

March 15, 2021

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

Dear Mr. Chairman:

I am writing to you regarding SB 2018 and 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 Wash Your Tail LLC in Fargo ND, for over 7 years which provides dog services to clients. Our company received assistance from the SBDC Fargo Center and center director Paul Smith. The SBDC was vital to expanding and purchasing my business as Paul assisted with my business plan development/market research/financial projections/finding capital.

His knowledge, expertise, professionalism and dedication were greatly appreciated as this process required numerous virtual meetings and collaboration with lenders. I simply cannot do this type of thing and need his timely help in many areas.

In the end, our company was successful in securing financing to purchase our business, which resulted in the creation of 5 jobs so far and retention of 16 ND jobs. The services provided by the SBDC were vital to help us get to the finish line and achieve our goal. This has helped so many dogs and humans.

Our business is just one of hundreds of companies, which received assistance during the past year from the SBDC. In 2020, the program assisted more than 1,400 unique clients in all 53 counties, helped clients secure nearly \$85M in capital and supported 6,031 jobs. Working in collaboration with the ND Department of Commerce, the SBA and other organizations, the SBDC has been on the 'front lines' for those businesses hardest hit by the pandemic. Perhaps most impressive, 90% of small business owners who used SBDC services to start their companies are still in business after 5 years (pre-pandemic) vs. 50% nationally. These results point to the significant impact of the SBDC on ND small businesses and sound return on investment for ND taxpayers.

I respectfully request your consideration of increased state funding for the SBDC, which will allow the program to continue to assist and meet the growing demand for services by ND small businesses. By voting to increase state funding of this program, you would be demonstrating your support for ND small businesses, job creation and economic growth across our great state.

Sincerely,

Kelly Norton

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