



Client Spotlight

WILD ROOTS EARLY LEARNING CENTER: A RURAL CHILD CARE

Recognizing that access to child care in rural Minnesota is a critical community and economic issue, the North Central Small Business Development Center actively works to provide high quality professional business consulting services to new and existing providers. Through one-on-one technical assistance, the North Central SBDC team works with child care providers to help them develop a financially viable business model and grow their personal skill set as small business owners. One success story that has come from this effort is Wild Roots Early Learning Center in Pine River, Minnesota.

Morgan Dabill, Owner and Director of Wild Roots Early Learning Center, began working with the North Central SBDC in June 2021. At that time, she was a recent graduate of Central Lakes College and was interested in starting her own child care business, but did not know where to start the process. “I reached out to the North Central SBDC and they immediately put me in contact with Marina Lovell, and that was the start of something great,” Dabill said.

Over the next few years, Dabill worked directly with North Central SBDC Professional Business Consultant Marina Lovell to develop her business plan and seek funding. “Marina helped me build a financial model that proved we could make this work. She was with me through every step of the way—from planning, to grants, to going to the lenders. Even emotional support—we talked every single day and she became a friend real quick,” Dabill explained. From 2021 to 2023, she had 142 counseling sessions with Lovell, showcasing the deep involvement and commitment that North Central SBDC consultants have to their clients.

Through the financial projections and loan packaging assistance received from the North Central SBDC, Dabill was able to secure \$954,000.00 in capital funding from 5 different sources. She opened her doors in October 2022 and now has 9 employees.

Wild Roots Early Learning Center now serves children from 6 weeks of age to 12 years old in a nature inspired setting. They have an infant room, a toddler room, two preschool rooms, and a school-age room. They are licensed to serve up to 67 children. Reflecting on her business model and what makes Wild Roots a benefit to the whole community, Dabill said, “We offer parents the benefit of having one place, of not having to do pick up here and there. We can provide for the whole family.”

“We are incredibly proud that Morgan chose to partner with us on her journey to small business ownership,” stated Katie Heppner, Regional Director of the North Central SBDC. “Child care providers play such a key role in our local economy, and they deserve to be seen and be treated like the professional small business owners that they are. The North Central SBDC is strongly committed to continuing to provide no-cost consulting services to businesses like Wild Roots Early Learning Center.”

The North Central SBDC is hosted by Central Lakes College and works throughout an 11 county and two sovereign nation region. The geographic region served by the North Central SBDC includes: Aitkin, Cass, Chisago, Crow Wing, Isanti, Kanabec, Mille Lacs, Morrison, Pine, Todd, and Wadena counties and the sovereign nations of the Leech Lake and Mille Lacs Bands of Ojibwe. To learn more about the North Central SBDC and to register for services visit www.clcmn.edu/small-business-development-center or contact Katie Heppner, Regional Director, at katherine.heppner@clcmn.edu.

In 2023, the Minnesota SBDC Network helped North Central Region businesses start, manage and grow.

By the numbers:



543

Unique clients served



1,634

Jobs supported



18

New businesses started



\$16.5M

Capital infused



3,685

Total hours of consulting services



53%

Pre-venture clients



47%

In-business clients

North Central Region

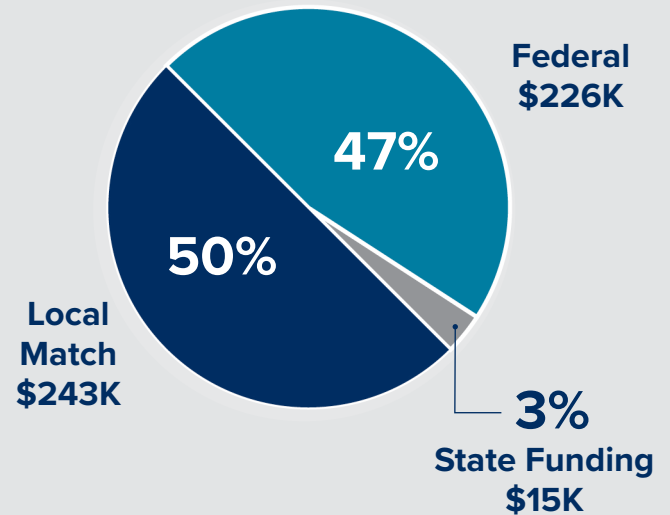
Small Business Development Center

Partners in Success

Our partners share in the vision for Minnesota's business success and recognize the positive relationship between nurturing small businesses and the well-being of their communities, regions, and the state. Funding for the program comes from the U.S. Small Business Administration, the Minnesota Department of Employment and Economic Development, and our most important local partners—the institutions of higher learning that host our regional centers.

Other local funding partners include many community lenders, economic development organizations, corporate donors, and private individuals. We're so grateful for their incredible continuing commitment to this program. Together, we are helping businesses start, grow, and succeed.

2023 Funding



HOST INSTITUTION



NORTH CENTRAL REGION

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