

## BUSINESS COUNSELING AND TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE

### **St. Cloud State Center for Entrepreneurship** [St. Cloud State University](#)

In the Herberger Business School's entrepreneurship program, learn how to become an effective and successful entrepreneur in a diverse, global economy that needs small business leaders willing to develop new ideas and new industries. Graduate with the conceptual tools and the management, finance, law, marketing, technology, and customer service skills needed to launch new ventures that will generate economic growth and prosperity.

### **ILT Studios** [ILT Academy](#) [An ILT Studios Startup](#)

ILT Studios was designed to be the first startup studio to create, find and fuel innovation and entrepreneurship by focusing on supporting innovators and startup entrepreneurs.

### **FastLane94** [About FastLane94 \(greaterstcloud.com\)](#)

FastLane94 is part of [Launch Minnesota](#), a statewide initiative to accelerate the growth of startups and further strengthen Minnesota as a leader in innovation. The initiative includes a group of Resource Navigators that are committed to guiding West Central Minnesota region startups and helping them connect to resources needed to drive them forward.

### **Cottage Industry U of M Extension** [For food entrepreneurs | UMN Extension](#)

Resources to help keep food safe for people who make and sell baked goods, canned goods or other foods or who process produce they grow on their own farm or garden.

### **Initiators Fellowship** [Initiative Foundation](#)

The Initiators Fellowship is a two-year suite of supports – including training, mentoring and funding – for beginning or early stage social entrepreneurs.

### **Great North Labs Start-up School** [Great North Labs](#)

Courses designed to learn how to research, build, and launch business ideas in a collaborative environment through practical, real-world projects.

### **Entrepreneur Lab** [Sherburne County](#)

Provides a variety of high-quality business support services that entrepreneurs (including both new and established businesses) can access, at no cost.

### **Launch MN** [State of Minnesota](#)

A state-wide collaborative to accelerate the growth of startups in Minnesota. Access to funding, accelerator programs, incubators, classes, and events.

### **MN Cup** [University of Minnesota](#)

The largest startup business competition in the country, offering \$500,000 in prize money each year to entrepreneurs with promising business ideas in technology and other sectors.

### **Enterprise Minnesota** [enterpriseminnesota.org](#)

An ISO 9001:2015 certified consulting organization that works with small and medium sized manufacturing companies to help them compete and grow profitably. It is the official representative of the Manufacturing Extension Partnership (MEP) National Network in Minnesota.

### **Forge North** [Forge North | Welcome to MSP's Startup Community](#)

Provides over 500+ incredible resources including accelerators, funds, peer and mentor networks, co-working spaces, and much more.

### **Women's Business Alliance** [Women's Business Alliance: Empowering Women Entrepreneurs | Entrepreneur Fund \(efund.org\)](#)

Provides women business owners with services to grow, finance, or start a business. Resources are specific to women including advising and networking opportunities that support strategies for professional and business growth.

## BUSINESS COUNSELING AND TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE CONTINUED

### **Minnesota SBIR/STTR** [State of Minnesota](#)

The Governor's resource to provide free and confidential business and technical assistance to Minnesota firms to access federal SBIR/STTR investments.

### **SBDC (Small Business Development Center)** [St.Cloud State University](#)

Provides one-on-one professional and confidential business consulting at no-cost. Pre-venture, start-up, and established businesses can obtain professional expertise and guidance to identify and secure financing and training programs for owning and operating a business.

### **SCORE of Central Minnesota** [SCORE St.Cloud Services](#) | [SCORE](#)

Provides free and confidential business counseling to assist people in starting a new business and existing small and mid-sized business owners. SCORE volunteers are real world professionals with expertise in such areas as accounting, finance, operations, marketing, management, and business plan preparation.

### **Export Counseling and Assistance** [MN Trade Office](#)

Provides professional assistance from international trade representatives to guide small and mid-sized companies through the challenges and opportunities of conducting international business, including technical, regulatory and logistical information, market intelligence and research, conducting business across borders and cultures. Eligible small businesses may apply for reimbursement up to \$500 for export training that will result in the development of an export strategy or up to \$7,500 for approved export development activities.

### **Thrive MN Startup & Small Business Assistance Program** [Thrive MN](#)

As part of Thrive MN program, the GSDC offers FREE one-on-one coaching sessions (up to 10 hours) with our seasoned growth strategists! Whether you're delving into financials, navigating the complexities of commercial real estate, or fine-tuning your food & beverage venture, we've got the expertise tailored just for you. This opportunity is industry-agnostic and caters to everyone from emerging entrepreneurs with fresh ideas to seasoned business owners planning their next steps.

## LOAN AND GRANT PROGRAMS

### **Launch MN Grants** [Launch MN](#)

Businesses are eligible to receive one of each grant for the next two years. Increased consideration to startups located in Greater Minnesota, as well as businesses owned by women, veterans, or people of color.

- Business Operations: Grants up to \$35,000 for business operations including research and development, direct business expenses, and technical assistance.
- SBIR Match: Grants provide up to \$50,000 for business awarded a first time Phase 2 SBIR or STTR award.

### **Enterprise Academy** [Initiative Foundation](#)

The Enterprise Academy is based on the Entrepreneur Development Model, a program of the Neighborhood Development Center's Build From Within Alliance, Direct loans are possible in amounts up to \$50,000 for successful graduates of the Enterprise Academy Entrepreneur Training Class.

### **Emerging Entrepreneur Loan Program**

#### [Emerging Entrepreneur Loan Program / Minnesota Department of Employment and Economic Development \(mn.gov\)](#)

DEED provides ELP funding to certified nonprofit partners to make loans to Minnesota businesses that are majority-owned and operated by minorities, low-income persons, women, veterans and/or persons with disabilities. Businesses must apply directly with a certified lender, although DEED may be able to assist in identifying an appropriate lender. Once the lender approves the loan, they will forward the loan package to DEED for approval by the commissioner and disbursement of funds for the project.

## LOAN AND GRANT PROGRAMS CONTINUED

### **The State Small Business Credit Initiative**

[State Small Business Credit Initiative / Minnesota Department of Employment and Economic Development \(mn.gov\)](#)

The State Small Business Credit Initiative (SSBCI) is part of the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) of 2021 and includes \$10 billion for state, territory and tribal business finance programs. Minnesota has been approved by the U.S. Department of the Treasury for up to \$97 million for small business financing support. Programs include the Growth Loan Fund, Minnesota Loan Guarantee Program and the Small Business Loan Participation Program.

### **SBA 504 Loans** [MN Business Finance Corp](#)

Provides start-up and existing businesses loans to create new jobs with long term, low down payment, fixed-rate financing of major fixed assets, such as land and buildings.

### **African Development Center of Minnesota**

[Your guide to financial success in America | African Development Center \(adcmnnesota.org\)](#)

Provides business training, commercial financing and technical assistance to assist African Immigrants and refugees in Minnesota.

### **Native American Business Loan Program**

[Minnesota Native American Business Loan Program / Minnesota Department of Employment and Economic Development \(mn.gov\)](#)

Supports the development of Indian-owned and operated businesses and promotes economic opportunities for Native American people in Minnesota. Loans may be up to 75 percent costs and feature favorable interest rates.

### **MN Reservist and Veteran Business Loan Program** [State of Minnesota](#)

Provides interest free, business loans of up to \$20,000 to businesses that are adversely affected when certain employees are called to active military duty and to individual veterans who have returned from active duty and want to start their own business.

### **Minnesota Loan Guarantee Program**

[Minnesota Loan Guarantee Program / Minnesota Department of Employment and Economic Development \(mn.gov\)](#)

The Minnesota Loan Guarantee Program (MNLGP) is part of the State Small Business Credit Initiative (SSBCI) funding from the U.S. Department of the Treasury and is subject to SSBCI rules. MNLGP provides guarantees to enrolled lenders for up to 80% of principal on loans to eligible businesses. The program helps enrolled lenders mitigate risk so they can increase capital to small businesses located across Minnesota.

### **Growth Loan Fund** [Growth Loan Fund / Minnesota Department of Employment and Economic Development \(mn.gov\)](#)

GLF supports entrepreneurial growth throughout Minnesota by offering low-interest loans to early-stage businesses that are seeking to raise equity investments. Businesses seeking funding through this program need to be engaged in, or be committed to engage in, technological innovation in Minnesota.

## TAX CREDITS AND VENTURE CAPITAL

### **Great North Labs Venture Fund** [Great North Labs](#)

A regional fund managed by successful early stage tech investors and entrepreneurs. The high-performing team maximizes investor results by cultivating access to investment intelligence and opportunities through strategic relationships, and directly helping startups grow and find exits.

### **Angel Tax Credit** [State of Minnesota](#)

Businesses headquartered in Minnesota with fewer than 25 employees and engaged in research and development of qualifying high-technology can qualify for up to \$1 million in angel tax credit.

### **Direct Investment Venture Capital Program**

[Direct Investment Venture Capital Program / Minnesota Department of Employment and Economic Development \(mn.gov\)](#)

The program will invest in Minnesota-based seed and early-stage startups. This program is expected to target key sectors such as advanced manufacturing, agtech/foodtech, climate tech, life sciences, software, and technology.

## TAX CREDITS AND VENTURE CAPITAL CONTINUED

### Research and Development Tax Credit [State of Minnesota](#)

The tax credit for R&D expenditures is 10%, up to the first \$2 million in eligible expenses. The credit is 2.5 % for eligible expenses above \$2 million. Individuals involved in partnerships, S-corporations and limited liability companies can claim the credit against their individual income taxes.

## CO-WORKING SPACES

### Apiary Coworking [Apiary Coworking](#)

Provides a productive and collaborative working environment for office users to thrive and grow and aims to be an efficient work space with positive energy.

### Cooper Collective [Cooper Collective](#)

Provides a flexible, affordable professional space with a casual vibe that offers a ton of amenities and ability to network and collaborate with a talented community.

### Hyve Cospace [Hyve Cospace](#)

Whether you're an entrepreneur, remote worker, freelancer, small business owner, or part of a nonprofit, Hyve is designed to help you thrive. It's more than just a workspace – it's a place to focus, collaborate, and grow alongside a supportive community.

### Regus St. Cloud Center [Regus](#)

Flexible, lower-cost coworking spaces.

### StageWorks [StageWorks](#)

Flexible, lower-cost office rentals, coworking memberships, and downtown storefront pop-up spaces.

## ST. CLOUD CITY DEPARTMENTS

### St. Cloud Health & Inspections [Health & Inspections](#)

Inspects all food service establishments, grocery stores, meat markets, food manufacturers, food distributors, boarding and lodging establishments, swimming pools, day cares, schools and public health care facilities for compliance with City and State environmental health codes. Receives, records and issues all permit and license applications for environmental health and zoning related activities. Issues sign permits and enforces all sign regulations. Conducts lead paint evaluations of structures as recommended by area physicians.

### St. Cloud Planning & Zoning [Planning & Zoning](#)

Guides development, construction, and property maintenance.

