

3/15/2021

The Honorable David Monson  
Chairman, Appropriations Education and Environment Division  
ND House of Representatives

Dear Mr. Chairman:

I am writing you in regards to SB 2018, specifically in support of continued and increased state funding for the ND Small Business Development Centers (SBDC) through the ND Department of Commerce budget.

I am the owner of Lone Oak Farm Event Venue, which will be opening this summer after 27 months of work and prep. We are a rural ND, Cass County, venue that is excited to serve others and the community. We received tremendous assistance from the ND SBDC Fargo Center, specifically working with Paul Smith. Paul and the SBDC program were significant attributes to this endeavor. Not only did his expertise guide our path, but he was so patient and gracious teaching us the very basics of our business development and advocating for our best interest. The SBDC was essential in the development of Lone Oak with Paul assisting our plan development and financial projections. He also recommended financial institutions that have been great to partner with.

I can sincerely say we would not be where we are today, and most likely would not be in existence, if it were not for Paul and the support of the SBDC.

Lone Oak is one of hundreds of ND companies to receive support in 2020, and 2019 for us as well. The numbers show that SBDC supported 1400 clients, in 53 counties and helped clients secure nearly \$85 Million in capital, in addition to supported 6031 jobs. SBDC has been a influencing factor in support of businesses hit by the pandemic, with 90% of small business owners who received their support, pre COVID, still in business 5 years vs. 50% nationally. This data alone signifies the value in this group and its impact in ND.

Please consider an increase in state funding for the SBDC. This will enable them to continue to support, educated and partner with new ND small businesses, ultimately enabling success. A vote in support of the program will prove your support for ND small businesses, entrepreneurship, job development and economic growth in our communities.

Sincerely,  
Teresa Gulleeson

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