of small businesses.
- ☐ The two regions with Nebraska's largest cities (i.e., Omaha and Lincoln) are still underserved.
- ☐ The Mid-Plains Region, including a number of high-performing counties, is optimizing this program for its small businesses. We recommend that the outreach performance be evaluated to better understand why this region in Nebraska is reaching more of its qualified entrepreneurs for Program benefits. Please refer to the Molly Jeffries story, rooted in Keith County (e.g., part of the Mid-Plains Region) for insight regarding high performing counties.
- ☐ The Western Region is also achieving consider success rooted in four primary cities of Alliance, Sidney, Scottsbluff, and Chadron. These are the region's four largest cities and serve as retail and service hubs for larger rural regions that are among the most sparsely populated areas in Nebraska. Outreach and word of mouth marketing is enhanced in these situations.

Figure 8 on the next page provides both regional and county level reach and equitable distribution data.

Figure 8. Program Benefits Awarded by County and Region

Region	Population	% Total	Awards 195	%Total	Benchmarked
Metro	<i>4 Counties</i>				
Dodge	37,167	1.90%	3	1.54%	81.14%
Douglas	584,526	29.82%	35	17.95%	60.19%
Sarpy	190,604	9.72%	5	2.56%	26.37%
Washington	20,865	1.06%	0	0.00%	0.00%
Metro Total	833,162	42.50%	43	22.05%	51.88%
Southeast	<i>15 Counties</i>				
York	14,125	0.72%	1	0.51%	71.17%
Fillmore	5,551	0.28%	0	0.00%	0.00%
Thayer	5,034	0.26%	1	0.51%	199.70%
Seward	17,609	0.90%	3	1.54%	171.27%
Saline	14,292	0.73%	1	0.51%	70.34%
Jefferson	7,240	0.37%	0	0.00%	0.00%
Saunders	22,278	1.14%	2	1.03%	90.25%
Lancaster	322,608	16.46%	11	5.64%	34.28%
Gage	21,704	1.11%	1	0.51%	46.32%
Cass	26,598	1.36%	0	0.00%	0.00%
Otoe	15,912	0.81%	0	0.00%	0.00%
Johnson	5,290	0.27%	0	0.00%	0.00%
Pawnee	2,544	0.13%	0	0.00%	0.00%
Nemaha	7,074	0.36%	2	1.03%	284.22%
Richardson	7,871	0.40%	0	0.00%	0.00%
SE Total	495,730	25.29%	22	11.28%	44.61%
Northeast	<i>20 Counties</i>				
Keya Paha	769	0.04%	0	0.00%	0.00%
Brown	2,903	0.15%	1	0.51%	346.29%
Rock	1,262	0.06%	0	0.00%	0.00%
Boyd	1,810	0.09%	0	0.00%	0.00%
Holt	10,127	0.52%	5	2.56%	496.34%
Garfield	1,813	0.09%	2	1.03%	1108.98%
Wheeler	774	0.04%	0	0.00%	0.00%
Knox	8,391	0.43%	2	1.03%	239.61%
Antelope	6,295	0.32%	1	0.51%	159.70%
Boone	5,379	0.27%	0	0.00%	0.00%
Pierce	7,317	0.37%	0	0.00%	0.00%
Madison	35,585	1.82%	2	1.03%	56.50%
Cedar	8,380	0.43%	0	0.00%	0.00%

Wayne	9,013	0.46%	3	1.54%	334.61%
Stanton	5,842	0.30%	0	0.00%	0.00%
Dixon	5,606	0.29%	0	0.00%	0.00%
Dakota	21,582	1.10%	3	1.54%	139.74%
Thurston	6,773	0.35%	2	1.03%	296.85%
Cuming	9,013	0.46%	1	0.51%	111.54%
Burt	6,722	0.34%	0	0.00%	0.00%
NE Total	155,356	7.93%	22	11.28%	142.36%
Western	<i>13 Counties</i>				
Sioux	1,135	0.06%	0	0.00%	0.00%
Scotts Bluff	35,585	1.82%	4	2.05%	113.00%
Banner	674	0.03%	0	0.00%	0.00%
Kimball	3,434	0.18%	1	0.51%	292.75%
Dawes	8,199	0.42%	2	1.03%	245.22%
Box Butte	10,842	0.55%	10	5.13%	927.22%
Sheridan	5,127	0.26%	0	0.00%	0.00%
Morrill	4,555	0.23%	2	1.03%	441.40%
Cheyenne	9,468	0.48%	6	3.08%	637.07%
Sheridan	5,127	0.26%	2	1.03%	392.16%
Garden	1,874	0.10%	0	0.00%	0.00%
Deuel	1,838	0.09%	1	0.51%	546.95%
Grant	611	0.03%	0	0.00%	0.00%
W Total	88,469	4.51%	28	14.36%	318.17%
Central	<i>22 Counties</i>				
Dawson	24,111	1.23%	6	3.08%	250.17%
Gosper	1,893	0.10%	0	0.00%	0.00%
Furnas	4,636	0.24%	3	1.54%	650.53%
Valley	4,059	0.21%	4	2.05%	990.68%
Sherman	2,959	0.15%	2	1.03%	679.48%
Buffalo	50,084	2.55%	7	3.59%	140.50%
Phelps	8,968	0.46%	4	2.05%	448.39%
Harlan	3,073	0.16%	2	1.03%	654.27%
Kearney	6,688	0.34%	1	0.51%	150.31%
Franklin	2,889	0.15%	0	0.00%	0.00%
Greeley	2,188	0.11%	0	0.00%	0.00%
Howard	6,475	0.33%	0	0.00%	0.00%
Hall	62,895	3.21%	12	6.15%	191.80%
Adams	31,205	1.59%	2	1.03%	64.43%
Webster	3,395	0.17%	0	0.00%	0.00%
Nance	3,380	0.17%	0	0.00%	0.00%
Merrick	7,668	0.39%	0	0.00%	0.00%

Hamilton	9,429	0.48%	1	0.51%	106.62%
Clay	6,104	0.31%	2	1.03%	329.39%
Polk	5,214	0.27%	1	0.51%	192.81%
Nuckolls	4,095	0.21%	0	0.00%	0.00%
Butler	8,369	0.43%	0	0.00%	0.00%
Platte	34,296	1.75%	3	1.54%	87.94%
Colfax	10,582	0.54%	0	0.00%	0.00%
Central Total	304,655	15.54%	50	25.64%	164.99%

Mid-Plains	<i>19 Counties</i>				
Cherry	5,455	0.28%	1	0.51%	184.29%
Hooker	711	0.04%	1	0.51%	1413.91%
Arthur	434	0.02%	1	0.51%	2316.34%
Keith	8,335	0.43%	13	6.67%	1567.94%
Perkins	2,858	0.15%	1	0.51%	351.75%
Chase	3,434	0.18%	1	0.51%	292.75%
Dundy	1,654	0.08%	0	0.00%	0.00%
Hooker	711	0.04%	1	0.51%	1413.91%
McPherson	399	0.02%	0	0.00%	0.00%
Lincoln	34,676	1.77%	5	2.56%	144.96%
Hayes	856	0.04%	0	0.00%	0.00%
Hitchcock	2,616	0.13%	0	0.00%	0.00%
Thomas	669	0.03%	0	0.00%	0.00%
Logan	716	0.04%	1	0.51%	1404.04%
Frontier	2,519	0.13%	2	1.03%	798.17%
Red Willow	10,702	0.55%	3	1.54%	281.81%
Blaine	431	0.02%	0	0.00%	0.00%
Custer	10,545	0.54%	1	0.51%	95.33%
Loup	716	0.04%	0	0.00%	0.00%
Grant	611	0.03%	0	0.00%	0.00%
MP Total	89,048	4.54%	31	15.90%	349.97%

Analysis...

- ☐ Note very low population counties with just one or two awards have very high ratios indicating they are overserved. This is a statistical distortion.
- ☐ Top counties for awards include:
 - Douglas – 35
 - Keith – 13
 - Hall – 12
 - Lancaster - 11
 - Box Butte – 10
 - Buffalo – 7

- Dawson & Cheyenne – 6
 - Lincoln, Holt & Sarpy – 5
- 54 of Nebraska’s 93 counties or 58% have now received assistance from the Program. This is a significant increase in outreach and reach since the Program’s last quarterly report.

Section 4 - Program Impacts

Pursuant to Section 14 of the Act, the Program is required on or around October of each year beginning in 2024 to provide the Department, and then the Legislature and Governor “impact” analysis. For this quarterly report it is premature to provide impact analysis.

Benchmarking Data

Later in 2024 the first impact analysis for the ***Nebraska Small Business Assistance Act Program*** will be undertaken. It is important to put this Program’s success within the context of national small business performance. Ultimately, the following outcomes should be evaluated:

1. Development of Entrepreneurial Talent
2. Connection of this Entrepreneurial Talent with Nebraska’s Entrepreneurial Ecosystem
3. Performance of the Small Businesses Assisted by the Program
4. Community Economic Development Outcomes and Impacts
5. The Role of the Program in Supporting the Previously Four Noted Outcomes

Development of Entrepreneurial Talent. The research is clear... we can never project where any individual entrepreneur will end up. Some fail and start over creating lifestyle businesses. Others, learning from earlier experiences, create and grow businesses that over time create more substantial socio-economic impacts. Core to NSBAA’s north star mission is to find and develop a new generation of Nebraska’s entrepreneurs. This is like planting trees that over time will change our landscape for the better.

Connection of this Entrepreneurial Talent with Nebraska’s Entrepreneurial Ecosystem.

Capturing in the Unicameral’s public hearing record, and Senator Giest’s intent in proposing the ***Nebraska Small Business Assistance Act***, a case was made for connecting these nascent¹⁶ entrepreneur to resources sooner rather than later. Early connections within Nebraska’s remarkable small business resource network¹⁷ can dramatically increase small business success and development, decrease catastrophic failure, and empower future entrepreneurial success and impact.

Performance of the Small Businesses Assisted by the Program. NSBAA is a new startup. As a new startup, this Program is experiencing all the challenges and issues associated with a major new venture startup. There have been birthing issues. Over time, as this Program realizes its maturity, the overall efficiency, effectiveness, and performance should be evaluated. With time, the Program should demonstrate material progress on all three fronts.

Community Economic Development Outcomes and Impacts. Legislative and Program intent are clear. Supporting new small business startups and nascent existing small business

¹⁶ Nascent entrepreneurs are early in their small business founding and development. Most are inexperienced and the lack of knowledge contribute to failure.

¹⁷ Checkout SourceLink Nebraska for more information... <https://sourcelinknebraska.com/>.

expansions is intended to strengthen urban and rural communities throughout Nebraska. In addition to likely economic development impacts¹⁸, but also community building. Community building can include real estate development, building and site renewal and repurposing, provision of both essential and desired goods and services, and community capacity building.

The Role of the Program in Supporting the Previously Four Noted Outcomes. The Program is documenting its role in driving these four outcomes and impacts through both statistics and short stories. The statistics document the reach of the program geographically, the kinds of small businesses assisted, and the volume of deal flow enhanced. The Program's growing list of testimonial stories provide qualitative lens into what this Program is supporting and how it is making a fundamental difference to the entrepreneurs interviewed.

Role of Equity Capital

A primary determinant of why early-stage entrepreneurs fail or succeed is access to sufficient and patient capital. Most nascent entrepreneurs lack deep pockets to provide sufficient equity capital ensuring a sufficient runway to business success. NSBAA provides critical early-stage equity capital that can provide a longer and more patient runway for a new small business startup or nascent existing small business expansion. Additionally, even small amounts of equity capital (e.g., grants), that does not require repayment, can greatly enhance the viability and ultimate sustainability of these small businesses.

e2 Entrepreneurial Ecosystems

Impact Stories...

On average, each month the Program is capturing one impact story. These stories highlight how the Act and this Program are fulfilling Legislative intent. Our impact stories to date including:

❖ Jillana Sauder - ***Savor and Grace*** – Sidney and Cheyenne County

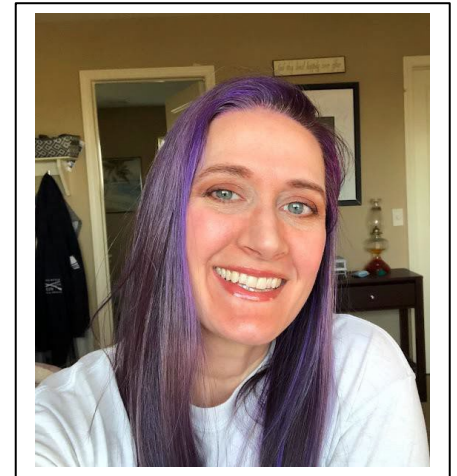
In this quarterly report we are featuring Megan Shonka and her ***Happy Mango Bakery*** located in metropolitan Omaha and Whitney Baldwin and her ***Butte Bakeries*** located roughly 400 miles to west in Alliance and Chadron.

Future stories are in progress and our next story captures how an entrepreneurial navigator program based in Keith County has generated, relative to population, the most NSBAA projects across Nebraska.

¹⁸ Likely economic development impacts include more and better businesses, job and career creation, increased investment, and area tax base expansion.

Entrepreneur Megan Shonka And Her Happy Mango Bakery

Meet Megan Shonka, and her **Happy Mango Bakery** located in LaVista, Nebraska. Megan is a person with wide ranging passions and talents. She started working for her family's business when she was just eight years old. Her family ran a family entertainment center dating back to the early 1990s in the Omaha metro. By age 13, she became a regular employee learning about business, human resources, and work ethics. She has a strong work ethic and is learning first-hand both the joys and challenges of being an entrepreneur. During her early years Megan studied psychology at college, then pivoting to arts and finally landing in theater as her final focus. Megan readily admits this is "in her blood." She is driven, committed, and is seeking to realize more than just money, but build community in her corner of Nebraska.



Megan's early experiences, formal and informal education all provided solid foundations for being an entrepreneur and business owner. She loves teaching, coaching, and mentoring others. As an artist Megan is powered by her passions and experiences in the fine arts, creative writing, and theater. Leading up to her home-based business, Megan used Mangelsen's™ (<https://www.mangelsens.com/>) training space to teach and test her ideas. Megan is a continuous learner, and during the Pandemic and while raising children, she spent lots of hours on **YouTube**™ (<https://www.youtube.com/>) exploring ideas and fueling her creative energies.



The origins of the **Happy Mango Bakery**, like so many other small businesses, began at home. In January of 2020, Megan gave birth to her last child. With the emerging Pandemic, her side gig managing an Airbnb™ (<https://www.airbnb.com/>) became unfeasible. She began baking out of her home kitchen satisfying both her need for income and creativity. When asked her rationale for moving from her home to a store front, Megan shared a lot of the reasons why so many early-stage entrepreneurs make this big step, including... a must needed commercial kitchen with more space, room to enable workshops and trainings, and space for events such as birthdays and summer baking camps with kids. In summer of 2024 the bakery opened. Her new store front shop will not only provide much needed kitchen and customer space, but a

"baking library." She is thinking about community building, where baking library members can check out mixers, other baking equipment, and books. The **Happy Mango Bakery** will be closed two days per week to provide Megan and her family time. Entrepreneurs... life balance is

The **Happy Mango Bakery** does not do breads, but a quick check of its website features... cakes, cupcakes, and other sweets. While the bakery is a business that must pay its way and make money, Megan is enabling a network of bakers throughout this part of America. The bakers **Facebook**™ page has 500 plus members creating a bakers' ecosystem. Ecosystems encourage and supports others. As Megan now focuses on her new shop, others in this network are stepping to foster this niche community. Check out <https://www.facebook.com/HappyMangoBakery/> for more information.

A collection of 14 cookies decorated with Winnie the Pooh characters, honeycomb patterns, and the name 'Oliver'. The cookies are shaped like various items: a honey pot, a donkey, a t-shirt, a number '1', a honeycomb hexagon, a bear, a piglet, and a heart. The decorations include the characters themselves, honeycomb patterns, the name 'Oliver', and a bee with a dotted trail.

1. Be open to asking for help.
2. Be prepared for the hard work and challenges in starting up a new business.
3. Swallow one's pride and seek help!
4. Be willing to give up some control so one can receive help from others.
5. Train staff so well so they can step up, do their jobs, and take some pressure off the owner.

<https://www.mapquest.com/us/nebraska/happy-mango-bakery-653480863>

Whitney Baldwin – Nebraska Entrepreneur

Butte Bakery – Chadron and Alliance

About Whitney... Whitney shares being an entrepreneur is “in her blood” and life experiences. Her grandfather was an entrepreneur. Her mother owned and operated a bookstore, and she is always ready to test new ideas. Her father provides the analytical talents supporting her mother’s entrepreneurial ventures and now Whitney’s. Whitney, despite her youthful age, has worked for others, managing a café in Denver, created and closed other businesses including Fizzy’s Diner. She has run a food truck, done smoothies and wraps, and even in her spare time is the staff for the **Chadron Open Art Gallery**¹⁹. She believes in community and gives back including serving as the “hunger coordinator” for **Community Table**. Plus, Whitney also has a life as a mother of three and wife to a railroader based in Alliance.

Like so many other entrepreneurs, Whitney has a strong creative urge. She is motivated to innovate, but also contributing to community building. Whitney is candid in how hard it is being an entrepreneur and small business owner. She advises others to be ready for the challenges and

Butte Bakery Ribbon Cutting



joys of this kind of life and work. Butte Bakeries are gathering places, and venues for other entrepreneurs to retail their creations. There is now a “bakers’ network” in Chadron and Alliance, as well as an emerging collaborative of other food makers in this rural region home to the beautiful Pine Ridge and south of the amazing Black Hills of South Dakota.

“Local Bakers Working Together to Rise!”

Butte Bakery... There are two Butte Bakeries, the first shop opened in Alliance and by popular demand, the second shop is in historic downtown Chadron. In so many ways “bakery” is not the right description for what is going on in the Butte Bakeries. These shops are more like

antique malls where there are multiple consignment dealers. In this case, the bakeries are markets for multiple vendors to retail their products. Butte Bakeries provide a commercial outlet for a minister who roasts coffee, a pie maker from Custer, South Dakota, bakers, meat producers, and so much more. A quick internet search pops up numerous multi-media stories, Facebook posts, and deeper insights into this Nebraska small business empowering other entrepreneurs.

¹⁹ <https://chadronopenart.com/>

Whitney also created and operates a ghost kitchen in a repurposed double-wide trailer. In her expanded Chadron shop, there is also space for another commercial kitchen. For cottage food producers, having access to commercial kitchens is foundational enabling them to retail their products.

Who Helped Me... When I asked who has helped her in her journey, Whitney did not even think and quickly shared... “Can’t do it alone!” She recognizes that her success is energized first and foremost by God, so many other helpers, collaborators and friends. Her family, including her husband,

daughter, grandfather, mother and father, and the four friends were instrumental in this small business journey. There are dozens of vendors core to this success, each in their own way contributing, generating a value proposition for customers beyond the individual offerings.

Then there is the **Nebraska Small Business Assistance Act Program**²⁰. Whitney shared how the funding from this Program enabled new commercial kitchen equipment in the Alliance store

allowing its older equipment to set up the Chadron shop. There are new display cases for food offerings. Finally, there is the POS or **Point of Sale** (POS) software system. For small businesses “point of sales” technology allows for tracking sales attributed to multiple vendors, providing powerful research into what is selling and when it is selling, and generating sales information. POS system produces weekly reports allowing this small business to become smarter, contributing to greater and sustained success.

The Program’s funding was foundational, but possibly even more important was the one-on-one help provided by Starr Lehl. Starr is a veteran economic developer, and she came out of retirement to help GROW Nebraska²¹ with this Program. She is based in western Nebraska and worked personally with Whitney through the entire process. She is following Butte Bakery and becoming a passionate champion.

Our guess is that Whitney is not done. She sparked when asked “what is on the horizon?” ...She envisions more Butte Bakery type shops across Nebraska. Maybe five, 10 or 20 more shops where area food makers can retail their creations, build community, and offer consumers high quality food and other products. Whitney and Butte Bakery is more than making a living, or economic development, its ripple effects are expansive in Chadron, Alliance, and who knows other communities someday soon.



²⁰ <https://grownebraska.org/nebraska-small-business-assistance-act/>

²¹ <https://grownebraska.org/>

Section 5 - Program Financials

The following provides an overview of the Program Financials inclusive from March 2023 through June 2024.²² The following financials are reported according to the Program budget curated by both the Department and GROW Nebraska.

Figure 9. Year-1 Funding Program Financials Overview²³

Category	Budget	% Total	Expended	% Total	Remaining	% Total
Total Appropriation	\$5,000,000	100.00%	\$5,000,000	100.00%	\$0	0.00%
DED Overhead	\$812,764	16.26%	\$812,764	16.26%	\$0	0.00%
GROW NE Grant	\$4,187,236	83.74%	\$4,187,236	83.74%	\$0	0.00%
GROW NE Overhead	\$423,081	10.10%	\$423,081	10.10%	\$0	0.00%
GROW Administration	\$127,001	3.03%	\$127,001	3.03%	\$0	0.00%
Program Consultants	\$79,513	1.90%	\$79,513	1.90%	\$1	0.00%
Core Partners	\$410,000	9.79%	\$410,000	9.79%	\$0	0.00%
Technology Services	\$75,172	1.80%	\$75,172	1.80%	\$0	0.00%
Program Costs	\$1,114,767	26.62%	\$1,114,767	26.62%	\$0	0.00%
Small Business Grants	\$3,034,543	72.47%	\$3,034,543	72.47%	\$0	0.00%
Business Planning	\$0	0.00%	\$0	0.00%	\$0	0.00%
Business Services	\$37,926	0.91%	\$37,926	0.91%	\$0	0.00%
Awarded Benefits	\$3,072,469	73.38%	\$3,072,469	73.38%	\$0	0.00%
Grant Total	\$4,187,236	100.00%	\$4,187,236	100.00%	\$0	0.00%

Note... The financial reporting contained in Figures 9 and 10, differ slightly to reporting dates. However, materially, these financial correspond to the Program costs and benefits provided from its start through June 30, 2024.

Analysis...

- ☐ **Program Costs.** The original year-one Program funding allocated up to 52% of the GROW Nebraska Grant from the Department for Program overhead and administration. Actual Program overhead and administration costs were lower at 26.62% of the GROW Nebraska

²²This budget report is cumulative through June 30, 2024.

²³ These values are current as of the end of June 30, 2024. Note some budget lines now have \$0 balances. This is due to payment procedures by the Department and there is still budget capacity within these line items. Source for this date is the Nebraska Department of Economic Development and its AmpliFund Program.

year-one grant allocated funds. The lower cost of Program administration resulted in more State funding available for benefits to qualified beneficiaries.

- **Beneficiaries Supported.** Nearly \$3.1 million in financial support has been provided through June 30, 2024, to qualified beneficiaries representing over 73% of available Program funds.
- **Business Planning.** A \$250,000 per funding year sub-Program is being created to assist otherwise qualified beneficiaries who have incomplete and/or weak business feasibility and business plans. This sub-program will become operational beginning August 2024.

Figure 10. Year-1 and 2 State Program Funding Financials

Category	Budget	% Total	Expended	% Total	Remaining	% Total
Total Appropriation	\$10,000,000	100.00%	\$5,742,960	100.00%	\$4,257,040	42.57%
DED Overhead	\$1,555,724	15.56%	\$1,555,724	27.09%	\$0	0.00%
GROW NE Grant	\$8,444,276	84.44%	\$4,187,236	72.91%	\$4,257,040	50.41%
GROW NE Overhead	\$844,486	10.00%	\$423,081	10.10%	\$421,405	49.90%
GROW Administration	\$280,000	3.32%	\$127,001	3.03%	\$152,999	54.64%
Program Consultants	\$187,829	2.22%	\$79,513	1.90%	\$108,317	57.67%
Core Partners	\$810,000	9.59%	\$410,000	9.79%	\$400,000	49.38%
Technology Services	\$153,550	1.82%	\$75,172	1.80%	\$78,378	51.04%
Program Costs	\$2,275,865	26.95%	\$1,114,767	26.62%	\$1,161,098	51.02%
Small Business Grants	\$5,830,369	69.05%	\$3,034,543	72.47%	\$2,795,826	47.95%
Business Planning	\$250,000	2.96%	\$0	0.00%	\$250,000	0.00%
Business Services	\$88,043	1.04%	\$37,926	0.91%	\$50,116	56.92%
Awarded Benefits	\$6,168,411	73.05%	\$3,072,469	73.38%	\$3,095,942	50.19%
Grant Total	\$8,444,276	100.00%	\$4,187,236	49.59%	\$4,257,040	50.41%

**Appendix B –
Impact Analysis of NSBAA
University of Nebraska
Bureau of Business Research
September 25, 2024**



A Bureau of Business Research Report
From the University of Nebraska—Lincoln

The Economic Footprint of the Nebraska Small Business Assistance Act

Prepared for the Nebraska Department of Economic Development and
GROW Nebraska

September 25, 2024

Dr. Eric Thompson
Director
University of Nebraska Bureau of Business Research

Dr. Mitchel Herian
Project Director
University of Nebraska Bureau of Business Research

Executive Summary

The Nebraska Small Business Assistance Act (NSBAA) is the result of 2022 legislation establishing the program. The NSBAA is designed to assist Nebraska small businesses with various aspects of running a small company. Administered by GROW Nebraska, the program offers qualifying businesses access to grants that can be used for a wide variety of purposes. The purpose of this report is to estimate the economic footprint of the new business activity among NSBAA grantees. The report also presents the results of a survey of NSBAA grantees.

In total, across all NSBAA programs, 194 grants totaling \$3,553,107 have been awarded across the state. The average award has been \$18,315. Businesses in 54 of Nebraska's 93 counties have received an award through the program. Business reported adding 61 full- and part-time employees since receiving the NSBAA grant. Grant dollars were spent on a variety of goods and services in the state.

The results of the economic footprint study show that the annual economic footprint is \$6.68 million while the economic footprint in terms of value-added is \$3.62 million. Note that the value-added footprint is a component of the output impact, implying that the two numbers should not be added together. The annual economic footprint in terms of employee compensation is \$2.29 million. This employee compensation is a component of the value-added footprint. There is an employment footprint of 84 jobs. This suggests wages per job of \$27,290 including both direct and multiplier employment.

Annual Economic Footprint Due to Growth	
Footprint Concept	Total Annual Economic Footprint
Output (in millions)	\$6.68
Value-Added (in millions)	\$3.62
Employee Compensation (in millions)	\$2.29
Employment	84 jobs
Source: BBR calculations based on data collected by GROW Nebraska, Summer 2024.	

Follow-up conversations with small business owners indicate that NSBAA grant dollars have been instrumental to the efforts of some small businesses to grow their business and expand service or product offerings. Grant dollars have allowed small businesses to generate revenue more quickly through increased investments in their businesses. There was a high level of satisfaction with the program and all grantees reported they would suggest the program to other small business owners.

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Introduction

The Nebraska Small Business Assistance Act (NSBAA) is the result of 2022 legislation establishing the program. The NSBAA is designed to assist Nebraska small businesses with various aspects of running a small company. Administered by GROW Nebraska, the program offers qualifying businesses access to grants that can be used for a wide variety of purposes, including: startup costs, working capital, franchise fees, equipment, inventory, or purchase/renovation of an eligible place of business that is not for passive real estate investment purposes.² New businesses can receive up to \$25,000 and small businesses less than five years old can receive up to \$12,500.

According to the Second Quarter 2024 Report to the Department of Economic Development, as of June 30, 2024, 148 businesses have received New Business Grants from the program. The total dollar amount of benefits awarded was \$3,142,541. The average dollar amount per award was \$21,233. Dollars for the New Business Grant program have been distributed widely across the state. Businesses in 50 different counties have received dollars through the program. Table 1 below presents the total dollars distributed to businesses, by county.

Table 1. NSBAA Awards by County					
County	\$ Awarded	County	\$ Awarded	County	\$ Awarded
Douglas	\$429,977	Scotts Bluff	\$50,000	York	\$24,998
Keith	\$269,099	Dawes	\$49,700	Thayer	\$24,927
Hall	\$249,532	Saunders	\$48,437	Chase	\$24,902
Lancaster	\$172,887	Thurston	\$47,379	Red Willow	\$24,763
Box Butte	\$171,040	Adams	\$47,025	Arthur	\$24,697
Cheyenne	\$118,919	Wayne	\$46,607	Deuel	\$24,660
Dawson	\$99,907	Furnas	\$43,469	Polk	\$24,614
Lincoln	\$99,142	Sarpy	\$37,427	Gage	\$24,405
Buffalo	\$90,535	Red Willow	\$26,447	Hamilton	\$22,907
Holt	\$86,191	Brown	\$25,000	Madison	\$19,972
Phelps	\$83,158	Cuming	\$25,000	Saline	\$19,865
Seward	\$75,000	Hooker	\$25,000	Garfield	\$18,000
Valley	\$66,099	Kimball	\$25,000	Perkins	\$11,878
Dodge	\$61,993	Logan	\$25,000	Morrill	\$6,000
Platte	\$53,537	Nemaha	\$25,000	Cherry	\$5,550
Harlan	\$50,000	Dawes	\$49,700	Clay	\$1,947
Knox	\$50,000	Sheridan	\$25,000		

² <https://opportunity.nebraska.gov/programs/business/sbaa/>

Initially, program dollars tended to be somewhat concentrated in western counties in the state. According to the GROW Nebraska 2024 Quarter 2 report, dollars have been distributed throughout both western and eastern counties. As would be expected, given their populations, businesses in Douglas and Lancaster Counties have received substantial sums of award dollars. Businesses in counties along the I-80 corridor have also been awarded significant award dollars.

Thirty (30) awards totaling \$328,827 have been allocated through the Existing Business Grant program. Small businesses in 17 distinct counties have received funding through this program. The average award amount was \$10,960. Small businesses can also receive Professional Services Awards. These awards provide up to \$10,000 in financial support to access professional services or technical assistance in forming and registering and LLC in the State of Nebraska. Through the second quarter of 2024, 16 grants totaling \$81,739 have been awarded.

In total, across all NSBAA programs, 194 grants totaling \$3,553,107 have been awarded across the state. The average award has been \$18,315. Businesses in 54 of Nebraska’s 93 counties have received an award through the program. Data from the GROW Nebraska Quarter 2 report offers insight into the distribution of grants throughout the state (see Table 2). The six regions along the left column correspond with the Community College service area regions; these regions align with the development areas now used by the Nebraska Governor’s Office and the Nebraska Department of Economic Development. As the table shows, counties in the Central Region of the state receive a relatively large proportion of awards in relation to their share of the population. Conversely, counties in the Metro and Southeast Regions receive fewer awards than would be expected based on the share of the total population of the state.

Table 2. Distribution of NSBAA Grants in Nebraska through Quarter 2, 2024				
Region	Population	% of Population	Beneficiaries	% of Total Award Dollars
Metro	833,162	42.50%	43	22.05%
Southeast	495,730	25.29%	22	11.28%
Northeast	155,356	7.93%	22	11.28%
Central	304,655	15.54%	50	25.64%
Mid-Plains	89,048	4.54%	30	15.38%
Western	88,469	4.51%	28	14.63%

Nebraska Small Business Assistance Act Grantee Survey Results

In Summer 2024, NSBAA grantees were asked to complete a brief survey that asked them about several aspects of their business, how they spent grant dollars, and their views on their small business. A total of 178 businesses were invited via email to complete the survey; 102 businesses completed the survey, resulting in a response rate of approximately 57%. Below, the results of the survey are presented.

Please keep in mind that not all 102 businesses responded to every question on the survey. Further, it is important to keep in mind that the survey responses and resulting economic impact analysis are based on the responses of the 101 businesses that completed the survey. Given that researchers do not have complete information on the business activities of NSBAA-funded businesses, it is likely that the financial information and associated economic impact estimate represents a conservative estimate of the effect of the grant program.

Business Tenure. Respondents were asked to report how many years their business has existed.

Ninety-six business owners responded to this question. Responses ranged from 1 year to 6 years, with the majority of business owners (65%) indicating that their business has been in existence for one year. The mean number of years in business was 1.6 years. The responses are in line with what one would expect given the nature of the small business grant program.

Employment and Salary. Respondents were asked to indicate how many workers were employed at the time of the survey; business owners were asked to count themselves as employees. Ninety-six business owners responded to this question. Responses ranged from 1 to 14 employees. The majority of businesses (57%) reported that they had one employee. Another 22% reported having two employees. The total number of workers employed by these businesses is 226. The mean number of employees was 2.4.

Small business owners were also asked to report how many full- and part-time employees have been hired since receiving the grant. Small businesses reported hiring 20 full-time and 41 part-time employees since receiving grant funding. The responses suggest that about 18% of NSBAA-funded small business employees have been hired since receiving grant funding.

Researchers sought to determine the compensation of recently hired employees of NSBAA-funded businesses. Therefore, small business owners were asked to report the total salary and compensation of full-time and part-time employees that have been hired since the time of award. Results show that the total salary and benefits of the 20 new full-time employees was \$506,760, or about \$25,338 annually.

Total salary and benefits for the 41 new part-time employees was \$370,360, or about \$9,033 annually. See Table 3 for more information.

Table 3. NSBAA Survey, Newly-Hired Employees and Salary			
	Employees	Total Salary and Benefits	Annual Salary and Benefits
Full-Time	20	\$506,760	\$25,338
Part-Time*	41	\$370,360	\$9,033
Total	61	\$877,120	\$14,379
*Part time employees are assumed to work .50 Full Time Equivalent (FTE), or about 1,000 hours/year.			

Revenue and Dollars Spent on Goods and Services. Small business owners were asked to report the total amount of revenue generated by their business since receiving the NSBAA award. Fifty business owners responded to this question and reported values greater than \$0. Revenue for these businesses ranged from \$30 to \$207,000. Total revenue generated for these 50 businesses was \$1,943,679. The average revenue per business was \$25,916; the median value was \$12,000.

To get a sense of the dollars being spent by small businesses in Nebraska, business owners were asked to report the total amount of goods and services purchased in the state. Respondents were specifically asked not to report spending that took place outside the state, or through online retailers that are unlikely to be located in Nebraska. Forty-two businesses responded to this question and reported values greater than \$0. The value of goods and services ranged from \$50 to \$400,000. The average value of goods and services was \$28,900; the median value of spending on goods and services was \$7,500.

How NSBAA Grant Dollars are Spent. Respondents were asked to report how grant dollars were expended along several broad categories. Small business owners were presented with several categories of spending and were asked to choose all categories of spending that apply to their experience. The results are presented in Table 4. Please note that the percentages do not sum to 100%, as respondents were able to choose multiple categories of spending that apply.

The results show that small business owners most commonly used grant funding for “Product or Service Expansion,” followed by “Marketing” (31.7%), and “Business Finance/Operations Set Up” (27.7%). Respondents selecting the category “Other” had the opportunity to type in descriptions of those expenditures. The most common description of these expenditures was “Equipment”, or a very close variation on that theme.

Table 4. NSBAA Survey, Use of NSBAA Grant Dollars by Spending Category		
Spending Categories	N	%
Labor	14	13.8%
Rent	21	20.8%
Insurance	14	13.8%
Marketing	32	31.7%
Technology Acquisition	22	21.8%
Product or Service Expansion	57	56.4%
Business Finance/Operations Set Up	28	27.7%
Other	39	38.6%
Source: UNL-BBR calculations.		

Motivation for Starting Small Business. Beyond understanding relevant aspects of employment and financial activities of businesses receiving NSBAA funding, researchers sought to understand the motivations of business owners when starting their new business. Consequently, respondents were asked to choose from several categories of motivations for starting their small business. The results are presented in Table 5 below. Once again, the percentages do not sum to 100%, as respondents were able to choose multiple categories of spending that apply.

The results show that small business owners most commonly reported a desire to be self-employed as a reason to start their small business (63.4%). Large proportions of business owners also reported that they saw a market opportunity for their product/service (57.4%), and that they recognized a business opportunity in their community (50.5%).

Table 5. NSBAA Survey, Reasons for Starting Small Business		
Reason for Starting Business	N	%
Desire to be a first-generation business owner	26	25.7%
Recognizing an opportunity in your community	51	50.5%
Saw a market opportunity for a specific product/service	58	57.4%
Sought to be self-employed	64	63.4%
Wanted to capitalize on my industry-specific knowledge	35	34.7%
Other	16	15.8%
Source: UNL-BBR calculations.		

Greatest Challenges Facing Small Businesses. Researchers sought to identify challenges currently facing small businesses in Nebraska. Therefore, respondents were asked to respond to the question: “What are some of the challenges facing your business today?” Business owners were asked to select from a list of seven potential challenges. The results are presented in Table 6. Once again, the percentages do not sum to 100%, as respondents were able to choose multiple categories of spending that apply.

Table 6. NSBAA Survey, Greatest Challenges Facing Your Small Business		
	N	%
Competition with other businesses	26	25.7%
Cost of doing business (rent, insurance, taxes)	75	74.3%
Finding quality employees	21	20.8%
In-person vs remote employment	1	1.0%
Offering competitive wages/salaries	17	16.8%
Workforce availability	9	8.9%
Other	26	25.7%
Source: UNL-BBR calculations.		

Economic Footprint of Business Activity from NSBAA Grantees

Using information from the surveys, investigators computed the direct effects of investment through the NSBAA program. In particular, it was possible to compute direct economic footprint in terms of jobs, wage, and business activity since receiving an award through the NSBAA program. This information was then used to estimate the “multiplier” footprint which captures the business connections that takes place as participant companies grow, and as employees support other local businesses. For example, growing firms make additional purchases of supplies and services from other businesses within the state, capturing some of the sales, wages and employment of these businesses. This is known as the indirect footprint. In addition, the new employees of firms spend their paychecks on ordinary household items such as housing (mortgage payment or rent), food, retail items, entertainment, insurance, health care, or transportation. This creates another connection with other businesses throughout the state and is known as the induced footprint. The indirect and induced footprint together form the multiplier footprint, which is the measure of interactions with other businesses in the state.

The multiplier footprint is estimated using the IMPLAN model. IMPLAN is a widely used input-output analysis software package and database which provides a detailed picture of the economy for any state and sub-state region in the nation. Specifically, the IMPLAN model can be used to calculate the relationship between the direct footprint and multiplier footprint. The total economic footprint is the sum of the direct footprint and multiplier footprint. The direct, multiplier and total economic footprint will be prepared for each of four economic concepts: *output*, *value added*, *proprietor and labor income* and *employment*.

- *Output* is equivalent to an increase in business activity.

- *Value-added* is analogous to gross domestic product and reflects the increase in labor income, proprietor profits, business taxes paid and capital consumption in the economy.
- *Employee compensation*, which includes proprietor and labor income, corresponds closely with personal income estimates maintained annually for state and local units of government by the U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of Economic Analysis.
- *Employment* is a critical measure to consider and includes both full and part-time positions.

As noted above, businesses reported growth in full- and part-time employment since their initial award from the NSBAA and the average wages and benefits (i.e., employee compensation) of any new jobs created since then. Data on job growth and average wages and benefits were used to estimate the growth of businesses involved in the program. Reported wage and benefit data were used to estimate the cumulative growth in employee compensation since first award. Estimates of value-added and output in each participating firm were estimated based on employment and employee compensation, using industry averages.

Growth in employment, employee compensation, value added and output is the measure of the direct economic footprint of each participating business. The direct annual economic footprint was summed across businesses to yield the total economic footprint from businesses participating in NSBAA programs. This focus on growth as a measure of economic footprint was appropriate for multiple reasons. First of all, some businesses were established businesses with employees when applying to the program. The program helped these businesses to develop a new product or process and expand employment. The expansion of employment is the appropriate measure of impact for these firms. In many other cases, participating businesses were at a very early stage of development when applying for a grant through the program. For these firms, growth in employment is essentially equivalent to current employment.

The point is that the focus on business growth better reflects the amount of business activity associated with NSBAA programs. The approach is superior to simply counting all employment, employee compensation and sales of firms which received funding, given that some firms may have already had significant levels of employment when first applying to a program.

Table 4 shows the total annual economic footprint of businesses participating in NSBAA programs in terms of output, value-added, employee compensation and employment. The annual economic footprint is \$6.68 million while the economic footprint in terms of value-added is \$3.62 million. Note

that the value-added footprint is a component of the output impact, implying that the two numbers should not be added together. The annual economic footprint in terms of employee compensation is \$2.29 million. This employee compensation is a component of the value-added footprint. There is an employment footprint of 84 jobs. This suggests wages per job of \$27,290 including both the direct and multiplier employment.

Table 7. Annual Economic Footprint Due to Growth	
Footprint Concept	Total Annual Economic Footprint
Output (in millions)	\$6.68
Value-Added (in millions)	\$3.62
Employee Compensation (in millions)	\$2.29
Employment	84 jobs
Source: BBR calculations based on data collected by GROW Nebraska, Summer 2024.	

Semi-Structured Interviews: Impacts of NSBAA Grants on Small Businesses

Survey results provided researchers with important information regarding how NSBAA grant dollars affected small businesses. To gain a greater understanding of how NSBAA dollars were used, and how funding impacted the operations of small businesses, BBR researchers conducted semi-structured interviews. A total of 10 small participating businesses were chosen to participate. Four small businesses accepted the offer to provide their input on the program. The businesses were located throughout state, including one business in the Omaha metro, another in north central Nebraska, another in western Nebraska, and one in the Tri-Cities region. The businesses were from the service and retail sectors. All four businesses had been started in the past five years. Each of the businesses received New Business Grants, with a full award of \$25,000.

Small business owners were asked how grant dollars were used. One grant recipient reported purchasing new equipment for the business, including heavy kitchen equipment. Another clothing retailer reported purchasing new inventory and new hardware inside the store, as well as new equipment that allowed the business to expand its clothing offerings to the local community. This business also reported spending some dollars on software to expand online purchasing options. One business owner reported spending the bulk of the dollars on new construction for a new store. The final grant recipient reported restocking inventory with the grant dollars and purchasing new software related to the services offered in conjunction with the product sold in store. This business owner also reduced overhead (i.e. rent) costs with the grant.

Grant recipients were asked if grant dollars were specifically used to hire employees. The participating small businesses reported that no new employees were hired or paid using grant funds. All reported that they had not reached the point of needing to hire additional employees at the time.

Small business owners were asked to report whether new spending using grant dollars would have taken place in the absence of the grant funding. Three of the four small business owners reported that new spending would not have occurred at this time without the grant dollars. The implication is that spending may have occurred later, after necessary revenue was generated. One small business owner reported that the grant dollars were used to purchase inventory that allowed the business to generate revenue and continue operations. The fourth business owner reported that the large construction project would have been undertaken in the absence of grant dollars, but that the grant dollars allowed the project to move more quickly. The grant dollars generally allowed small businesses to generate revenue earlier than they would have otherwise.

When asked about the process of obtaining funding, small business owners generally agreed that the process involved reasonable steps. Two of the business owners found the requirement of developing a business plan to be very helpful in running their company.

Finally, small business owners were asked whether they would recommend the program to other small businesses. All four respondents indicated that they would recommend the program to other businesses, and in several cases had already recommended the program.

Appendix A. NSBAA Survey Respondent Open-Ended Comments

Table 8. NSBAA Survey, Impact of Grant Dollars on Small Businesses
Responses to Survey Question: How has your participation in the NE Small Business Assistance Program impacted you and your business? (responses reported verbatim from text box)
Participation in the NE Small Business Assistance Program has had a significant positive impact on my business. It enabled me to purchase a soft serve machine, which I could not have afforded otherwise. Additionally, it provided funds to repair my trailer and has overall contributed to increased revenue for my business.
As a women-owned business, participation in the NE Small Business Assistance Program has been especially empowering. The program provided the resources and support I needed to acquire products and launch a website, which has been instrumental in growing my business. This experience has strengthened my ability to compete in the market and reach a broader audience, all while staying true to the values of my small-town, women-owned enterprise
At this time we are able to secure water for our food truck more easily and affordably. In the future we will be able to provide a building to keep the business running for a longer season as the building goes up
Been Incredibly helpful just paying bills. Creates less stress on business when there is some support
Being a part of this program allowed my small business to buy the equipment needed to conduct business on a daily basis.
Being able to add a coffee Cart to my mobile setup will allow me to offer even more options to my customers for catering/events, etc...
Gave me additional funding to purchase additional grains, hops and yeast to increase our production of beer.
Great it has helped me so much launching my business
Has been instrumental in getting feet under me in this first year. It allowed me to acquire technology sooner than expected that will increase productivity and efficiency. It has helped cover some input costs to increase early profitability.
HAS BEEN REALLY HELPFULL KEEPING UP MY BUSINESS
Has helped my business gain for jobs and tools
Help me grow my Business
Helped get my business started
Honestly, I would not have been able to even launch my business without this assistance program. Receiving the award gave me the money I needed to jump into opening our bookstore right away. I was a teacher for 10 years and then worked mostly part-time in nonprofits for 8 years collecting low wages while my children were young, so I did not have a lot of extra money lying around to invest in my business without taking huge financial risks that may negatively impact my family.
I am able to reach a wider customer base with my LED sign displaying vacancy, an attention getter for people passing through our small town. The ability to offer a remodeled bathroom for easier accessibility for those in need
I am constantly finding myself in a chicken and egg struggle where I need money in order to make money. Having this grant expedited the growth of my business by probably 2-3 years and saved me from taking on a considerable amount of debt.
I am still in the process of using my funding, but I am using the grant to get a professional webstore for my business. This will allow me to reach more customers and have a better platform to market to new and repeat customers.

I feel if the economy were in a different place, it would have allowed it to make a more positive impact for us. I'm disabled. So my husband does the majority of everything to try to get us ahead. We are not. But that is not any fault of the NSBA. It's the economy
I feel pride in the Grow NE program! It had been amazing and so much help! I feel hopeful that we can do this with the help of the funds!! It's really going to bring my business to another level!! I will soon have the refrigeration and freezer space I need to be successful and storage I need to keep my stock on hand to better equip my business needs!
I have been able to extend the products I make as well as having everything all together
I haven't officially opened yet but I wouldn't be able to even have a space and this opportunity if it wasn't for this program. It has given me a chance to be able to create something that is going to help so many people.
I learned alot about running a business. I also successfully completed my business plan.
I was able to establish my business by being able to afford a new website, inventory, marketing, shipping supplies, and other equipment needed to bring my ideas to life.
I was able to purchase new tools that were needed for jobs that I couldn't do previously. Receiving the tools expanded my business.
I was given the funds needed to take the next step in growth to scale my new business to a level I could not have financial done at this point.
I would not been able to make my dream come true.
I've went from a being employed to a full-time business owner.
It's allowed us to revitalize space that will bring opportunity and life to something that has been out of use for a long time. It also allowed us to put money back into our current offerings. With this, we were able to move forward and build for the future.
It allowed me to attend 2 conferences which I learned valuable information which I applied to my business upon returning. I was able to partner with an enrolled agent which should grow my business.
It allowed my husband and I to offer a greater variety of services faster. This allowed us to generate a client base faster and subsequently has led to a longer waiting list of jobs to be scheduled.
It allowed us to open the business in general. We knew we had a good concept, but we needed to find the funds to make it happen.
It bootstrapped my company.
It has afforded me the opportunity to pursue my desire to start my business and purchase the necessary equipment to do so.
It has allowed a great opportunity to expand service offerings.
It has allowed me to carry product physically in my store for customers to see and try out. Without the assistance I would have had to use other high interest means to carry inventory in my retail store.
It has allowed me to expand my business more quickly then without it. From being able to improve business setup, hire a new person, and acquire professional services, these things would've taken much longer.

It has allowed me to focus on my product and not stress about the areas of business I needed help in.
It has allowed me to launch
It has allowed me to purchase additional equipment to make production more efficient
It has allowed my small business to offer new services and better quality of supplies. It has lessened the burden on my family's income by allowing me to offer these new things without the worry of the cost of them.
It has allowed us to start on a much faster track than we might otherwise have, and allowed us to start debt-free.
It has been a great help in acquiring new machinery and thus being able to take my bussiness to another level.
It has been such a blessing. It allowed a total studio replenish of every supply I could dream of. I received a necessary scissor lift to complete larger murals, it's just opened up so much for me
It has expanded our services we are able to offer our clients. The equipment that was purchased allows additional opportunities to help customers reach their goals. The upgrades in computer systems efficiently runs our key systems for our doors without dropping services.
It has given me the opportunity to hit their ground, running and giving me the ability to start managing my business to be competitive in this market
It has helped me afford the items I needed to start my business.
It has helped me get my name out there to other NE communities, I have been able to use funds to join Chamber of Commerce's in other counties. And I love the NE networking events, I try to attend as many as possible.
It has helped us build beyond what would be available locally.
It has made it so I was able to purchase high quality equipment to further my business. Also make it more efficient.
It has provided and expansion of services that will allow us to be successfull and grow and put more money back into the community.
It has taken away some of the stress of starting a business with little money.
It helped expend my business to the next level by securing more revenue and avoid paying in leasing
It helped me understand so many different aspects of business and how to move forward to increase sales.
It helped us to be able to replace old equipment that we could not afford otherwise.
It impacted a lot. Help get us a big van. Help provide more safety seats.
It repaired an essential component of my business and helped expand my products carried.
It was critical to improving the quality of life in my kitchen for me and my staff as there was no AC in the kitchen at all. Additionally, we constantly ran out of hot water, due to the limited water heater capacity and the overwhelming popularity of our business. This has helped retain employees and has made working conditions more tolerable.
Just help me make some upgrades
My participation has caused me to what to continue growing and learning

My participation has impacted me and my business tremendously. I have been able to purchase much need new equipment like a power washer and paint sprayer, which helps me increase my work volume. It has also helped me fund marketing efforts like lead purchasing and distribution of flyers. These things produce more sales revenue and the program has also given my company a boost in funds to help pay one of our biggest costs: labor expense. I was also able to get some assistance in business plan writing and several service recommendations like insurance, marketing, SEO and others.
My participation in the NE Small Business Assistance Program has allowed my small business to begin building a workshop space for Flourishing Farms. Currently it is framed and ready for the electrical and plumbing to be established next. GROW has helped me understand and accomplish some of the initial steps in the process of starting a business from scratch.
My participation in the NE Small business assistance program has allowed to better budget my finances and plan the future for my business
My product was made possible by the NSBAA grant!
Our participation has helped us tremendously. We have been able to offer additional much needed services to our clients (homebuyers) with the tools and equipment we purchased through the grant. Our inspections are more thorough because of the tools and equipment we were able to purchase. The funds from the grant that were used to pay annual membership fees, training, insurance, etc. has helped free up our income to put towards marketing our business as well, which has been successful.
Participation has allowed me to construct a brand new building to operate my salon out of, providing our community with much needed permanent improvement.
Participation in the NBAA program has been life-changing. Without assistance, I wouldn't have been able afford many of the required (over-looked or underestimated) items for start-up. This grant is helping make my dream a reality.
The first impact it has had on me and my business is the motivation and support to complete a business plan. Secondly would be the motivation and support to logically think through the financial aspects of building the foundation of a private practice. Thirdly, would be the opportunity to financially acquire the necessities needed to practice without the stress of working either part time or full time elsewhere.
The funds for heating and cooling will help tremendously since it will help the 1900s building not deteriorate.
The grant funding allowed us to invest in product and introduce an additional product to the market.
The grant funds assisted with creating a quality learning environment for the children. I purchased equipment and learning supplies.
The grant gave me the opportunity to branch out and grow my company within my community. I was also able to add carpet cleaning as part of my business as it is a need in this area, hire people who need a second chance, and to help those who wouldn't normally be able to get help cleaning there home do to cost of living. But most of all it has helped us be able to clean others homes without worrying about how I can afford this, and this has changed many of my client's mental health!
The grant opportunity allowed us to replace several pieces of kitchen equipment before they failed. This also allowed us to schedule replacements during down time and not having to shut down our business because of surprise equipment failure. We also were able to replace equipment and complete a cosmetic project on the building without having to borrow against our high-interest line of credit--allowing for more curb-appeal to drive business.

The impact so far has been positive we have been able to expand our product offerings and store fixtures to increase traffic.
The NE Small Business Assistance program allowed me to cover necessary expenses that must be taken care of and also expand areas of my business (technology) that I wouldn't have been able to otherwise.
The NE Small Business Assistance Program has made an impact on Rural Way Promotions by assisting in the acquisition of updated technology and office supplies. The grant is giving Rural Way Promotions an opportunity to serve their clients better and more efficiently with their new technology.
The program has help me lunch the business and be able to operate.
The Small Business Assistance Program expanded our services, therefore speeding up or business revenue and growth. Without the grant, it would have taken us a minimum of 2 years to purchase equipment that would allow us to expand our services.
The things that we were not able to afford at the time, we were able to with the funds we received!
This grant enabled us to move into our own location, which has opened up teaching time that was not accessible to me before. It has helped spread the word about my skill sets and given me tangible items such as instruments to better educate my students.
This grant has been amazing and has allowed us to purchase equipment that would have taken us another year to save up for to be able to purchase without loans. Also the help of rent and supplies will allow us to expand and grow faster
This grant was helpful in purchasing equipment, tools, and inventory to get started in my business.
this has been an excellent opportunity for me
This has helped our business tremendously. We would not have been able to purchase the equipment and product we have today without this assistance and are so grateful for this opportunity.
This program has helped me greatly with funding and perfecting my product so I can start selling my own product
This program has made it possible for me to hire a web site developer and a marketer to create information streams for people to see and easily access. The grant has also allowed me to buy equipment that will greatly help my ability to educate and monitor each clients progress through Orofacial Myofunctional Therapy. The equipment results help to validate the need for this therapy and define it's value to clients.
Very beneficial to helping gain parts/equipment to start up the business. Has taken alot of stress off to know that the money is there and do not have to pay it back as a loan etc.
We've been able to expand our inventory to meet for customers requests and lowered our overhead.
We were able to purchase a Mini X, which has given our Company the chance to be more efficient.
We were able to purchase equipment that allows us to better serve our customers. We are able to provide more options for our baked goods, and are able to get our customer's orders out more quickly and effeciently
Will help me save a huge amount by not having to pay for an essential asset for my business.so I can use my money for other necessities.
With the economy being a bear this year, we were still able to invest in new inventory to keep our customers coming in. Online shopping is our biggest competitor.

With the grant that I was awarded, I was able to purchase a stationary massage bed. This has been about the most valuable thing that I did! Clients feel very safe and secure when using this bed and it has drawn in more business.

With this help I finally feel like I've built a foundation to grow my business.

Without the grant, I would have never been able to keep up with demands of owning of business in a town with very high taxes. Even starting up my business with my own saved up money, I was starting in a deficit despite the success of my service/product. Also the networking and connections I've made have continued to support me in ways of opportunities to strengthen my small business knowledge.

Table 9. NSBAA Survey, Recommendations for Program Delivery
Responses to Question: Do you have any recommendations to improve the NE Small Business Assistance Program or services? (responses reported verbatim from text box)
All has went well so far.
Better communication on timeline.
Better communication, I was not notified that I would get the funds up front in full, I thought I needed to present a receipt first, so I tried to get a business loan with 3 different associations and it was really stressful.
Communication has not always been the clearest. I think I may have been one of the first recipients, so we were all kind of figuring things out together, which was stressful for me. My program staff representative seems very overwhelmed, and I do not hear from her very often and usually have to follow up to prompt a response to my questions. It would be helpful to have some sort of online group or directory of other business owners who received this funding so we could problem-solve together and network.
Everything has been great with the program
Everything is great and everyone has been very helpful!
Finding a way to speed up the approval time and disbursement timing would be beneficial.
Having mentors or coaches would be very helpful. I think that resource could be made more clear. Especially in the first 2 years of business, it should be a staple.
I believe this has been a very smooth and seamless process from application through use of funds. I have only had one issue being able to log in to submit the use of my funds but was able to get assistance with that.
I came in at the very beginning, and so the reporting requirements have been constantly changing, including retrofit reporting. I think by now there will be more stability in that reporting. Maybe have a requirement where each business must have a copy of QuickBooks and some basic training where the needed accounting information can be quickly downloaded.
I do not have any specific recommendations. While the process was challenging, but worth it, if I had to highlight one aspect, it would be the length of the wait. However, I understand that such processes often require time.
I don't know if this is a recommendation or a question, but it would be helpful to have assistance in the marketing area. Perhaps this can be done through Rural Futures? Or maybe I'm just not aware of the resources out there to help in this area.
I don't have any at this moment. Everything has been great
I found it very cumbersome to apply. I don't know if that was on the NSBAA side or if it was the person helping me through GrowNE. I was continually asked for forms and information I had already submitted. After I was told I would be presented soon, it took another 5 months for my business to fully apply. I would just say communication could have been better.
I really appreciated how the NSBA Program funding process went. I worked on another grant program prior and it felt more restrictive. This program has some built in flexibility that is welcomed with the unknowns in the early stages of starting up.

I received this survey 12 days after I received the grant money and less than a year of being a business and only 3 months into being a public business, I really didn't have good answers to many of your questions.
I seem to remember a few technology hiccups with the system in completing data and then uploading supporting docs. Additionally, some of the questions were vague and needed clarification with a call to the administrators so that the application was filled out properly. Otherwise, it was a pretty good experience. The Grow Team did a great job as true partners with small business.
I think it is an amazing program!! And I am so very grateful I get to take a part in it!! It was a long road to get here, but it is well worth it!! Thank you!!
I think making things more easy for software companies to get started will help. for example it is hard to document costs when your working on a project that has so many nuances involved in the building process.
I think this program is fantastic, I have spread the work to many other small business owners. Thank you for all you do to support our wonderful state.
If I had any suggestions, it would be a checklist of some sort to make it easier to fill out the grant application/expense budget and transparency on what is able to be used.
If they could give pre-approved list of what exactly kind of services or marketing would be approved, that would help immensely. I found out after the fact that some huge costs could have been applied for with this grant and possibly covered.
In my experience everything was perfect.
Less paperwork but it is well worth the work
Make funds available sooner and the full amount if possible.
Maybe better guidelines
More clarity of payment scheduling, however, that was learning as a first-time grant recipient.
More flexibility- Talk to the business owner when setting up the payments. There were issues with the way our payments were split and the items ordered were not matching up exactly to the amount given. So for example for the first check we had \$300 left over but all the equipment was over \$300 so we had to move finances around to make it work before the second check would be sent to us.
More options to help with social media.
Better forms for tracking the grant funds also the distribution of funds.
More transparent time lines
N/A - My assigned worker was very helpful, easy to work with, and knowledgeable on the program. I am beyond grateful for the grant and the opportunities it allowed for us.
no
No
No
No keep being wonderful
No! Wonderful service. Responsive and very communicative team.
No, I think that it went quite well.

No, my coordinator was very efficient and helpful when I had many questions that I didn't understand. she was quick when returning my phone call and keeping me updated when I need to provide my business information
No.
None
None
none at this time
None that I can think of at the moment
None that I can think of at the moment.
Not at this time
Not at this time.
Not at this time. The process was fairly straightforward and easy to navigate.
Provide more business coaching, resources
Quicker turn around times and clearer communication on expectations, qualifications for grant.
Sometimes it is confusing and not a straightforward process. It may be helpful to have a step by step guide on how the grant works and all that need to be done along with tips and tricks for acquiring professional services.
<p>The application process and the entire grant process was very smooth.</p> <p>My only suggestion is that in the future the grant could help business owners pay >already acquired< business debt.</p> <p>We obtained a business loan in the year prior to receiving the grant to start our business, buy our equipment etc. It would have helped us if the grant would have allowed funding for cost acquired prior to the grant application. We still owe \$14,000 on the business loan and are making interest payments every month. It will take us years to pay it off.</p> <p>But the grant has helped us tremendously either way.</p> <p>Thank you!</p>
The only recommendations I have is to let those who get the grant know they need to make sure they are adding taxes and shipping onto the prices as it was a big issue for me and others I have spoken with. Other than that, nothing as this has been a great learning opportunity and experience!
The people that I work with were very helpful and I learned a lot about my business and the market. I don't know that I would change anything except maybe speed up the process a little bit
The process was seamless and easy!
The process went pretty smooth. Having a timely response to some questions would have made the process go smoother.
The program covered everything that I needed. I got financial assistance as well as free access to several mentors in every facet of business you can think. There is still several benefits of the program that I will need to take advantage of in the near future.
One recommendation would be to change to new business qualification back to 3 years, as it would match the time line for a business being able to claim overhead expenses.

The program is a complete online interaction and they are using platforms that still have flaws. You cannot talk to anyone in person for assistance.
The staff have been incredibly helpful! The entire process has been clear and concise. We can't wait to open our doors for business in September and continue to grow each year.
The submitting of expenses needs a better streamlined process.
The whole process was smooth. I do not have any input on what they can change at this time to make the program better.
Tonja Hajhn was amazing. We have nothing but great things to say about her and this program.
Working with my contact Sue has been extremely beneficial, she has helped me to understand what is needed to prevent having to resubmit information two or three times. However, I feel it did take a long time to receive the first installment of funding following signage of the DocuSign agreement contract.
Workshops or a conference
Yes, I worked with Grow Nebraska Women's center and from my experience the information provided to me was not consistent with information provided to others. For example, one person I know who received the grant funds was provided with working capital, while I was told working capital was not an option. Consistency and fairness should be provided for everyone.

Appendix B. About the University of Nebraska-Lincoln Bureau of Business Research

The Bureau of Business Research

The Bureau of Business Research is a leading source for analysis and information on the Nebraska economy. The Bureau conducts both contract and sponsored research on the economy of Nebraska and its communities including: 1) economic and fiscal impact analysis; 2) models of the structure and comparative advantage of the current economy; 3) economic, fiscal, and demographic outlooks, and 4) assessments of how economic policy affects industry, labor markets, infrastructure, and the standard of living. The Bureau also competes for research funding from federal government agencies and private foundations from around the nation and contributes to the academic mission of the University of Nebraska-Lincoln through scholarly publication and the education of students.

Key Personnel

Dr. Eric Thompson

Dr. Eric Thompson is the Director of the Bureau of Business Research and an Associate Professor of Economics at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln. Dr. Thompson has conducted a broad group of economic impact studies including impact studies of Nebraska agriculture, Sandhill Cranes migration, the Nebraska child care industry, the Omaha Zoo, the Nebraska horseracing industry, Husker Harvest Days, and the UNL Athletic Department. Dr. Thompson also works on demographic projections and analyses of economic development programs for Nebraska and cities in Nebraska. He also has conducted numerous economic impact studies for the Lincoln Department of Economic Development, the Omaha Chamber of Commerce, the Nebraska Department of Economic Development, various Nebraska industries, and Nebraska tourism attractions. Dr. Thompson's research has received support from the United States Department of Labor, the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, the Center for Economic Analysis, the Nebraska Health and Human Services System, as well as Lincoln, Omaha, and Nebraska organizations and agencies. In his previous employment, Dr. Thompson served as the Director of the Center for Business and Economic Research and a Research Associate Professor of Economics at the University of Kentucky. Dr. Thompson received his Ph.D. in agricultural economics from the University of Wisconsin-Madison in 1992. His research fields include regional economics, economic forecasting, and state and local economic development. His research has been published in *Regional Science and Urban Economics*, the *Journal of Regional Science*, the *American Journal of Agricultural Economics*, and the *Journal of Cultural Economics*.

Dr. Mitchel Herian

Dr. Mitchel Herian serves as a Project Director through the Bureau of Business Research at UNL. Dr. Herian has worked for agencies such as the U.S. Army, the U.S. Air Force, the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA), the Nebraska Supreme Court, the Nebraska Department of Education, and the Kansas Department of Corrections. His research has received support from agencies including the National Science Foundation and the National Institute of Justice. Dr. Herian's research has been published in a variety of peer reviewed journals including the *Journal of Public Administration Research and Theory*, *American Review of Public Administration*, *Policy Studies Journal*, *State and Local Government Review*, and *Ecology & Society*.