

# ANNUAL REPORT

2024

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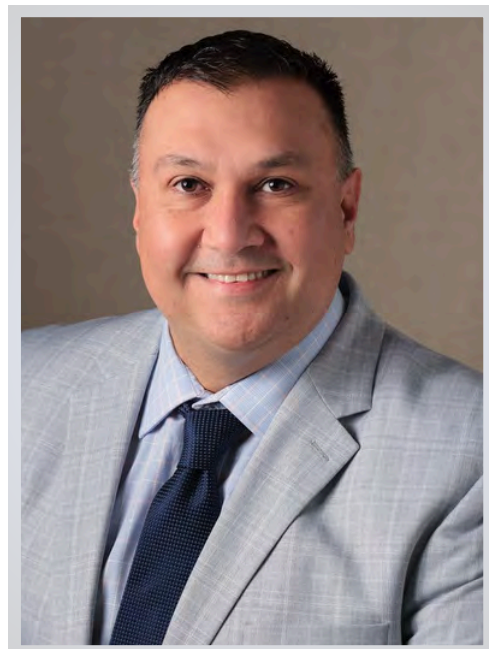


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# Letter from the State Director



As we look back on 2024, the Missouri SBDC stands as a cornerstone of support for entrepreneurs and small businesses across our state. The network continues to empower businesses with cutting-edge resources and expertise, ensuring our entrepreneurs are equipped to compete in an ever-evolving marketplace. Whether creating new jobs, assisting with expansion, or building vibrant local economies, the Missouri SBDC remains a trusted partner for small businesses on their journey to success.

In fiscal year 2024, the Missouri SBDC network assisted over 10,000 clients through one-on-one counseling and training. In this report, you learn about some of our amazing clients and the economic impact due to their relationship with the Missouri SBDC.

The success of the Missouri SBDC would not be possible without the steadfast support of our partners and the communities across Missouri. Our partners have played an instrumental role in enabling us to fulfill our mission, and their investment in the Missouri SBDC ensures that small businesses across the state thrive, create more opportunities, and strengthen our economy.

Thank you for your ongoing support as we embark on another year of growth and opportunity in 2025. Together, we will continue to make Missouri a beacon for entrepreneurship and innovation.

Warm regards,

Ted J. Gutierrez  
State Director

# Program Overview



The Missouri Small Business Development Centers (SBDC) has served small business owners and entrepreneurs for over four decades. The Missouri SBDC provides one-on-one business advising, coaching, and training to existing and new, for-profit, businesses in the 114 counties of Missouri and the city of St. Louis.

The program is funded through a Cooperative Agreement with the U.S. Small Business Administration. The State Office is administered and hosted by the University of Missouri Extension with service center host locations at universities, colleges, and economic development agencies throughout the state.

## MISSION

To educate entrepreneurs, business owners, and workforce to realize success.

## VISION

To be the preferred partner for entrepreneurship and business solutions in Missouri.

## VALUES

- People
- Innovation
- Empowerment
- Collaboration
- Confidentiality
- Integrity

# Technology/Innovation Overview



## FY24 Missouri SBDC Outcomes

Number of unique clients supported by FAST activities	376
Total number of participants at in-person & webinar trainings	422
Number of SBIR/STTR Phase I proposals submitted by clients / Number submitted by underserved businesses	15 / 7
Number of SBIR/STTR Phase I awards won by clients   Number won by underserved businesses	7 / 3

In FY2024, the Missouri FAST program, housed within the Missouri SBDC, played a key role in supporting technology startups and innovative small businesses. Over four quarters, FAST awarded 16 Phase 0 grants, delivered SBIR/STTR training, and collaborated with partners like BioSTL, BioGenerator, and Missouri Technology Corporation. Outreach efforts engaged universities statewide, promoting grant opportunities and connecting with technology transfer offices.

FAST provided a range of training, from SBIR webinars to NSF Phase 1 workshops, earning high satisfaction ratings. Programs like the Business Model Canvas series and ElevationLAB Tech Venture helped early-stage startups refine business models and market strategies. In Q4 alone, seven training sessions attracted 72 participants. FAST also coached clients for InvestMidwest, led NSF-focused workshops, and supported I-Corps cohorts, reinforcing its impact on Missouri's entrepreneurial ecosystem and technology commercialization efforts.

### Specific highlights:

- Total Phase I award funding won by clients: \$1,214,852
- Total Phase II award funding won by clients: \$2,884,922

# International Trade Overview



In 2024, the Missouri SBDC strengthened its support for small businesses expanding into international markets through expert counseling, strategic partnerships, and digital resources. A team of certified export counselors provided guidance on export financing, regulations, and market entry strategies.



Counselors assisted businesses in evaluating export readiness, securing financing, and navigating global markets. They collaborated with U.S. Export Assistance Centers, engaged in rural exporting initiatives, and participated in World Trade Week activities. Key partnerships included the World Trade Centers, U.S. Commercial Service, Missouri Department of Agriculture, Missouri Department of Economic Development, and EXIM Bank. Missouri SBDC also worked with the Heartland Export Accelerator and regional trade programs to expand export opportunities.

To improve productivity, export counseling was largely conducted via video conferencing, supported by cloud-based assessments and online tutorials from NASBITE International Trade Passport and Food Export Midwest. Counseling sessions and strategies were documented for ongoing client support. Through these efforts, Missouri SBDC continues to position businesses for success in the global marketplace.

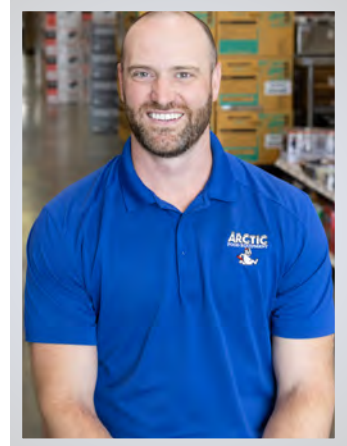
# Client Success Stories



Client success stories showcase the real impact of the Missouri SBDC, demonstrating how our expert guidance helps small businesses thrive. Whether it's developing a strategic growth plan, strengthening management skills, gaining confidence in financial understanding, or creating a marketing strategy to attract and retain customers, our advisors provide the tools and insights entrepreneurs need to succeed. These stories not only highlight the resilience and innovation of Missouri's small business community but also inspire others to take advantage of the resources available to navigate challenges and seize new opportunities.

# Arctic Food Equipment

Owner: Nathan McCartney  
Springfield, MO



As Arctic's incoming CEO, Nathan McCartney faced the critical challenge of scaling his family business while honoring its strong foundation. With a decades-old business and a trusted reputation, Arctic was ready to expand, but Nathan encountered typical hurdles of growth: limited time for operations, expanding customer reach, and balancing sales and service. His father, the previous leader, had built Arctic over 30 years and was focused on maintaining its established reputation. Nathan, however, saw potential for strategic growth, but he needed resources and guidance to bring his vision to life effectively.

Nathan found the support he needed in the Elevate program, a Missouri SBDC initiative. Through a mix of expert consulting and CEO roundtables, Elevate provided tools to refine Arctic's growth strategy. With a consultant team, Nathan identified and targeted ideal customers, detailing specifics like job titles, company revenue, and industry needs. The program also helped him focus on increasing the value of existing customers by promoting Arctic's lesser-known services. Additionally, roundtable discussions with other Missouri CEOs gave Nathan a safe space to share and gain insights, building connections with business leaders facing similar challenges.

Elevate equipped Nathan with a robust customer prospect list worth thousands, enhancing his strategic growth efforts. He's now actively balancing Arctic's sales and service sides and effectively reaching new customer segments. The program's CEO roundtables offered valuable connections and camaraderie, addressing the isolation common among business owners. With these tools, Nathan is not only growing Arctic but also reshaping it to reflect his vision, all while building efficiencies that align with his leadership goals.

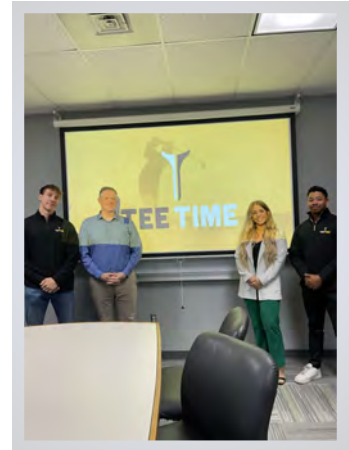
See client's success blog post: <https://efactory.missouristate.edu/blog/2024/10/09/why-elevate/>





# Tee Time

Owners: Kellen Grantham &  
Jonathan Johnson  
Webb City, MO



The entertainment venue Tee Time opened its doors in Webb City in June 2024. Hosting 19 driving bays, four pickleball courts, and cornhole, not to mention its expansive food and drink menus, the business has been successful, and Missouri Southern students and the Missouri Small Business Development Center (SBDC) at MSSU had a hand in this process.

Tee Time co-owners approached the Missouri SBDC to help start their business and offered to collaborate with students. Throughout the Spring 2024 semester, students created an advertising launch plan for Tee Time. They developed a marketing brief and determined what advertisement to use and what message to promote. In the end, the students pitched their strategies to Tee Time owners.

Jonathan Johnson, co-owner of TeeTime, emphasized, "We are grateful to be a part of this collaboration between our business and MSSU. The students and staff have been awesome to work with.... We hope that the students gained real-world applications for their studies and can transfer those skills to their future ventures. All in all, we're thankful for this opportunity and for everyone involved and hope that other businesses will be able to utilize the Missouri [SBDC at MSSU] and their resources!"

The value of the partnership was also noted by Katie Kelly, Director of the Missouri SBDC at MSSU. "This collaboration exemplifies SBDC's commitment to supporting local businesses and fostering educational experiences that bridge the gap between academia and industry," expressed Kelly. Ultimately, the collaboration between TeeTime and MSSU students, through the Missouri SBDC at MSSU, exemplifies the power of partnerships in driving innovation and fostering growth in the local business community with the added bonus of providing students with hands-on work-based learning experiences.



# Ice Cream Factory

Owner: Shannon Imler  
Eldon, MO



Nestled in Eldon, Missouri, The Ice Cream Factory is more than just a beloved ice cream shop—it's a testament to the entrepreneurial vision of owner Shannon Immler and his family. His journey began in 2019 when he transformed an abandoned Kraft mac and cheese factory into a thriving ice cream business. Since then, The Ice Cream Factory has grown into a regional sensation, with expansion plans including a new manufacturing facility in Lebanon, MO.

Shannon's success stems from his commitment to quality, innovation, and community. When COVID-19 threatened operations, he quickly pivoted to ice cream delivery, keeping employees working and customers happy. But he didn't stop there. Eager to grow beyond Missouri, Shannon set his sights on exporting and sought guidance from the Missouri Small Business Development Center (SBDC).

Through the Missouri SBDC's Elevate program, Shannon gained valuable insights, connections, and a roadmap for expansion. His business counselors introduced him to the SBDC International Trade Director and the Missouri APEX Accelerator team, helping him explore global markets and government contracts. Now, with exporting opportunities on the horizon, he's working toward bringing his handcrafted ice cream to customers in Australia and New Zealand.

The Missouri SBDC has been instrumental in The Ice Cream Factory's journey, providing financial guidance, strategic planning, and resources to navigate new challenges. Shannon's story is one of resilience, innovation, and ambition. What started as a small-town business is now growing into an international brand, proving that with passion, adaptability, and the right support, even the sweetest dreams can become reality.

# PawTalk

Owner: Makayla Hawkins  
Jackson, MO



Makayla always knew entrepreneurship was her ultimate goal, but instead of rushing in, she built a strategic plan. She and her husband saved money, gained experience, and explored how her passion for animals could drive a successful business. The turning point? Realizing that people already sought her expertise in dog training—leading to the launch of Paw Talk.

Makayla started with training services, but her long-term vision included boarding and daycare. She connected with the Missouri Small Business Development Center (SBDC) for guidance on strategic growth. When we first met in 2022, she was ready to expand, looking at property options and securing financing. However, challenges kept arising—deals fell through, negotiations stalled, and life took an unexpected turn when she became pregnant.

Many would have given up after three failed expansion attempts, but not Makayla. Each setback only fueled her determination. By summer 2024, she found a new solution—renovating a building to create her dream facility. Once again, we revised her business plan, updated financial projections, and worked with the bank to secure SBA funding. Her persistence paid off.

By fall 2024, the property was purchased, renovations completed, and a grand opening set for December 6.

Makayla's journey is a testament to resilience, strategy, and unwavering passion. With support from the Missouri SBDC, she navigated obstacles, adapted her plan, and turned challenges into opportunities. Paw Talk is not just a business—it's a reflection of her grit, vision, and love for animals. Her story proves that with the right mindset and expert guidance, success is always within reach.



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# What Clients Say

“You are worth your weight in Gold X10! There is absolutely no way I would have gotten through this w/o your expertise.”

“This is exactly the kind of information and guidance I’m interested in! I have done some research but you’ve gone much more in-depth”

“These are things that are (at least for me) somewhat hard to conceptualize for someone in a service-based industry so having guidance was extremely helpful.”

“The SBDC was a huge part of us buying our business and helped us learn some very important lessons early on. I love the SBDC and what it can do for our community.”

“I have never broken down what creating a brand consisted of until this training.”

“Makes you think about your business all the way across the board instead of just focusing in one area.”

“I appreciated the use of the Growth Wheel to help showcase areas of strengths vs. potential. It helped build a full picture, drawing attention to areas one may not typically reflect on.”

“It was wonderful to finally sit down with someone who could offer advice, help, etc. and most importantly for me- HOPE!”

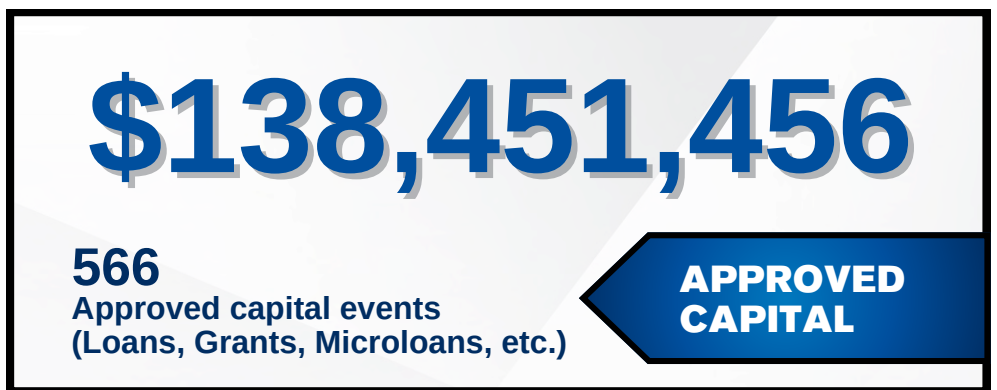
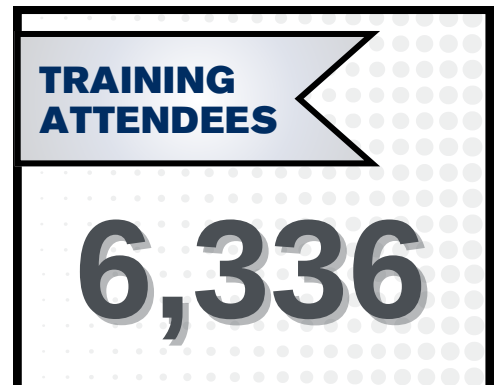
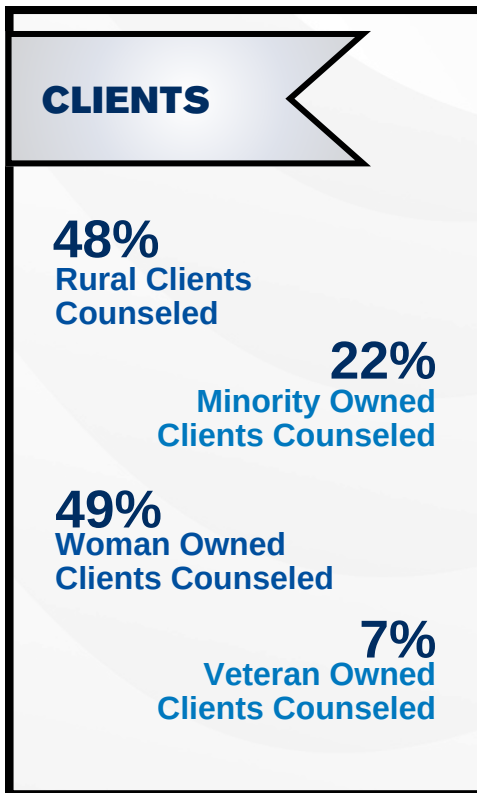
“Financial advice is incredibly useful, and one of the topics I felt least prepared for prior to this”

“Thank you so much for all your help and support! I can't even put into words how grateful I am!”

# Statewide Highlights FY2024



All data reported is verified by clients and attributed to working with the Missouri SBDC.



The Missouri SBDC is funded in part through a Cooperative Agreement with the U.S. Small Business Administration.



# Federal District Highlights

## District One



All data reported is verified by clients and attributed to working with the Missouri SBDC.

**18**

**BUSINESS STARTS**

**INCREASED SALES**

**\$15,173,557**

**CLIENTS**

**64%**  
Minority Owned Clients Counseled

**48%**  
Woman Owned Clients Counseled

**5%**  
Veteran Owned Clients Counseled

**390**

**CLIENTS COUNSELED**

**TRAINING ATTENDEES**

**498**

**\$26,701,673**

**41**  
Approved capital events (Loans, Grants, Microloans, etc.)

**APPROVED CAPITAL**

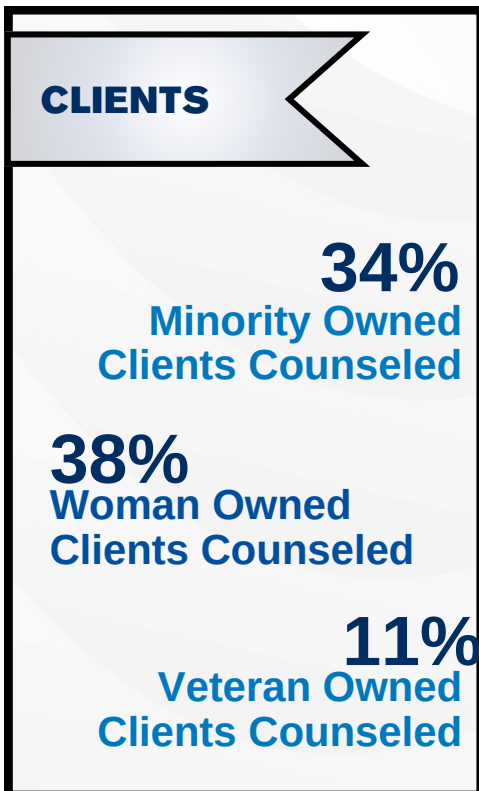
**Program Hosts**



# Federal District Highlights District Two



All data reported is verified by clients and attributed to working with the Missouri SBDC.



**Program  
Hosts**



# Federal District Highlights

## District Three



All data reported is verified by clients and attributed to working with the Missouri SBDC.

# 33

**BUSINESS  
STARTS**

**INCREASED  
SALES**

# \$5,354,986

**CLIENTS**

**28%**

Minority Owned  
Clients Counseled

**46%**

Woman Owned  
Clients Counseled

**4%**

Veteran Owned  
Clients Counseled

# 494

**CLIENTS  
COUNSELED**

**TRAINING  
ATTENDEES**

# 804

# \$9,460,345

**86**

Approved capital events  
(Loans, Grants, Microloans, etc.)

**APPROVED  
CAPITAL**

**Program  
Hosts**





# Federal District Highlights

## District Four



All data reported is verified by clients and attributed to working with the Missouri SBDC.

**40**

**BUSINESS STARTS**

**INCREASED SALES**

**\$34,194,158**

**CLIENTS**

**23%**  
Minority Owned Clients Counseled

**54%**  
Woman Owned Clients Counseled

**11%**  
Veteran Owned Clients Counseled

**637**

**CLIENTS COUNSELED**

**TRAINING ATTENDEES**

**1,117**

**\$8,319,784**

**105**  
Approved capital events (Loans, Grants, Microloans, etc.)

**APPROVED CAPITAL**

**Program Hosts**



# Federal District Highlights District Five



All data reported is verified by clients and attributed to working with the Missouri SBDC.

# 20

**BUSINESS  
STARTS**

**INCREASED  
SALES**

# \$23,384,177

**CLIENTS**

# 37%

Minority Owned  
Clients Counseled

# 47%

Woman Owned  
Clients Counseled

# 6%

Veteran Owned  
Clients Counseled

# 565

**CLIENTS  
COUNSELED**

**TRAINING  
ATTENDEES**

# 1,374

# \$11,671,621

# 60

Approved capital events  
(Loans, Grants, Microloans, etc.)

**APPROVED  
CAPITAL**

**Program  
Hosts**



# Federal District Highlights

## District Six



All data reported is verified by clients and attributed to working with the Missouri SBDC.

# 38

**BUSINESS  
STARTS**

**INCREASED  
SALES**

# \$13,147,600

**CLIENTS**

**14%**  
Minority Owned  
Clients Counseled

**52%**  
Woman Owned  
Clients Counseled

**7%**  
Veteran Owned  
Clients Counseled

# 840

**CLIENTS  
COUNSELED**

**TRAINING  
ATTENDEES**

# 1,426

# \$7,509,919

**51**  
Approved capital events  
(Loans, Grants, Microloans, etc.)

**APPROVED  
CAPITAL**

**Program  
Hosts**



# Federal District Highlights

## District Seven



All data reported is verified by clients and attributed to working with the Missouri SBDC.

# 39

**BUSINESS  
STARTS**

**INCREASED  
SALES**

# \$129,282,247

**CLIENTS**

**16%**  
Minority Owned  
Clients Counseled

**44%**  
Woman Owned  
Clients Counseled

**9%**  
Veteran Owned  
Clients Counseled

# 833

**CLIENTS  
COUNSELED**

**TRAINING  
ATTENDEES**

# 1,512

# \$31,316,681

**125**  
Approved capital events  
(Loans, Grants, Microloans, etc.)

**APPROVED  
CAPITAL**

**Program  
Hosts**



**Missouri  
State**  
UNIVERSITY

**MISSOURI  
SOUTHERN**  
STATE UNIVERSITY.

# Federal District Highlights

## District Eight



All data reported is verified by clients and attributed to working with the Missouri SBDC.

# 16

**BUSINESS  
STARTS**

**INCREASED  
SALES**

# \$10,651,022

**CLIENTS**

# 11%

Minority Owned  
Clients Counseled

# 54%

Woman Owned  
Clients Counseled

# 8%

Veteran Owned  
Clients Counseled

# 344

**CLIENTS  
COUNSELED**

**TRAINING  
ATTENDEES**

# 637

# \$4,924,637

# 34

Approved capital events  
(Loans, Grants, Microloans, etc.)

**APPROVED  
CAPITAL**

**Program  
Hosts**



# Network Highlights

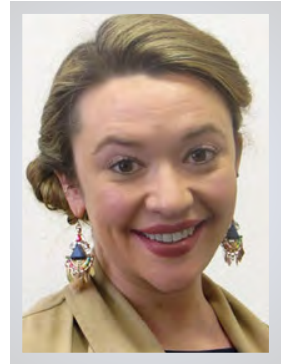


**ED LAHUE  
RECOGNIZED  
AS MISSOURI SBDC  
STATE STAR**

The SBDC State Star Award is the highest recognition for individual achievement within America's SBDC Network. State Stars are nominated by their peers, and winners are selected by their State Directors. The State Stars are those who demonstrate exemplary performance, make significant contributions to their Networks, and are committed to the success of America's small businesses.

Charles "Tee" Rowe, America's SBDC President & CEO says, "These remarkable and driven leaders are transforming their communities by introducing fresh perspectives and innovative strategies that align with the demands of today's economy. Small businesses thrive when they are linked to a supportive community, like the SBDC Network, which wholeheartedly advocates for their growth and success."

The winners of the America's SBDC State Star awards were honored at a private reception at the Georgia Aquarium on Tuesday, September 10th, 2024 during the 45th Annual America's SBDC Conference.



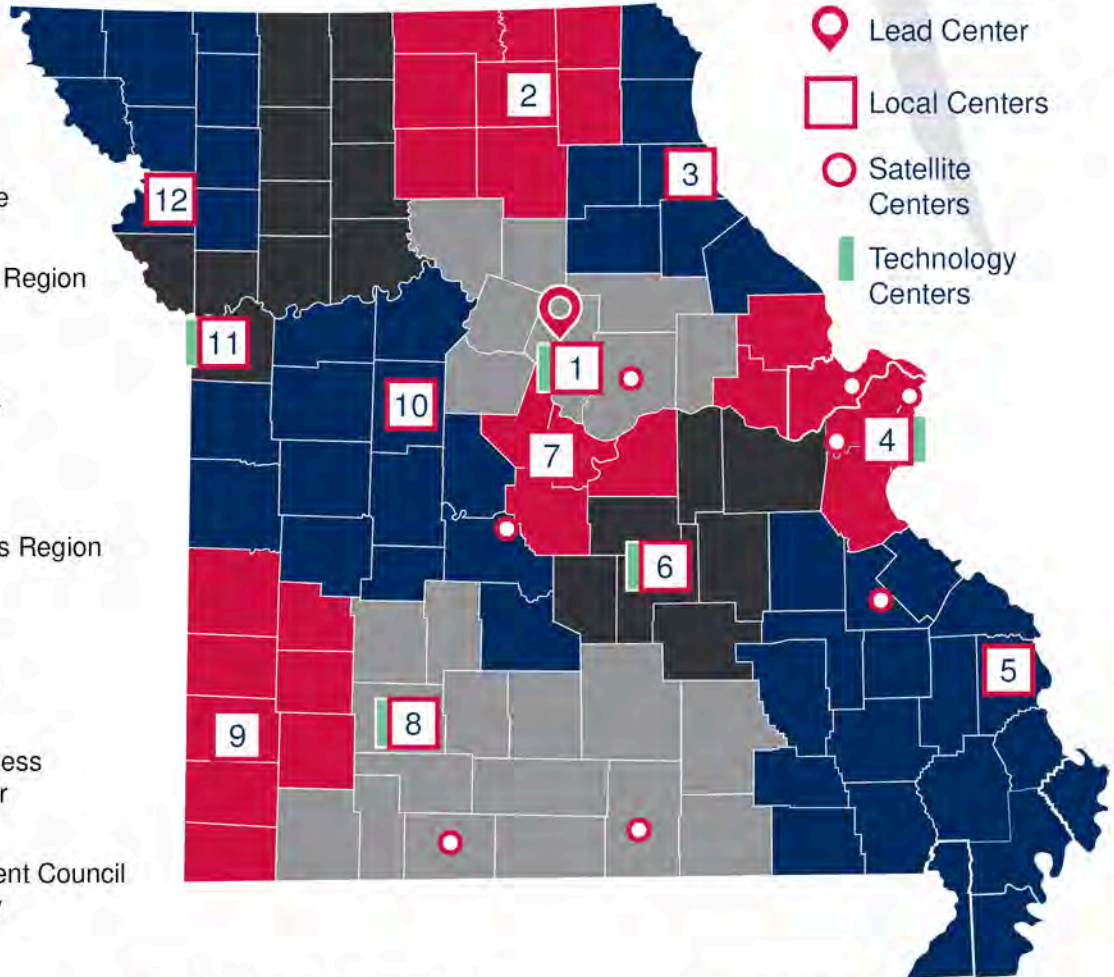
**LESLIE FISCHER  
AWARDED  
NATIONAL 40  
UNDER 40**

The winners of the America's SBDC 40 Under 40 awards were honored at a reception during the 45th Annual America's SBDC Conference on Wednesday, September 11th, at the Marriott Marquis in Atlanta, GA.

This prestigious award recognizes outstanding individuals under 40 in the SBDC Network. A panel of judges from the America's SBDC Millennial Interest Group carefully selected the winners. These youthful visionaries will receive accolades for their mastery of commerce, sparks of innovation, and steadfast dedication to nurturing the growth and prosperity of their communities.

Charles "Tee" Rowe, America's SBDC President & CEO says, "These ambitious leaders are changing communities and employing unique perspectives and strategies that resonate with a modern workforce. Small businesses thrive when they feel connected to a compelling mission and a community that supports their growth, such as the SBDC Network."

- 1 Missouri SBDC at Mizzou  
Columbia  
573-884-8087  
musbtcdc@missouri.edu
- Callaway County  
Chamber of Commerce  
573-550-1885
- 2 Missouri SBDC Northeast Region  
Kirksville  
660-665-3348
- 3 Missouri SBDC at HREDC  
Hannibal  
573-221-1033  
sbdc@hredc.com
- 4 Missouri SBDC in St. Louis Region  
St. Louis Downtown  
314-405-8400  
info@stlouissbec.org
- St. Louis Partnership  
314-615-7663
- St. Louis Small Business  
Empowerment Center  
314-241-1697
- Economic Development Council  
of St. Charles County  
636-441-6880



- 5 Missouri SBDC at SEMO  
Cape Girardeau  
573-651-2929
- Farmington Regional  
Chamber of Commerce  
573-756-3615
- 6 Missouri SBDC at S&T  
Rolla  
573-341-4690  
ecodevo@mst.edu
- 7 Missouri SBDC at LU  
Jefferson City  
573-681-5031  
sbdc@lincolnu.edu

- 8 Missouri SBDC at MSU  
Springfield  
417-837-2617  
sbdc@missouristate.edu
- Taney County  
417-546-4431
- West Plains  
417-255-7966
- 9 Missouri SBDC at MSSU  
Joplin  
417-625-3128  
sbdc@mssu.edu

- 10 Missouri SBDC at SFCC  
Sedalia  
660-530-5822
- Osage Beach  
573-693-9010
- 11 Missouri SBDC at UMKC  
Kansas City  
816-235-6063  
sbdc@umkc.edu
- 12 Missouri SBDC at NWMSU  
St. Joseph  
816-364-4105

Lead Center  
Columbia  
573-884-1555  
musbdcadmin@missouri.edu

**MissouriSBDC.org**



The Missouri SBDC is funded in part through a Cooperative Agreement with the U.S. Small Business Administration.

# Hosts

Where business owners locate their business means a lot. That's the place that will shape how the business grows, provide the business with resources and employees. And that's the community that stands to benefit from the business's success. It's the business's home.

The Missouri SBDC succeeds at serving Missourians across the state because of the valuable partnerships that have been developed in our communities over years and decades.

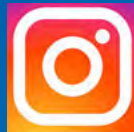
The universities, colleges, and economic development organizations below host the Missouri SBDC and financially invest in the program to serve businesses, entrepreneurs, and the community around them.







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**@MissouriSBDC**



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[missourisbdc.org](http://missourisbdc.org)