



SOUTHERN MINNESOTA
INITIATIVE FOUNDATION

Southern Minnesota Initiative Foundation

Tim Penny

Collaborating for Regional Vitality



Vision & Mission

VISION FOR THE REGION

Southern Minnesota will be a prosperous and growing region with vibrant communities, innovative and successful economies, and engaged and valued citizens.

MISSION

Southern Minnesota Initiative Foundation is a regional development and philanthropic organization that fosters economic and community vitality in 20 counties of southern Minnesota through a culture of collaboration and partnership.

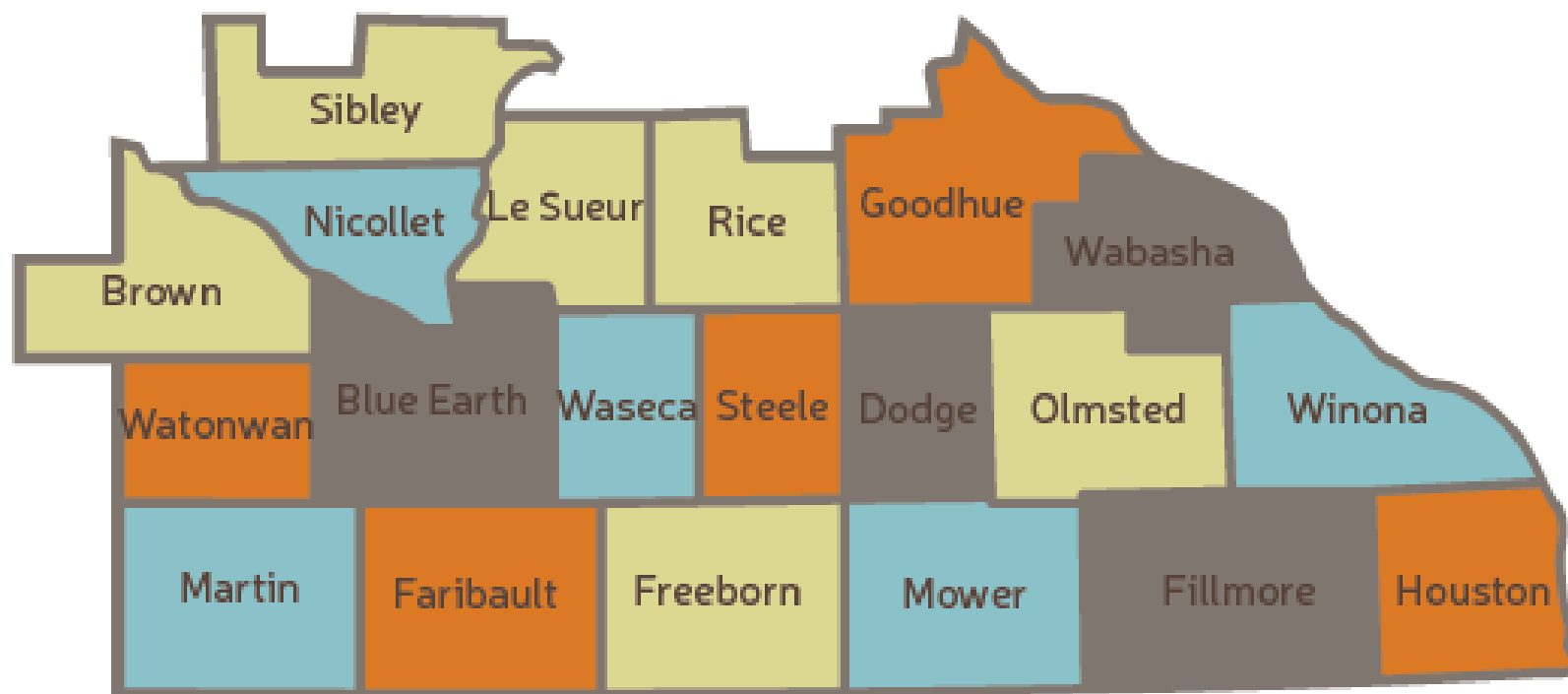




SOUTHERN MINNESOTA
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Our 20-County Region

\$162 million invested since 1986



Serving 20 counties, 175 communities and one Native nation

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Focus Areas

Entrepreneurship

Early Childhood

**Community Vitality
& Small Towns**

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Entrepreneurship Key Focus Areas

Community Ecosystem Building

- Rural Entrepreneurial Ventures (REV)

Business Education/Training

- Prosperity Initiative
- IEC Grants
- IGNITE Business Competition
- FEAST! Local Food Marketplace, Rochester
- Peer Networks
- Entrepreneurial Bridge Annual Event

- Compeer Financial
- Winthrop Foundation/SWIF

Community Development/Partnerships

- Collider Foundation
- IGNITE
- Wells Fargo
- Renewing the Countryside
- SE Regional Sustainable Development Partnership
- University of MN Extension/Region Nine



Women's Peer
Group, Rochester

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Entrepreneurship

\$2.9 million or more invested annually



China House Cafe, Truman

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Business Financing



*Twisted Chicken, Faribault
Loan client*

793 loans have supported
596 local businesses,
creating 5,223 jobs.

Partners: Local banks,
Economic Development
agencies, Cities and
Counties.

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Business Training and Coaching



Wiimānj Homestead LLC, Kasota
Prosperity Initiative client

Hundreds of entrepreneurs supported through trainings or one-on-one coaching last year.

Partners: CEDA, UofM Extension, Red Wing Ignite, Collider, Region Nine, SBDC, SCORE, and many more.

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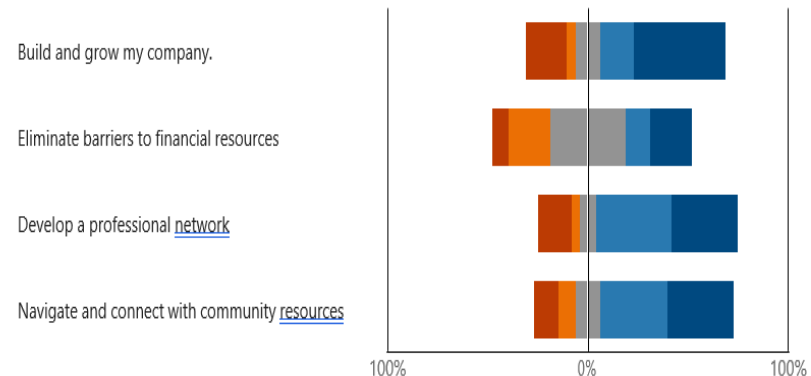
Prosperity Initiative Clients

Company Name (Legal)	Company City
Anfaani Construction LLC	Rochester
Baoboost	Rochester
Bee Balm	Harmony
Birdie and Bounce Mini Golf	Rochester
Celeste Beauty Max	Red Wing
ETCHpressions	Janesville
Everyday 365 Clothing LLC	Rochester
Gari Hills LLC	Mankato
Hiwet Products LLC	Owatonna
Lakota Made LLC	Mankato
Little Scholars Academy LLC	Faribault
Lush Cakes	Waseca
NVherlook	Rochester
RANAS Breakthrough Counselling LLC	Rochester
Annie Jurrens	Plainview
Thistle & Amber	Winona
Twisted Chicken Corporation	Faribault
Wiimani Homestead LLC	Kasota

I have a good experience with SMIF for networking and expand my knowledge on some aspects of the business. As a minority, I will need a one-to-one mentorship to take my business to next level which is manufacturing and marketing the products.

49. How helpful was the Prosperity Initiative Program as you worked towards achieving the following outcomes?

■ Very unhelpful ■ Somewhat unhelpful ■ Neutral ■ Somewhat helpful ■ Very helpful





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join us!
10 *Feast!*
LOCAL FOODS
~est. 2014~
ten years
NOV. 4, 2023 ROCHESTER, MN

*The next event is the FEAST! Tradeshaw that will Saturday,
March 21 at the Grand O2 Center in Cannon Falls, MN.*



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Regional Food System



FEAST! Local Foods Marketplace

1,313 attendees and 82 local food booths at 10th FEAST! Local Foods Marketplace.

Partners: Renewing the Countryside, Minnesota Department of Agriculture, Compeer Financial and others.

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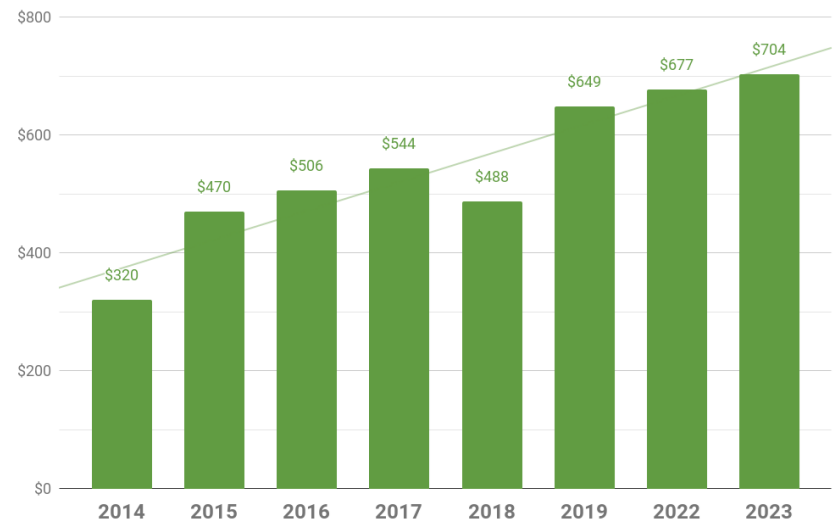
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Vendors

Reported sales avg: \$704

Range:
\$150 - \$3,000

FEAST! festival vendor sales averages, 2014-2023 (est.)



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Vendors

Priorities for the day, ranked:

1. Brand building
2. Onsite sales
3. Networking
4. Market research



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RURAL ENTREPRENEURIAL VENTURE
DISCOVER | IGNITE | GROW



City of Wells

The business visits have already opened lines of communication and I feel this is a huge success. The businesses we visited showed a genuine appreciation for us taking the time to meet with them. We hope these visits will improve communication and relationships the city has with its local businesses.

- Tiffany

Schrader

New City Administrator



Sustainability Growth Plans

- Montgomery
 - Visit with at least 2 businesses per month
 - At least 3 business educational sessions
 - Create Downtown Grant Challenge
 - Dedicate more city staff to this effort
 - Request EDA provide direct financial assistance for REV related activities/EDA REV subcommittee meetings
- Mapleton
 - Bi-monthly business roundtables
 - Engage with less visible businesses (homebased)
 - Recapitalize and market the loan program at get at least 1 application.
 - Increase available childcare slots by 100
 - Work on at least one real estate project that includes private investor
- Wells
 - A rebuilding year – new city administrator and new community development director
 - Partnership with CEDA – goal
 - Business education events and visits
 - Develop accessible business resource portal
- Springfield
 - KickStart Springfield will become a formal subcommittee of the Springfield EDA.
 - Business Visits will continue – at least 12 in 2024
 - Annual Civic Summit is permanent
 - Kickstart recruitment for members ongoing

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REV Community Opportunities/Trends

- Helping existing businesses improvement their operations, marketing and workforce.
- Maintaining consistent staff and leadership for entrepreneurial efforts.
 - Creating grant opportunities
- Talent pipeline
- Leadership confidence, proactive mindset
- Embraced entrepreneurial development as a core component for their economic development strategy
- Educational sessions/roundtables/visits
- Stronger collaborations, partnerships and resource development

- *“I believe Montgomery has embraced entrepreneurial development as a core component of their economic development strategy. The city has committed staff time to support the REV effort and has institutionalized the work as a subcommittee of their EDA.”*

Jennifer Hawkins, former REV Coach



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Inclusive & Equitable Communities 18 Month Implementation Grants

The Inclusive & Equitable Communities (IEC) Grants Program aims to foster a growing number of communities to build inclusive, welcoming environments and advance equitable opportunities in the lives of all people.

SMIF's funded 9 applications totaling \$90,000. A special invite to five additional organizations demonstrating impact.



The FY23
Cohort –
January
convening at
SMIF – 2nd of
three
convenings

Applicant	Title
Austin Community Charitable Fund	Austin Community Entrepreneur and Business Outreach and Support
Collider Foundation	Business Bootcamp for Entrepreneurial Starters
Hispanic Advocacy and Community Empowerment through Research	Entrepreneurs of Tomorrow
Northfield Healthy Community Initiative	Entrepreneurial Business Postsecondary Career Pathway
Rice County Neighbors United Of Northfield	Creating Equity and Wealth as Emerging Entrepreneurs
Saint Peter Good Neighbor Diversity Council	Identifying, Training, and Creating Entrepreneurial Opportunities for the Increasing BIPOC Population of St. Peter, MN
Somali American Cultural Society of Owatonna	To Engage, Educate, and Empower communities of adult learners by advancing literacy skills and employment opportunities.
Somali American Social Service Association	SASSA Inclusive and Equitable Communities Program
YWCA of Mankato	Sewing for Success

“We are so appreciative of SMIF’s IEC grant. We could not have done this planning work in Olmsted County without it.”

- Sharing best practices in the school systems – Triton and Blue Earth
- Opportunities to discuss land access – Riverbend and The Village
- Opening the eyes of leadership at Martin County EDA and Olmstead County

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Small Business Relief Grants



1,967 emergency grants to southern MN businesses that could demonstrate financial hardship as a result of the pandemic.
Total = \$20.6 million.

Partners: MN DEED

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Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy



**What is Our Regional
Comprehensive Economic
Development Strategy?**

February 5, 2024 from 12:00 - 5:00 PM

Wood Lake Meeting Center, Rochester

FREE to Attend and Lunch is Provided

Join us as we introduce a regional resource to streamline your planning and enhance your economic development efforts. The Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) Report, sponsored by the Southern Minnesota Initiative Foundation, highlights our region's strengths and challenges; identifies our goals for future growth; and presents a strategic direction and action plan to leverage our assets and mitigate risks.

The CEDS provides you with valuable data and regional recommendations that can be referenced and used by your organization in a variety of ways. Having this US EDA-approved plan also opens access to even more grant opportunities at the state and federal levels.

Special guest Nicole Griensewic, Executive Director of Region 9 Development Commission, will highlight examples of how their region has successfully leveraged their CEDS. Additional panelists will share practical applications, resources, and funding ideas to assist each entity in accomplishing its goals. There will be opportunities for small group conversations with the panelists and networking with other attendees from across the region.

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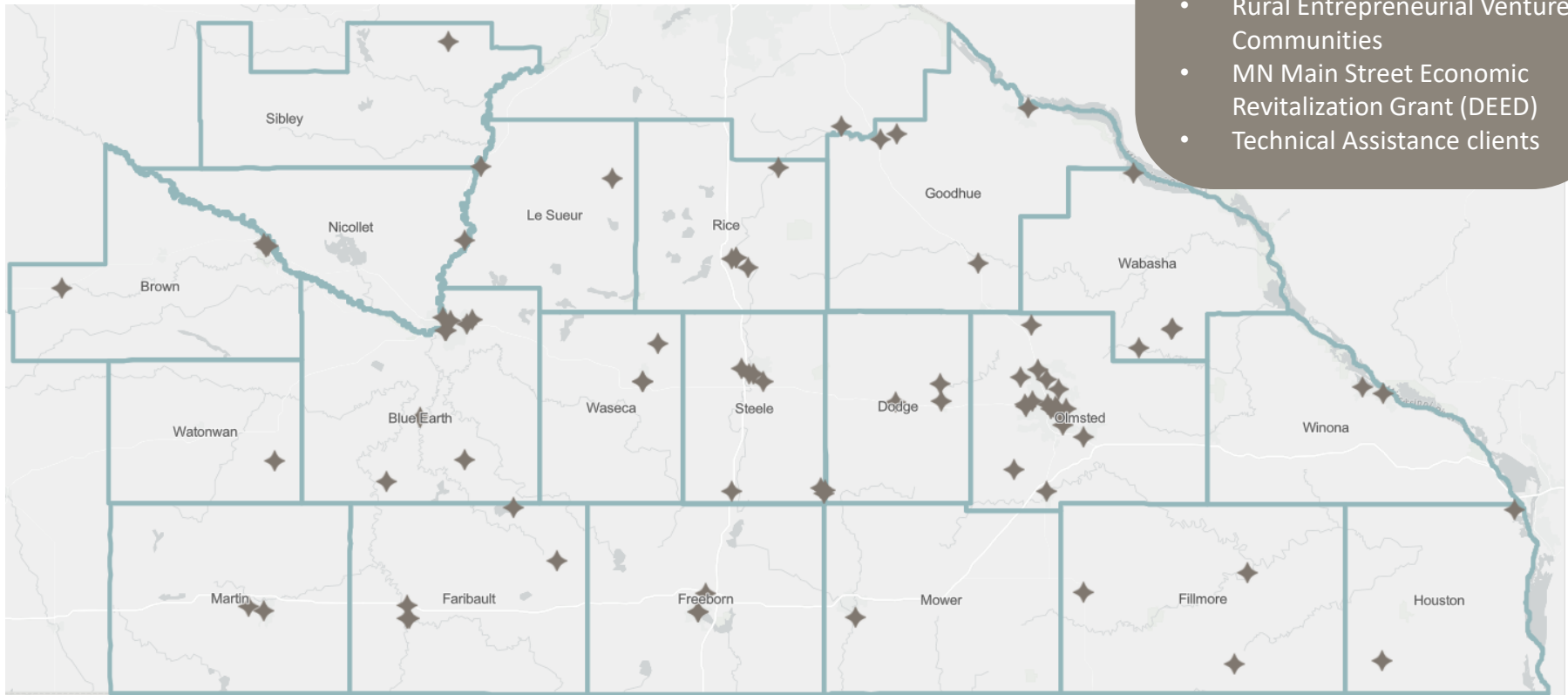


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Entrepreneurship

July 2022 – June 2023

- Business Trainings
- Equity Investments
- Inclusive & Equitable Communities Grant
- Loan clients
- Peer Network members
- Prosperity Initiative members
- Rural Entrepreneurial Venture Communities
- MN Main Street Economic Revitalization Grant (DEED)
- Technical Assistance clients



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Early Childhood Development

\$1.8 million or more invested annually



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Early Childhood Literacy

More than 22,000 books distributed to 53 organizations last year.

Partners: local publishers, ABDO and Capstone.



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Literacy Grant Awards



of Organizations
53



of Spanish Books
1,990



of English Books
20,360



Total Books
22,350



Total Book Value
\$ 397,830



Avg Book Value
\$17.80

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Early Childhood Trainings





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Early Childhood Trainings Outcomes

Training	# of Sessions	# of Attendees
Conscious Discipline	45 on-line modules	450
Dine & Learn In-Person and Virtual	17	502
Spanish CPR Health & Safety	1	10

Survey Questions	% Yes
I believe this training provided me the opportunity to gain knowledge and skills related and useful to my professional development.	100%
The training gave me options for increasing the effectiveness of my work.	100%
The instructor was helpful in increasing my knowledge of quality childcare and or education.	99%
This training aids my ability to remain in the child care field.	96%

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Additional Training Partnerships

- ✓ Super Saturday with Families First
- ✓ Lake Crystal Little Lakers Training
- ✓ Collaborated with Families First to create Professional Development incentive for 20 caregivers to receive curriculum and supplies to enhance quality in their care facilities.
- ✓ Resources to Gibbon, Montgomery, New Prague, New Ulm, Northfield, UW Steele County, Stewartville, St. Charles, Waseca.
- ✓ ACTG partnership to implement SMART training for family providers.





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Additional Community Support and Programs

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Early Care & Education Grant Awards

Early Care & Education Grant Awards:

- ✓ **18** Organizations approved for funding totaling **\$194,255** for the Early Care & Education Grant
- ✓ **5** additional organizations granted training and curriculum funding through other SMIF resources
- ✓ **6** subgrants totaling **\$175,000** made through the DEED Childcare Economic Development grant for facility expansion to increase child care



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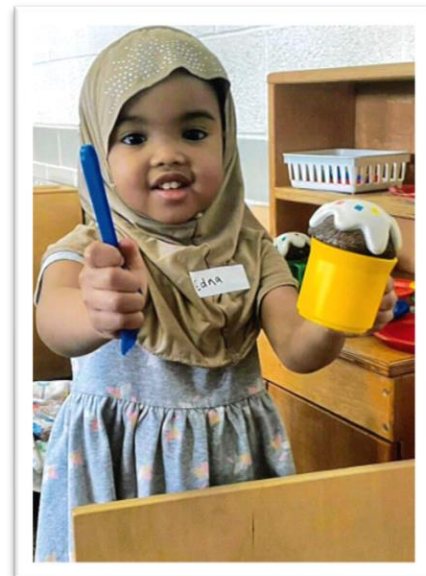
Early Care & Education Grant Reporting Highlights

YWCA - Mankato

“We met our goal of providing our families with developmentally appropriate toys, bilingual books in their home language, safety supplies, and diapers.”

Project Description

The New American Families program works to eliminate barriers using the parents as Teacher Curriculum. This evidence-based curriculum focuses on families with children who are prenatal to five years of age to promote parent-child interaction, child development, and family well-being in a home visiting model. Our culturally specific and multilingual team currently serves Latinx, Somali and some additional East African communities.



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Business Supports

Overall support in FY23 resulted in:



- ✓ **610** new child care slots
- ✓ **470** existing child care slots supported with technical assistance
- ✓ **44** case engagements – more focus on community efforts versus individual provider engagement

Growth & Retention of Child Care Highlights:



- ✓ Supported a team in the development stages of a **new child care center** focusing on family-oriented settings in the Byron area.
- ✓ Provided **guidance and support** to family care provider in Wells, who faced a personal tragedy and sought assistance in moving forward.
- ✓ Little Villagers & Little Rebels: These programs both endured **staffing challenges** to their businesses and our work helped them move beyond to new foundational plans for their business





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Early Care and Education Supports & Training

Details:

Dine and Learn: 7 sessions totaling 14 hours of continuing education

Conscious Discipline: Provided a total of 54 modules of self-paced Conscious Discipline Courses from January 2023 through January 2024

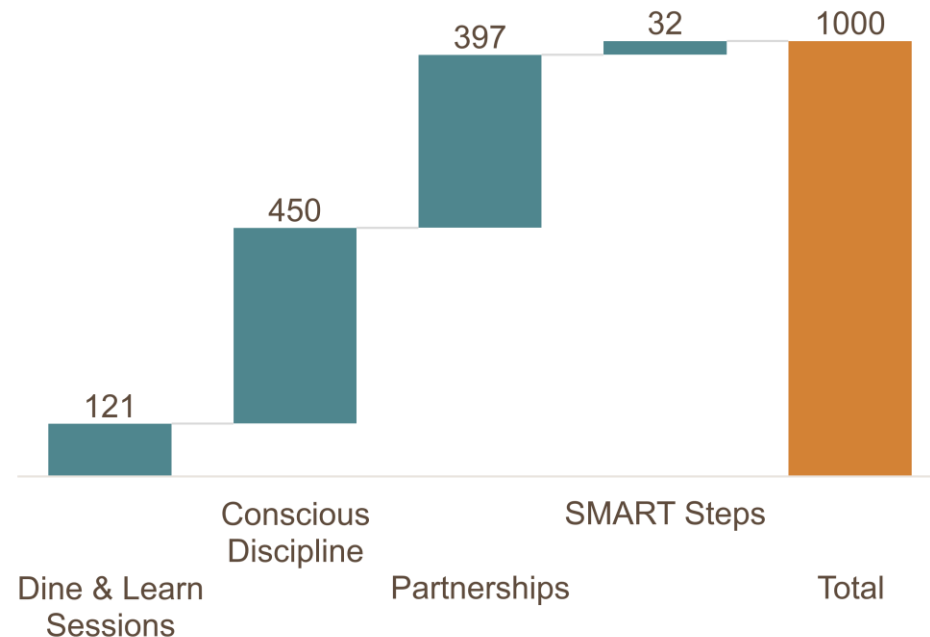
Partnerships:

- Brown County Super Saturday (171)
- Winona Super Saturday (57)
- Dodge County Childcare Provider Association (137)

Additional:

- Coordinated and delivered a 5 session business education series for Friend, Family & Neighbor (FFN) providers in Spanish
- Help Me Grow resources in Spanish, Somali, Karen, & Hmong on developmental milestones available at all trainings
- 7 organizations received subgrants totaling \$185,150 for expansion projects to increase child care slots

Individuals Impacted



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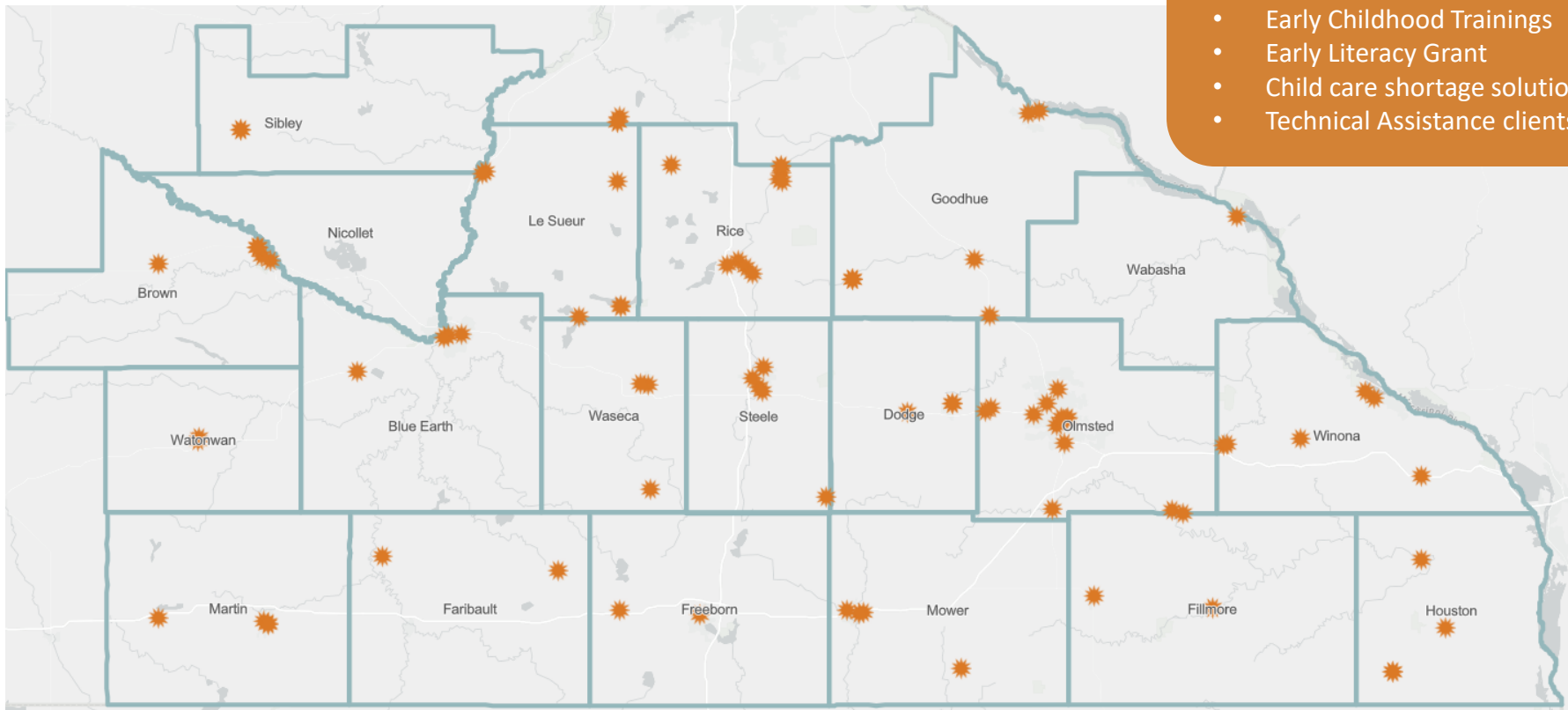


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Early Childhood

July 2022 – 2023

- Early Care and Education Grant
- Early Childhood Initiative Communities
- Early Childhood Trainings
- Early Literacy Grant
- Child care shortage solutions
- Technical Assistance clients



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Thank You!

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@smifound @tim_penny #soMNlove

Contact

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