



Community Navigator Pilot Program in New Hampshire Program Summary

OVERVIEW

The [Community Navigator Pilot Program](#) (CNPP) is an American Rescue Plan initiative designed to reduce barriers that underrepresented and underserved entrepreneurs often face in accessing the programs they need to recover, grow, or start their businesses. The program will provide a total of \$100 million in funding over two years to 51 organizations that will work with hundreds of local community groups to improve access to the [U.S. Small Business Administration](#) and government and other resources for America's entrepreneurs.

BACKGROUND AND EXISTING CDFA CAPACITY

CDFA and our program partners are focused on building the capacity of New Hampshire communities to be strong, resilient, vibrant places to live, work, and play, through investments in people, institutions and systems. Since 2013, CDFA has seeded and grown the Microenterprise Technical Assistance (TA) Program across the entire state, enabling a variety of regional partners to support development and expansion of very small businesses (with five or fewer employees) as a pathway to full-time employment, a living wage, and wealth building for low- and moderate-income business owners and their families.

WHY IS THIS IMPORTANT AND WHAT DOES IT MEAN FOR NEW HAMPSHIRE?

The [NH Community Development Finance Authority](#) (CDFA) was selected as the statewide "Hub" for implementation of the CNPP in NH based on the strength and success of our existing Microenterprise TA network. CDFA will work in partnership with established microenterprise TA partners to implement the program as regional "Spokes" covering the entire state. The "Hub and Spoke" team will engage the NH SBA office, state-wide training and language-access partners and on-the-ground community partners to achieve the goals of the program.

Through implementation of the current Microenterprise TA program, there are many challenges and barriers to reaching the most vulnerable and underserved community members, including inadequate resources, limited capacity, and insufficient cultural, language and other skills needed to meet the needs of a wider spectrum of underserved people. We believe SBA-CNPP funds will significantly expand our ability to reach these small businesses and entrepreneurs in a meaningful way.

WHO ARE WE AIMING TO REACH?

The CNPP is focused on addressing the barriers encountered by social and economically disadvantaged small businesses and entrepreneurs, with a particular focus on microenterprises, cooperatives, and early-stage businesses. The CNPP will enable CDFA and partners to focus collective and coordinated efforts to reach out to small businesses that are owned or being started by historically vulnerable community members, specifically Black, Indigenous, and People of Color (BIPOC); immigrants and refugees; veterans; women; disabled, formerly incarcerated, and LGBTQ and gender non-conforming people.

The CNPP team will leverage additional resources to build on our previous program strengths and to intentionally reach into communities of high need that we have not successfully connected to capital and technical assistance providers.

WHAT WILL THIS PROGRAM OFFER?

The CNPP team, led by CDFA and our five “Spokes” covering the entire Granite State, will work with the NH SBA office and community partners to expand services and connect small businesses to critical resources and assistance, including:

- Business counseling
- Marketing, operations, business planning and strategy development
- Connection to training and skills development resources
- Access to capital
- Other technical assistance as identified by each individual small business

The program also seeks to build the capacity of community organizations and small business owners working with community members who have been historically excluded from or experienced barriers accessing resources in the small business development ecosystem. The program will provide support to the Spokes to expand their skills and capacity to support underserved communities, as well as provide stipends and support to community members and organizations who are working to shift and connect people to culturally appropriate and equitable types of business technical assistance, capital and other support.

WHO ARE THE PROGRAM PARTNERS?

The NH CNPP includes CDFA as the ‘Hub’ and five organizations serving as ‘Spokes’ covering the entire state:

- Northwest Spoke (Grafton and Coos Counties) - Grafton Regional Development Corporation & Coos Economic Development Corporation
- Northeast Spoke (Belknap, Carroll and Strafford Counties) – Belknap Economic Development Council and Wentworth Economic Development Corporation
- Southeast Spoke (Hillsborough, Merrimack and Rockingham Counties) – Regional Economic Development Center of Southern NH
- Southwest Spoke (Cheshire and Sullivan Counties) – Hannah Grimes Center and River Valley Community College
- Statewide Spoke – NH Small Business Development Center

WHAT'S NEXT

CDFA and program partners are working toward a formal program launch in January 2022. To learn more and sign up for program-related news and updates, visit www.nhcommunitynavigator.org. If you have questions or would like more information, please contact Jennifer Near, CNPP Program Manager, at jnear@nhcdfa.org.