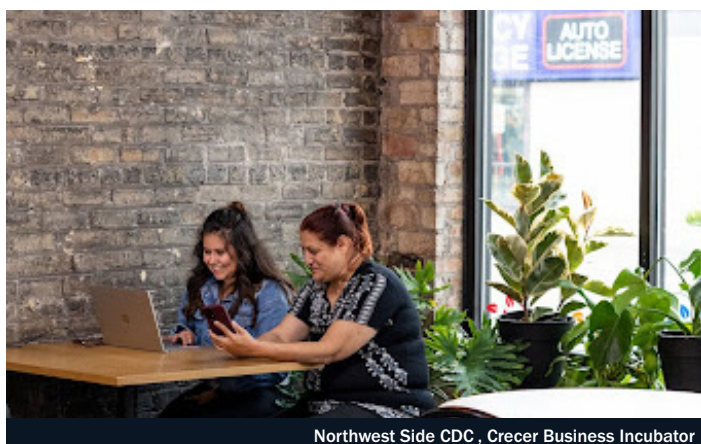


COMMUNITY NAVIGATOR PILOT PROGRAM (CNPP)



Northwest Side CDC, Crecer Business Incubator

The Small Business Administration's (SBA) Community Navigator Pilot Program (CNPP) strengthens support for small businesses by connecting aspiring and existing entrepreneurs, particularly those from historically underserved communities, to technical assistance and capital programming that meets their varied needs. **The CNPP builds more inclusive entrepreneurial ecosystems by investing in partnerships with trusted local Business Development Organizations (BDOs) to drive economic growth and spur entrepreneurship** with a focus on enhancing the ability of SBA and other public-private resources to reach microenterprises, and small businesses owned by veterans, women, people with disabilities, and those in rural places and communities of color.

What is the Community Navigator Pilot Program?

- Small businesses are the backbone of our economy, creating jobs and driving economic growth in communities across the country. However, many small business owners, particularly those from historically underserved rural and urban communities, face significant barriers to accessing the resources and support they need to start, strengthen, and expand their businesses.
- The **CNPP is a critical and necessary tool for addressing longstanding gaps by creating a continuum of services that focus on hard-to-serve populations and areas often beyond traditional resource centers' work.**
- The competitively funded CNPP is expanding entrepreneurship and wealth-building opportunities through a "hub and spoke network." Hubs provide high-quality support that **invests in the infrastructure necessary for long-term recovery and growth in local markets, while strengthening organizational capacity to support small businesses through data-driven models.** In turn, the BDOs act as spokes that connect specific sectors of the entrepreneurial community to provide direct assistance, including access to technical and financial assistance.
- Over the past 18 months, the **CNPP program has supported 450 BDOs from all over the country.** These organizations serve as trusted ambassadors on the ground, providing technical assistance, capital access, and guiding business owners as they navigate local public and private resources.

What has been LISC's involvement?

- In October 2021, LISC received a \$5 million Tier 1 Community Navigator award to deploy "Small Biz Network Builders" to underserved communities within seven markets to equitably distribute the resources that local businesses need to maintain stability and grow through a data-driven and accountable model.
- Through CNPP, **LISC is partnering with 30 spokes across seven markets:** Chicago, Connecticut, Los Angeles, Newark, Phoenix, and the rural Mississippi Delta, which includes Arkansas, Kentucky, Louisiana, Tennessee, and Missouri, to expand their reach. LISC is also enhancing support for industry-specific sectors like childcare providers through CNPP.

What are LISC's outcomes?

- To date, LISC and our partners have supported **over 2,300 unique businesses** across our seven markets.
- Of the 2,300 businesses: **95%** are owned by low-to-moderate-income individuals; **23%** are located in rural communities; **72%** are minority-owned; and **61%** are women-owned.
- LISC and our partners have provided **12,600 counseling sessions** to entrepreneurs, an average of ~5 TA sessions per business.
- Over **1,000 businesses received over 1,600 hours of access to capital training**, and LISC and our partners helped secure over **\$12.7 million in capital**.

How has LISC used CNPP?

- LISC is leveraging CNPP resources to support BDO or spoke partners in seven markets across the country, advancing more inclusive small business ecosystems and fostering equitable access to capital and technical assistance for all small businesses.
- **LISC's CNPP program has supported over 2,300 businesses and helped 260+ businesses secure over \$12.7 million in approved capital.**
- Examples of LISC's CNPP successes across the country include:
 - In Chicago, [Northwest Side CDC](#) leveraged CNPP resources to support the establishment and sustainability of the [Crecker Business Incubator](#). Located in the Belmont Cragin neighborhood, the incubator provides entrepreneurs with the skills to launch and improve their business.
 - In Arkansas, [Conductor](#) is leveraging CNPP to increase startups and their sustainability. CNPP helped provide technical assistance to [SBA's 2023 Arkansas Minority-Owned Business of the Year](#) and connected [Day Dream Design](#) to loan capital to expand their business.
 - In Toledo, [Assets Toledo](#) helped two entrepreneurs acquire commercial space to collocate [Studio 32Nine](#), a salon, and [K'Janee Boutique](#), a clothing business. Through CNPP supported technical assistance, these entrepreneurs refined their business plans, obtained financing preapproval, located a storefront, and secured a loan for energy efficiency upgrades.
 - In Los Angeles, [Inclusive Action for the City](#) leveraged CNPP resources to help [Sad Girl Creamery](#), a small batch creamery, access affordable capital to purchase inventory and equipment necessary to expand operations. Sad Girl Creamery's flavors are inspired by Latin roots and they are committed to raising awareness about mental health within Latin communities.
 - In Connecticut, the [Community Economic Development Fund \(CEDF\)](#) assists entrepreneurs throughout CT with personalized technical assistance and has helped small businesses like [Borinquen Bakery](#) start and expand into a local storefront thanks to CNPP resources.
 - In Phoenix, [Retail Arts Innovation & Livability \(RAIL\) CDC](#) supported the start-up and sustainability of [Hope's Frybread](#), a Navajo-owned and operated business, with technical assistance and access to loan capital. This led to the opening of a brick-and-mortar space and 13 new jobs in Mesa.
 - In Mississippi, CNPP supported **AgLaunch Initiative's** delivery of high-quality technical assistance to the [Milestone Cooperative Association](#). As a result, the agricultural business was able to obtain its USDA GAP Certificate and create 15 new jobs.

What can Congress do?

- **Permanently authorize the SBA's Community Navigator Pilot Program, and provide funding of no less than \$30 million for FY 2024.** This is the only federal program that directly supports the capacity and growth of local Business Development Organizations.

LISC is a national nonprofit housing and community development intermediary with offices in 38 different cities and a national rural network of 150+ organizations.

For more information on the Community Navigator Pilot Program, please contact Matt Josephs at mjosephs@lisc.org.