

Business Innovation Act: Microenterprise Assistance Program

The Impact of Microbusiness Development in Nebraska

Prepared by the Center for Rural Affairs
on behalf of the Nebraska Small Business Collaborative

December 2025



Summary

The Nebraska Business Innovation Act (BIA) Microenterprise Assistance Program is a critical tool for fostering small business development across the state, particularly in economically distressed areas. The program encourages the growth of a wide range of industries by providing funding for lending and technical assistance that serves microenterprises, which are businesses with 10 or fewer employees.

Historically, funding under the program has been open to 501(c)(3) nonprofit organizations based in Nebraska who partner with the Nebraska Department of Economic Development (DED) to support entrepreneurs across the state. While the program is required by statute to disburse its budget in an even split between lending capital dollars and technical assistance funding, eligible organizations can apply for and receive capital only, technical assistance funding only, or both.

In 2012, the Center for Rural Affairs partnered with the Nebraska Enterprise Fund, Community Development Resources, and Catholic Charities of Omaha to form the Nebraska Small Business Collaborative (“the Collaborative”) and provide one-on-one technical assistance to individuals who may not qualify for traditional financing or who need information and education on sound business practices. Through the Collaborative, BIA Microenterprise Assistance Program technical assistance funding has helped start and expand thousands of businesses across the state.

In 2024 alone, the Collaborative served more than 4,000 entrepreneurs who received over 12,000 hours of individualized business counseling. Additionally, the partners hosted almost 350 training sessions for nearly 6,000 participants. The Collaborative helped deploy over \$9.8 million in small business loans—investments that directly led to job creation, business expansion, and long-term economic stability for Nebraskans.

In calendar years 2024 and 2025, \$1.477 million was available annually for microenterprise capital lending, and an additional \$1.477 million was awarded annually for technical assistance services. In 2025, the Nebraska Legislature Appropriations Committee budget reduced state funding for the overall BIA by \$3.75 million. The BIA comprises five programs, of which the Microenterprise Assistance Program is one. Despite legislative intent to fund the BIA at a reduced level, including the Microenterprise Assistance Program, the DED placed a hold on all new contracts under the program in October of 2025.

In December 2025, Governor Pillen Nebraska announced his intent to request a \$15 million appropriation to fund the BIA for the 2026-2027 fiscal year with the goal of enhancing support for startups and innovation in Nebraska, boosting proven programs, and reinforcing broader efforts to grow the state’s economy.

The Microenterprise Assistance Program’s investments are building a stronger, more resilient Nebraska by supporting entrepreneurs who are overlooked by other funding sources. No other program is dedicated to serving Nebraskans who face the highest barriers to business ownership, a demographic that includes low and middle-income individuals, immigrants, rural residents, and women, who are offered access to both

technical assistance and capital. As the only state program designed specifically to reach and uplift these entrepreneurs, the Microenterprise Assistance Program is indispensable to expanding Nebraska's economic growth.

Background

For nearly 30 years, Nebraska has fostered small business growth through programming designed to assist start-up and existing micro-businesses in the state. According to the U.S. Census Bureau, over 70% of businesses in Nebraska have ten or fewer employees, making these programs a vital contributor to the state's economic engine.¹ The BIA Microenterprise Assistance Program plays a unique role in the state as the only program to combine technical assistance with loan capital in order to effectively uplift traditionally underserved entrepreneurs.

In 1997, recognizing the importance of small businesses to Nebraska's economic success, the Legislature passed the Microenterprise Development Act.² The intention of the Legislature was to establish permanent, statewide infrastructure for microlending organizations.³ The program enabled the growth and development of small businesses, which are the backbone of Nebraska's rural economy. The Microenterprise Development Act provided business training for over 12,000 people, supported the creation or retention of 15,000 jobs, and provided \$5.5 million in lending to support microbusinesses throughout Nebraska between 1997 and 2011.⁴

In 2011, Governor Dave Heineman's goal of providing further state-funded investment for innovation and development in the state prompted the legislature to pass the Talent and Innovation Initiative.⁵ The Initiative included the Business Innovation Act (BIA), which comprised several programs focused on different avenues of economic development. At that time, the state's existing Microenterprise Assistance Program was incorporated into the BIA.

Originally, the BIA Microenterprise program passed into law with a sunset date of 2016 and required a minimum appropriation of \$500,000. The maximum state investment was capped at \$1 million per year, with 70% of the funds to be used for direct lending and 30% designated for technical assistance.⁶

¹ US Census Bureau. "All Sectors: County Business Patterns, including ZIP Code Business Patterns, by Legal Form of Organization and Employment Size Class for the U.S., States, and Selected Geographies: 2023." Economic Surveys, ECNSVY Business Patterns County Business Patterns, Table CB2300CBP, 2025, data.census.gov/table/CBP2023.CB2300CBP?q=establishments&q=040XX00US31.

² Microenterprise Development Act, LB 327, 95th Legislature, June 10, 1997. nebraskalegislature.gov/FloorDocs/95/PDF/Slip/LB327.pdf.

³ Nebraska Microenterprise Partnership Fund. "Report to the Legislature on the Nebraska Enterprise Development Act." Nebraska Department of Economic Development, April 2006. govdocs.nebraska.gov/epubs/E1000/B071-2006.pdf.

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ "Nebraska's Innovation & Entrepreneurial Ecosystem: Supporting and Increasing Venture Capital in Nebraska." Invest Nebraska Corporation, Dec. 1, 2014. govdocs.nebraska.gov/epubs/L3790/B076-2014.pdf.

⁶ Business Innovation Act, LB 387, 102nd Legislature, May 24, 2011. nebraskalegislature.gov/FloorDocs/102/PDF/Slip/LB387.pdf.

In 2014, the BIA's end date was extended to December 21, 2021.⁷ The following year, the Nebraska Legislature changed a variety of provisions to the Microenterprise Assistance Program to increase the funding available for microbusinesses throughout the state.⁸ The minimum appropriation for the program was increased from \$500,000 to \$1 million and capped at \$2 million per fiscal year. Additionally, the maximum microbusiness loan amount was increased from \$50,000 to \$100,000 annually, and funding for the program was shifted to dedicate 50% of funds for lending capital and 50% for microbusiness technical assistance.

As part of biennial budget setting during the 2017 Legislative session, the minimum appropriations requirement for the Microenterprise Assistance Program was removed; however, state funding for the program has consistently met or exceeded the minimum appropriation since.⁹ In 2019, the sunset date for the BIA was eliminated.¹⁰

In 2022, Senator Myron Dorn served as a champion for Nebraska small businesses when he passed legislation to ensure community lenders could continue to provide needed loans and no-cost technical assistance to entrepreneurs to start or grow their businesses. His bill increased the maximum microloan amount under the Microenterprise Assistance Program from \$100,000 to \$150,000 and raised the program's maximum funding allocation from \$2 million to \$3 million.¹¹

Purpose

The purpose of the Microenterprise Assistance Program is defined in Nebraska Revised Statute [Sec. 81-12,162](#):

- The Department of Economic Development will establish a small business investment program to support microenterprises, particularly in job creation, entrepreneurship, and self-sufficiency for low-income households.
- To facilitate the development of a permanent, statewide infrastructure of microlending support organizations.
- Grants will go to microloan delivery organizations, technical assistance organizations, and innovation hubs, with a focus on equitable geographic distribution.
- To leverage additional non-state funds for the support of microenterprise development.

⁷ LB 1114, 103rd Legislature, April 2, 2014. nebraskalegislature.gov/FloorDocs/103/PDF/Slip/LB1114.pdf.

⁸ LB 449, 104th Legislature, May 13, 2015. nebraskalegislature.gov/FloorDocs/104/PDF/Slip/LB449.pdf.

⁹ LB 331, 105th Legislature, May 15, 2017, nebraskalegislature.gov/FloorDocs/105/PDF/Slip/LB331.pdf.

¹⁰ LB 334, 106th Legislature, May 30, 2019, nebraskalegislature.gov/FloorDocs/106/PDF/Slip/LB334.pdf.

¹¹ LB 1012, 107th Legislature, April 4, 2022, nebraskalegislature.gov/bills/view_bill.php?DocumentID=46976&docnum=LB1012&leg=107.

- To establish the Department as the coordinating office that facilitates microlending and microenterprise development.
- A funding cap of up to \$3 million per year may be awarded to the Department, which must contract with a statewide microenterprise assistance organization.

Funding

The 2025 Nebraska Legislature Appropriations Committee Budget reduced state funding for the Business Innovation Act by \$3.75 million.¹² The cut was motivated by overall budget reductions in the State Legislature. The previous total BIA General Fund aid appropriation was approximately \$14.7 million, so the \$3.75 million cut reduced the available funding for all five BIA programs collectively to just over \$11 million per year.¹³ This situation was short-lived since Governor Pillen announced a funding boost of \$15 million to the BIA in December, 2025.

As determined by Neb. Rev. Statute 81-12,162, the Microenterprise Assistance Program may receive a maximum amount of \$3 million per year. In fiscal year 2024-25, \$1.477 million was available annually for microenterprise capital lending, with an additional \$1.477 million allocated for technical assistance services. By statute, funding is open to Nebraska-based 501(c)(3) nonprofit organizations. The primary technical assistance contractor must have the capacity to serve clients statewide but can work with partners to achieve statewide coverage.¹⁴

As the administering agency, DED is responsible for dividing the awarded BIA funding among its multiple programs. Historically, DED has distributed resources across all five programs, allocating 20% of total BIA funding to the Microenterprise Assistance Program in the most recent budget year; see Table A (Appendix).

Despite legislative intent to fund the BIA programs at a reduced level, including the Microenterprise Assistance Program, the Department of Economic Development placed a hold on funding for the entire Business Innovation Act in October 2025 with little explanation.¹⁵

Following the Governor's funding announcement, four independent but interconnected bills were introduced during the second session of the 109th Nebraska Legislature to solidify legislative intent for the Business Innovation Act (BIA) and the Microenterprise

¹² Nebraska Legislature. (2025). *FY 2025–26 and FY 2026–27 biennial budget* (p. 31). Nebraska Legislature. nebraskalegislature.gov/pdf/reports/fiscal/2025budget.pdf.

¹³ Ibid.

¹⁴ Nebraska Department of Economic Development. (2025). Microenterprise Assistance Program. opportunity.nebraska.gov/programs/business/microenterprise-assistance-program/. Accessed July 31, 2025.

¹⁵ State of Nebraska, Department of Economic Development. (2024, April 5). *2023–2025 BIA Action Plan for the Business Innovation Programs*. <https://opportunity.nebraska.gov/wp-content/uploads/2024/04/2023-2025-BIA-Action-Plan.pdf>

Assistance Program. Taken together, these bills establish a clear, long-term commitment to the Business Innovation Act.

LB 1015, introduced by Sen. Ibach, is the Governor's bill and creates a dedicated cash fund to sustain \$15 million in annual BIA funding, while LB 1044, introduced by Sen. Prokop, reinforces legislative intent to maintain that funding level for the future. LB 1167, introduced by Sen. Dorn establishes \$3 million to fund the Microenterprise Assistance Program in the 2026–2027 fiscal year, and LB 1205, introduced by Sen. Clouse, aims to secure \$3 million in annual funding for microenterprise programming going forward.

Leverage

Leveraging technical assistance into capital access

During the past six years, the Collaborative has effectively leveraged internal and external capital to maximize the impact of the BIA Microenterprise Assistance Program technical assistance funding, contributing substantial additional dollars to support Nebraska's small businesses.

In 2020–2021, the Collaborative together placed 198 loans totalling \$8.4 million and collectively leveraged technical assistance funding to bring an additional \$3.4 million to Nebraska's small businesses. These efforts directly contributed to the creation or retention of 463 jobs throughout Nebraska.

Building on this momentum, the Collaborative continued to make substantial progress in 2022–2023, placing 156 loans and leveraging an impressive \$6 million through 99 outside loans. This period also marked increased engagement with underrepresented entrepreneurs; 76 of the loans, or 47%, issued were to individuals that were identified as low-income. The Collaborative provided 15,454 hours of one-on-one technical assistance, helping ensure loan recipients had the tools to succeed. As a result, 380 jobs were created or retained statewide.

In 2024–2025 thus far, the Collaborative has already placed 106 loans and leveraged an additional 18 loans totaling \$452,329. The quality and targeted nature of the Collaborative's individualized lending remained strong, with 61 loans going to low-income clients. Through 4,289 hours of individual technical assistance, Collaborative members have continued to provide the resources and coaching entrepreneurs needed to stabilize and grow their businesses. Lending activity during the first portion of the reporting cycle helped to create or retain 56 jobs.

The above data points come from the BIA Microenterprise Collaborative Master Reporting Form, an internal tracking record managed by the Center for Rural Affairs, for FY2020 to FY2025.

Leveraging lending capital into matching funds

In addition to direct job and capital outcomes, the Business Innovation Act serves as a critical source of matching funds to bring money to the state from external sources, further extending the reach and impact of Nebraska's small business ecosystem. Both BIA technical assistance and loan funds helped Collaborative partners bring in federal dollars from the Small Business Administration (SBA), the US Department of Agriculture Rural Microentrepreneur Assistance Program (USDA RMAP), and the Community Development Financial Institutions (CDFI) Fund, as well as private funding sources. This public-private synergy magnifies the effectiveness of state investments and ensures that Nebraska communities—particularly those in rural and underserved areas—benefit from a robust pipeline of entrepreneurial sourcing and financing.

By leveraging a small amount of funding from the state into millions of dollars of additional investment, coupled with the revolving nature of the funding, the Nebraska Small Business Collaborative has demonstrated year after year that strategic lending paired with strong technical assistance can result in meaningful economic outcomes, including capital expansion, job growth, and increased development opportunities for entrepreneurs from low- to moderate-income backgrounds across sectors and experience levels.

Success Stories



Across Nebraska, small business owners are turning vision into reality through investments made by the BIA Microenterprise Assistance Program. Administered through trusted partners, contractors, and subcontractors like the Center for Rural Affairs, Catholic Charities, Community Development Resources, the Nebraska Enterprise Fund, GrowNE, Centro Hispano, and Lending Link, this program combines access to capital with hands-on technical assistance and training. It empowers individuals to launch and grow businesses that not only provide for their families, but also economically and socially strengthen communities.

In Grand Island, microenterprise assistance recipient Pham's Coffee & Boba has become much more than a coffee shop—it is an educational and cultural

experience rooted in innovation and community.¹⁶ When owner Tuan Pham opened the business in August 2023, he wanted to offer something entirely new to local residents. With technical assistance guidance and financing from the Center for Rural Affairs, he made that dream a reality. “The Center has been an awesome resource,” Tuan said. “When we got a loan, there were requirements for a full business plan, projections, cost breakdowns, etc. I really appreciated that because it forced me to think deeply about things. It made us ask ourselves what success looks like for us.”

Since opening, Tuan and his wife Alyssa have embedded their shop into the community. They have given back to the City of Grand Island through animal adoption drives, boba-making workshops for kids through the local library, and collaboration with a nursing home on a fundraiser to provide resident supplies. The shop, known for its specialty Vietnamese coffee, pandan and ube waffles, and colorful, customizable boba drinks, now plans to expand into a larger second location with more seating, dedicated community meeting space, and the potential to add a full kitchen.

Tuan currently employs four to five people and expects to hire an additional team for the new location. Job creation is just the beginning; his vision includes offering fair wages, career advancement, and eventually helping long-term employees grow into leadership or franchise roles. “That’s a big one for us: bringing people with us as we grow,” he said. “Being a barista may sound like a dead-end job to some, but we would love for a long-term employee to franchise their own location or become general manager eventually.” Tuan’s Boba shop continues to thrive—they have added a drink delivery service and have reached over 4,000 followers on social media.

Like Tuan, Taylor and Cole Bopes saw an opportunity to bring an important business to their community. In Elkhorn, the Legato Living memory care facility eases the burden for families with a loved one suffering from Alzheimer’s or dementia. The completely unique facility is run with heart, allowing residents with memory care needs to maintain many aspects of the lifestyle they were accustomed to before facing medical challenges, while also providing much-needed relief for families. With a 4:1 staff ratio, Legato stands out for its exceptional patient care.

The Bopes launched their entrepreneurial journey with support from the Nebraska Enterprise Fund. “NEF was a great support in the beginning of our venture. This wouldn’t have happened without their resources and funding,” says Taylor. “The process was very smooth, and NEF was extremely easy to work with, especially as compared to other banks. NEF was flexible, and they are a great support system for small and local businesses.”¹⁷

Elsewhere in the state, the Collaborative’s partners continue to deepen their impact. Collaborative subcontractor Lending Link responded to increased demand for construction capital in the wake of natural disasters, specifically severe storm damage throughout the greater Omaha metro area. Community Development Resources

¹⁶ Stewart, Liz. “Business owner offers Grand Island residents a fresh way to get their caffeine fix.” Center for Rural Affairs, May 23, 2024.

cfra.org/blog/business-owner-offers-grand-island-residents-fresh-way-get-their-caffeine-fix.

¹⁷ Nebraska Enterprise Fund. (2024, February 14). *Legato Living Elkhorn: How Legato Living’s individualized care sets them apart as a locally owned memory care facility*. NEBBIZ. November 18, 2025. <https://nebbiz.org/legato-living-elkhorn>.

expanded its reach through strategic partnerships with SCORE and Southeast Community College, issuing microloans and providing scholarships to help entrepreneurs take the next step to establishing successful businesses in Lincoln. Catholic Charities of Omaha hosted its second annual Posada Networking Event in 2025, drawing 127 attendees and offering 25 businesses a platform to promote their services while celebrating cultural pride and community connection.

The Microenterprise Assistance Program has bolstered large and small economies in all corners of Nebraska. In Ainsworth, with a population just over 1,500, Shawn Fernau rebuilt his construction business from the ground up after a devastating fire, thanks to a microloan and guidance from the Center for Rural Affairs. His business not only rebounded but now contributes to essential home repair and infrastructure work in a region where skilled labor is often in short supply.

Microloans and technical assistance span multi-sector small businesses. In Grand Island, sisters Ana Gonzalez and Veronica Ramos revitalized their bakery and beauty salon, receiving infrastructure financing and business coaching. Their businesses, Enchanted Bakery and Blossom Beauty Salon, offer both goods and services that are culturally relevant and economically vital in a diverse and rapidly growing city. The sisters' businesses continue to thrive, offering on-trend services that have attracted more than 2,000 followers on social media and 95% positive reviews.

In Omaha, entrepreneurs are also finding pathways to success. Wilfredo Amador and Fredi Tornes launched T&A Construction, LLC in early 2020 with business development education from Catholic Charities of Omaha. Despite pandemic-related setbacks, they built a strong reputation in both residential and commercial construction, eventually becoming the only Latino-owned subcontractor for Pella Windows & Doors in Omaha. Meanwhile, in South Omaha, Diomedes Tovar, a Colombian immigrant, opened Cellifax, LLC, a cell phone and computer repair shop—drawing on two decades of experience and technical assistance from a Collaborative partner to serve a neighborhood with limited access to affordable tech repair services.

In western Nebraska, Kaelyn Armstrong transitioned from a 13-year nursing career to open Saved By The Well, a mobile coffee shop operating out of a converted school bus.¹⁸ With financing and short and long-term planning from the Center for Rural Affairs through the Microenterprise Assistance Program, Kaelyn debuted her business in May 2023. Her café now brings sustainably sourced drinks to lakeside resorts, farmers markets, and local events, helping to create gathering spaces in rural areas where so-called “third places,” such as coffee shops, are few and far between. Her mobile model is uniquely suited to the needs and geography of rural Nebraska, where small population centers often lack brick-and-mortar retail options.

In Schuyler, Sabino and Maria Hernandez turned a love of food into a growing venture with Corn Taco Mexican Food LLC. With technical assistance from the Center for Rural Affairs—including zoning guidance and business counseling—they expanded their operations, purchased land, and began converting a food truck business into a

¹⁸ Stewart, Liz. “Mobile Coffee Shop Welcomes Customers to Gather at 'The Well.'” Center for Rural Affairs, August 14, 2023. cfra.org/blog/mobile-coffee-shop-welcomes-customers-gather-well.

permanent restaurant. Their journey reflects a broader trend in rural Nebraska, where culturally diverse entrepreneurs are meeting unmet needs and breathing new life into main streets and local economies.

Together, these stories represent more than personal success, they reflect a statewide strategy that works. Since its inception, the Microenterprise Assistance Program has helped thousands of Nebraskans overcome barriers to entrepreneurship by providing the capital, training, and planning needed to thrive. In rural communities, this often means the difference between having or losing local goods and services, especially as family businesses and main street storefronts face increasing pressures from consolidation and population decline.



With continued investment and thoughtful updates to meet evolving business needs, the Microenterprise Assistance Program can remain a powerful engine of economic growth, inclusion, and opportunity in both rural and urban communities alike. These entrepreneurs and the neighborhoods, towns, and regions they serve are proof that when we invest in people, Nebraska's communities thrive.

Measurement

The Small Business Collaborative collects and analyzes a variety of annual metrics to monitor the impact of the BIA Microenterprise Assistance Program. The section below provides a year-by-year breakdown of technical assistance and business development outcomes from 2018 through 2024.

These metrics directly align with how the Microenterprise Assistance Program creates impact. Technical assistance hours indicate the scale and depth of support delivered to entrepreneurs. The number of loans and total loan dollars reflect how many businesses successfully progress from technical assistance to capital access by providing hands-on coaching and assistance that is unique to each entrepreneur's situation. Leveraged loans and leveraged capital quantify how effectively state dollars attract additional investment. Together, these indicators provide a clear picture of how the program strengthens entrepreneurs, unlocks financing, and multiplies the return on the state's technical assistance and loan capital investment.

Technical assistance is a foundational part of the success of the Microenterprise Assistance Program. For many Nebraskans, the barrier to entrepreneurship is not merely a lack of capital; it is also a lack of access to expertise and one-on-one

guidance that helps transform a business idea into a financially viable enterprise. Technical assistance provides this support system by offering individualized coaching, business planning, financial literacy, and other entrepreneurship acumen tailored to the needs of each startup, a crucial approach for business sustainability.

In the Microenterprise Assistance Program, technical assistance lowers risk for the state by preparing entrepreneurs to qualify for loans and supporting them through underwriting and compliance. Sound training and preparation increases the stability of borrowers, reduces default risk, and improves business resilience, ultimately strengthening Nebraska economies. Nebraska invests in technical assistance and loan capital together to generate a higher return on the combined investment. Technical assistance strengthens business plans, improves financial management, and increases the number of entrepreneurs who are loan-ready, which increases the effectiveness of the state's loan capital. Stronger borrowers mean higher repayment rates, more successful businesses, and a greater economic payoff from the same pool of state-supported lending dollars.

An expanded number of entrepreneurs who are loan-ready directly translates into increased capital access statewide. Entrepreneurs who receive technical assistance are better positioned to secure loans from CDFIs, banks, and other community lenders. The multiplier effect has helped transform the Microenterprise Assistance Program into a high-return state investment: a relatively modest state appropriation amplifies the economic impact of state loan dollars and helps leverage substantial additional private and federal capital.

The impact of the program on Nebraska's economy is measurable and far-reaching. In rural communities, the effect is especially pronounced; microbusinesses often supply essential goods and services that would otherwise disappear from main streets. In urban areas, technical assistance helps diversify local economies, supports immigrant and women entrepreneurs, and fuels neighborhood-level revitalization. Leveraging technical assistance into capital access remains one of the most effective strategies the state has for generating job growth, expanding the tax base, and strengthening local economies with relatively modest public investment.

2018

- Through the Collaborative, partners funded 253 loans totaling \$6,241,232, with an average loan size of \$24,669. Each business loan received technical assistance leading up to the loan closing and through the life of the loan and beyond.
- Out of 3,248 businesses assisted through technical assistance, 1,485 were start-ups and 1,763 were existing businesses.
- 23 businesses leveraged an additional \$2,191,075 in traditional bank funding through the technical assistance provided and/or the loans made available to them.

- Job creation and retention remained strong: 832 jobs were created or retained through lending, and 7,389 were generated or maintained through technical assistance.

2019

- The number of loans placed resulting from technical assistance was 195, with a total value of \$4,957,825 and an average loan size of \$25,425.
- Technical assistance strengthened 3,062 businesses, including 1,394 start-ups and 1,668 existing businesses.
- 22 leveraged loans were secured for \$694,451.
- Jobs created or retained included 498 through lending and 6,342 through technical assistance efforts.

2020

- In 2020, 164 loans were placed as a result of technical assistance totaling \$2,852,116 at an average size of \$17,391.
- During the Pandemic, the Collaborative shifted focus to keeping business open and viable. However, technical assistance expanded its reach, serving 5,031 businesses—the highest number in the seven-year span. Notably, 3,588 existing businesses received assistance, compared to 1,443 start-ups.
- 60 leveraged loans totaling \$1,239,662 were facilitated.
- 429 jobs were created or retained via lending, and 6,459 jobs were created or retained through technical assistance.

2021

- In a rebound year, 198 loans were placed, resulting from technical assistance totaling \$8,426,526, with a notably high average loan size of \$42,558.
- Of the 4,773 businesses assisted, 1,876 were start-ups and 2,897 were existing firms.
- 188 leveraged loans added \$3,441,183 in capital.
- The program contributed to the creation or retention of 463 jobs from lending and 5,803 through technical assistance.

2022

- Lending activity from technical assistance held steady, with 185 loans totaling \$7,565,972, averaging \$40,897 per loan.
- 2,930 businesses received assistance, including 1,298 start-ups and 1,632 existing businesses.
- 83 leveraged loans were placed for a combined \$2,966,143.
- 457 jobs were created or retained through lending, and 3,172 through technical assistance.

2023

- In 2023, the program deployed 156 loans from technical assistance totaling \$9,496,353, with an average loan size of \$60,874—the highest recorded over the period.
- 2,729 businesses received individualized counseling: 947 start-ups and 1,782 existing businesses.
- 99 leveraged loans brought in \$6,083,726 in additional capital.
- Job creation and retention included 680 jobs through lending and 3,596 through technical assistance.

2024

- The program's most active lending year: 474 loans were made totaling \$9,862,125, with an average loan size of \$20,806.
- 3,336 businesses were served, including 1,096 start-ups and 2,240 existing businesses.
- 139 leveraged loans secured a record \$16,161,743 in third-party capital.
- 518 jobs were created or retained by lending, and 2,828 by technical assistance.

Summary

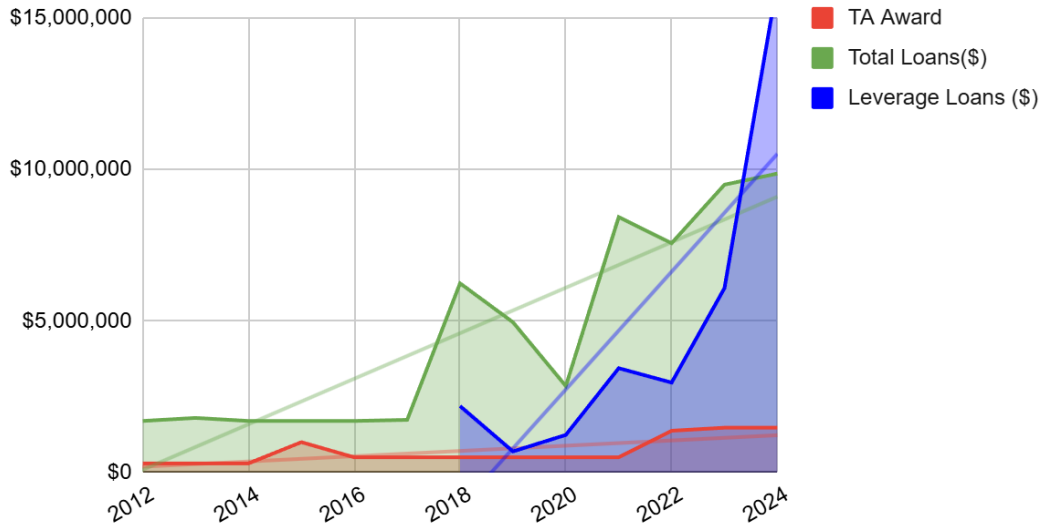
Across seven years, the technical assistance program facilitated:

- 1,625 loans placed by partner organizations, totaling \$49.4 million
- 614 leveraged loans from external sources, adding \$32.8 million in capital
- 25,109 businesses assisted, including 9,539 start-ups and 15,570 existing businesses
- 35,589 total jobs created or retained (3,877 via lending and 31,712 via technical assistance)

These results illustrate the program's critical role in growing Nebraska's small business sector and sustaining entrepreneurship across both start-ups and longstanding businesses.

Impact of BIA Microenterprise Awards

Small business lending growth supported by BIA funding



Appendix

A. BIA historical funding allocations to programs.

	Microenterprise Assistance Program	Small Business Innovation Research / Small Business Tech Transfer (SBIR/STTR) Grant Program	Nebraska Innovation Fund Prototype Grant Program	Nebraska Academic Research and Development Grant Program	Nebraska Seed Investment Program	<i>BIA Total</i>
FY 2016-2017 (Source)	\$1,000,000	\$942,207	\$1,552,400	\$578,597	\$2,625,000	\$6,698,204
FY 2017-2018 (Source)	\$1,000,000	\$676,754	\$1,660,800	\$1,273,260	\$1,444,123	\$6,882,834*
FY 2018-2019 (Source)	\$1,000,000	\$147,493	\$1,262,860	\$964,259	\$2,090,000	\$5,464,612
FY 2019-2020 (Source)	\$1,500,000	\$803,851	\$1,605,375	\$236,000	\$925,000	\$5,070,226
FY 2020-2021 (Source)	\$500,000	\$802,000	\$1,695,591	\$706,802	\$1,435,000	\$5,139,393
FY 2021-2022 (Source)	\$2,737,000	\$975,000	\$4,585,500	\$957,624	\$2,950,000	\$12,205,124
FY 2022-2023	\$1,477,000	\$297,801	\$4,353,773	\$1,510,634	\$4,764,200	\$12,403,408

	Microenterprise Assistance Program	Small Business Innovation Research / Small Business Tech Transfer (SBIR/STTR) Grant Program	Nebraska Innovation Fund Prototype Grant Program	Nebraska Academic Research and Development Grant Program	Nebraska Seed Investment Program	<i>BIA Total</i>
(Source)						
FY 2023-2024 (Source)	\$2,954,000	\$665,000	\$4,864,880	\$1,611,651	\$4,040,000	\$14,135,531
Total (2016-2024)	\$12,168,000	\$5,310,106	\$21,581,179	\$7,838,827	\$20,273,323	\$67,999,332

*Includes \$827,897 for the Innovation in Bioscience program, which only received funding once.

B. Impact of the Microenterprise Assistance Program – Technical assistance.

Detailed TA awards since 2012

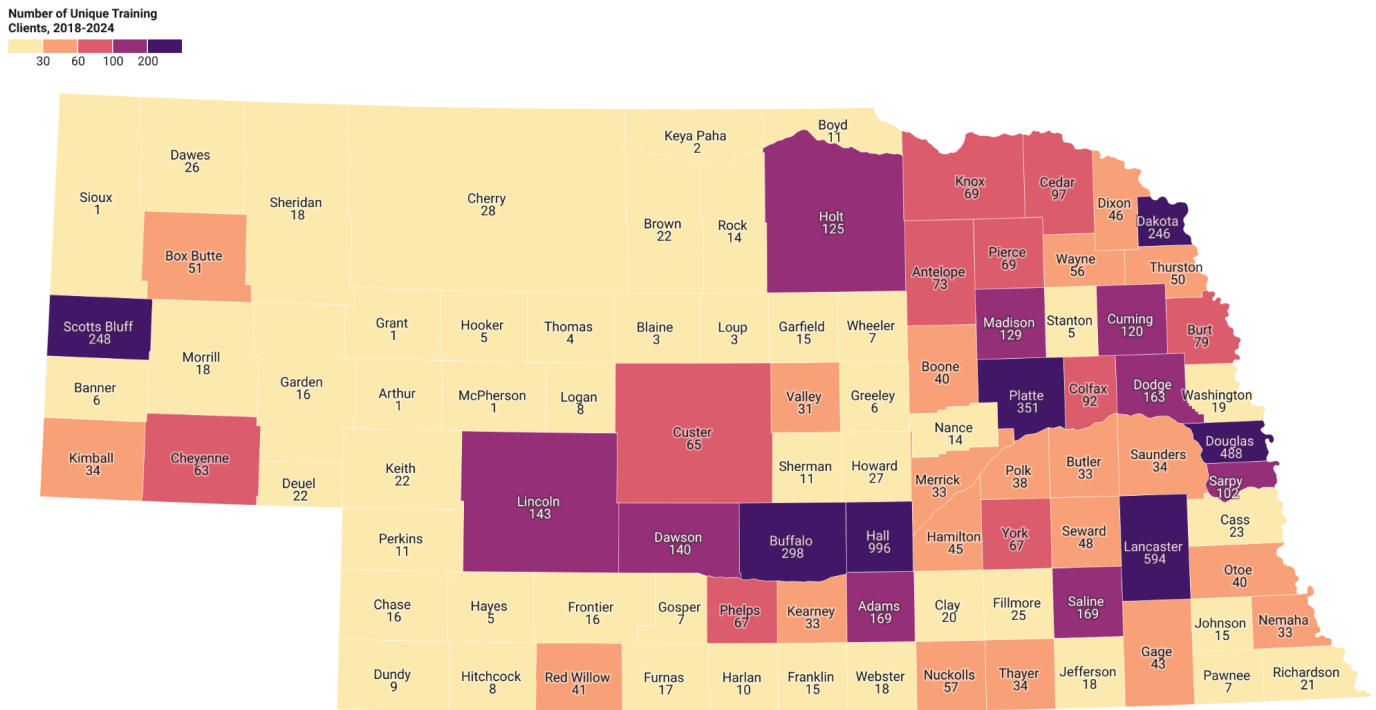
Sum of TA Awards (2012-2024)	\$9.2 million
Sum of Loans as a result of TA (2012-2024)	\$59.7 million

*Some data is unavailable due to changes in reporting requirements.

Annual Average Impact of Program	
TA Hours	6,597
Number of Loans	162
Amount of Loans per year	\$4.6 million
Number of Leveraged Loans	88
Amount of Leveraged Loans per year	\$4.7 million

*Some data is unavailable due to changes in reporting requirements.

C. The map below captures the number of unique individuals who have attended business training courses or one-on-one counseling sessions from the Center for Rural Affairs as part of the Microenterprise Assistance Program’s Technical assistance award from 2018 through 2024.



Created with Datawrapper