

Testimony of Christy Dauer, Executive Director, North Dakota Women's Business Center

In Support of Funding for NDWBC - SB2018

North Dakota Department of Commerce | 2025-27 Biennium Session

Dear Members of the Legislative Assembly,

My name is Christy Dauer, Executive Director of the North Dakota Women's Business Center (NDWBC). I strongly support continued funding for SB2018, which provides partial funding for two Women's Business Centers. This funding is essential for supporting women business owners with resources identified in listening sessions across North Dakota.

The NDWBC is the leading voice, resource, and partner for women business owners in our state. We are dedicated to amplifying the economic voice of our clients through advocacy and access to critical resources. Our impact over the past biennium has been significant, as highlighted in our Legislative Impact Report.

Key Programs and Impact

Over the past 25 years, the Women's Business Center has provided business resources and technical assistance across North Dakota to include many rural communities and citizens. We have built a large partner and client network across the state which promotes good communication and collaboration with local community leaders for developing programming and minimizing duplication of services. NDWBC's statewide presence and programming reach has increased due to a recognized brand, certified business coaches, and recognition as a go-to trainer and ecosystem partner.

Biennium	Coached	Trained	Outreach
2013-2015	69	5,146	
2015-2017	191	5,687	
2017-2019 A new CRM was implemented to better collect outreach numbers to individuals attending trainings.	233	5,298	
2019-2021	651	3,208	38,935
2021-2023	439	1,879	14,402
2023-2025* *number-to-date	383	1,581	5,397

Client Support and Coaching

The Women's Business Center offers statewide services and resources designed to help individuals in every phase of the business development and growth process. The one-on-one business advising and technical assistance services are free and confidential, with an emphasis on resources specific to women entrepreneurs

- We have provided free and confidential business coaching to 393 unique clients, totaling over 2,000 coaching hours during the last biennium session. The top three most requested business coaching topics are: business plans/start up assistance, buy/sell a business, and finance/access to capital.
- Our virtual intensive courses have offered financial training to help business owners make informed decisions, with 62 program graduates and 1,700 training hours completed.
- Recognized as the SBA Region 8 Center of Excellence for our best-in-class programming.

Statewide Connections and Events

In addition to our coaching and training services, we place a strong emphasis on fostering connections and providing platforms for business owners to collaborate and share best practices.

- We have organized 9 statewide events, fostering connections and problem-solving among business owners in the current biennium.
- Our Annual Business Summit was moved to Medora, ND and has accelerated business growth through training and networking, with 151 attendees and 30 expert speakers. We look forward to bringing a statewide audience back to Medora in late April.
- The Regional Food Business Centers-North Central (RFBC) updates for the quarter include the redesign of the RFBC technical assistance survey to enhance its effectiveness. Additionally, in October, our office traveled to Washington, D.C., to present at the USDA National Food Business Center conference, where they shared insights on initiatives for Region 5. NDWBC is proud to partner and serve as the statewide evaluator for the North Central Regional Food Business Center (Region 5), which includes North Dakota, South Dakota, and Minnesota.

Childcare Program

In collaboration with Childcare Aware, our childcare program has significantly contributed to the personal and professional growth of Childcare Operators which in turn support both children and their families. By fostering collaboration and mentorship among new and seasoned caregivers, we have created a nurturing environment that promotes the sustainability of the childcare business, including cash flow tools, business acumen, and digital resources to manage the business efficiently.

In addition to our business training, we have established partnerships with local and national organizations, which have helped expand the reach and impact of our program. These collaborations have brought in diverse expertise and resources, benefiting everyone involved.

- We found that childcare is a major barrier to women starting or growing their business. Successful childcare businesses boost the local workforce.
- Our Virtual Childcare Intensive Program launched in collaboration with Childcare Aware has supported North Dakota's childcare providers through 12 strategic sessions addressing the state's childcare needs.
- 100% of participants reported an increase in knowledge, and 100% would recommend the program to a friend.
- Currently there are 80 participants on the waitlist.

Certification and Revenue Growth

We certify women-owned businesses and find opportunities for growth under our partnership agreement. National certification allows ND businesses to pursue federal contracts set aside for women-owned businesses. The U.S. government aims to award 5% of federal contracts to such businesses, which could open up at least \$4.5 billion in annual marketplace opportunities.

- We have facilitated state certification for 81 business owners, increasing their opportunities for procurement/bids.
- Our efforts have contributed to an annualized revenue of \$16 million for certified businesses, with an average of 40 employees, and 17+ years in business.

Despite these successes, the NDWBC faces a critical juncture. Without the continued funding provided by SB2018, our programming would cease to exist. This would have a devastating impact on the main street businesses who rely on our support to thrive and contribute to the economic foundation of our region.

Our clients, who represent a diverse range of industries including childcare, construction, wholesale, retail, and more, are essential to the growth and vibrancy of North Dakota's communities. The NDWBC's programs directly impact these women to grow their businesses, create jobs, while creating thriving main streets across North Dakota.

In summary, NDWBC provides various programs that fulfill a gap in our state that positively impacts North Dakota's overall economy. Approval of the financial commitment is requested to enable securing federal funds for continuing support and services for women owned businesses throughout North Dakota.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,



Christy Dauer
Executive Director, North Dakota Women's Business Center

2022-2024 IMPACT REPORT

WOMEN BUSINESS OWNERS DRIVE VIBRANT LOCAL COMMUNITIES AND MAINSTREET BUSINESSES IN ND

NDWBC is the leading voice, resource, and partner for women business owners. We are dedicated to amplifying the economic voice of our clients through advocacy and access to critical resources. Visit www.NDWBC.com to learn more.

April 29 - May 1, 2025

Women's Business Summit

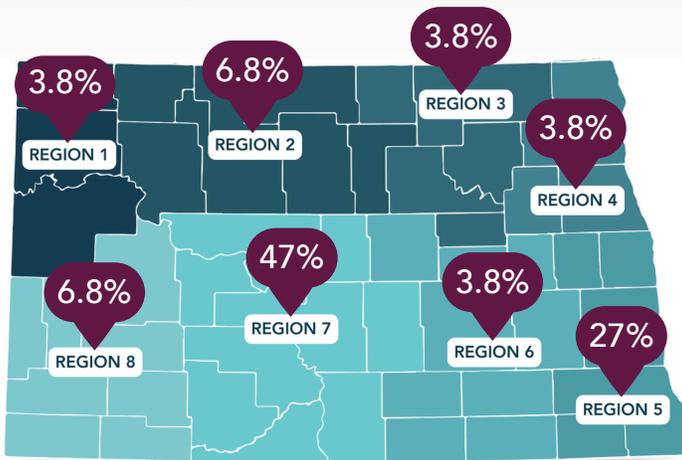
Summit is designed to fast-track growth and deepen connections. Summit offers a blend of hands-on training, strategic networking, and unparalleled resource opportunities.



MEET OUR CLIENTS

"NDWBC is a very valuable tool for all entrepreneurs. I have enjoyed all of the education behind their training. I would like to see all childcare providers work with NDWBC in the future for the insights of growing their businesses."

Cindy Kaml Childcare
 Childcare Intensives Graduate

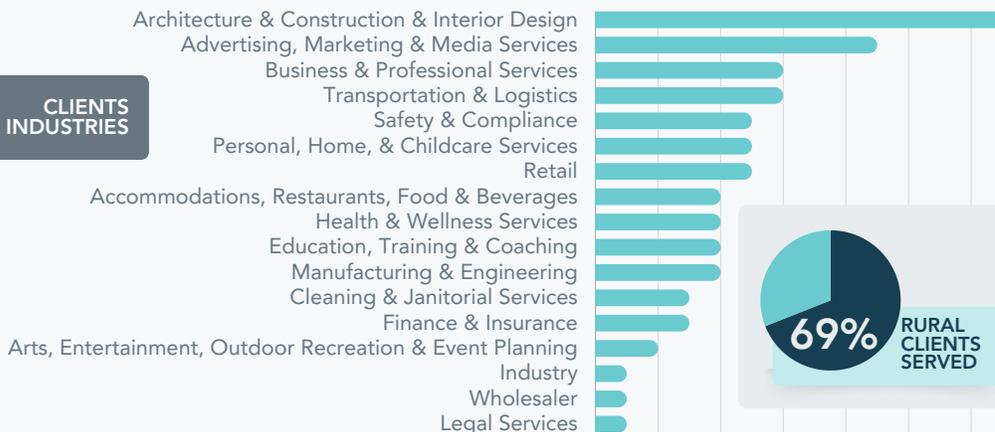


CLIENT REGIONS

"NDWBC has been an excellent resource for our organization to connect, grow, and champion other women-owned businesses."

Paula Klein
 Smartt Interior Construction
 ND Certified Women-Owned

CLIENTS INDUSTRIES



EDUCATION FOR WOMEN BUSINESS OWNERS

BUSINESS COACHING

Free and confidential coaching for entrepreneurs and owners at any stage.



CLIENTS
COACHED



RESOURCE
DOWNLOADS



COACHING
HOURS

INTENSIVES COURSES

Our virtual intensives courses offer financial training so owners can make informed business decisions.



ANNUAL
COURSES



PROGRAM
GRADUATES



TRAINING
HOURS

STRONG CONNECTIONS

Statewide connections and group discussions and problem-solving on ownership topics.



STATEWIDE
EVENTS



OWNERS
FEATURED



CONNECTIONS
MADE

BUSINESS SUMMIT

Accelerating business growth and connections through training and networking.



ATTENDED
EVENT



EXPERT
SPEAKERS



TRAINING
TOPICS

STATE CERTIFICATION

A fast and simple state certification to increase credibility as owners apply for bids.



TOTAL
CERTIFIED



NEWLY
CERTIFIED



ANNUALIZED
REVENUES

*self reported



SOLVING OUR STATE'S CHILDCARE NEEDS

Virtual Childcare Intensive Program Offers Comprehensive Support For North Dakota's Childcare Providers Through 12 Strategic Sessions

"I'm proud of the dedication these women have shown through their hard work. They understand their significance as key contributors to the economic foundation of our region, essential for its growth. This group of women is leading the way in childcare in our state, and we consider it a privilege to collaborate with them on their business journey." - NDWBC Client Success Director

100

% REPORTED
INCREASE IN
KNOWLEDGE

89

% WOULD
RECOMMEND
TO A FRIEND

80

ON WAITLIST
FOR NEXT
COURSE

49

CHILDCARE
PROGRAM
GRADUATES

A JOINT
EFFORT WITH



FUNDING
PARTNERS



POWERED BY
U.S. Small Business
Administration



Commerce



BUSH
FOUNDATION



OTTO
BREMER
TRUST

