



# 2022 ANNUAL REPORT

North Metro Denver SBDC

HOSTED BY:



FRONT RANGE  
COMMUNITY COLLEGE

# FROM OUR DIRECTOR

Dear Friends,

At the North Metro Denver SBDC, we continued to grow the diversity of our client base, offer innovative programming for the general business community as well as niche industries, and learn about the new business trends and influences shaping business, government, education, public health, and our personal lives. Our community partners continued to face unprecedented challenges as well, requiring more customized and agile collaboration as we all innovated on strategies to keep small businesses alive and well. Our partner network coalesced around the common goal of helping businesses by cross-marketing our programming, sharing ideas, and simply supporting each other.

We assisted small businesses with education on how to adapt to this new business environment, develop digital marketing skills, and seek capital funding from conventional and unconventional sources. As always, we take pride in the empathic capacities of our staff and consultants, simply being an ear for clients to talk through their fears and concerns. And still, even in the most turbulent and uncertain of times, we would hear from our clients: "I have an idea for a business. Can you help?"

May we always remember that this is what we do . . . walking alongside our clients as they grow, learn, and serve their communities. We are honored to serve and humbled by the grace and perseverance shown by our clients, consultants, partners, host institution, and our state and federal support network. This report is a snapshot of the story of our center in 2022, a year of learning and growing together.

Respectfully,



**Angela Atkinson**

*Director*

North Metro Denver  
Small Business Development Center (SBDC)

# WHO WE ARE & WHO WE SERVE



## Our Purpose

We are North Metro Denver SBDC. We are genuine, compassionate, caring and committed to building authentic diverse relationships. We commit to supporting dreams of small business owners. We are seen and stand in our power through fully utilizing our many resources.



## Our Values

"Our values" are the core principles that guide the decision-making, relationships, day to day actions, and messaging at the North Metro Denver SBDC. These values embody the "why" of our organization, bringing fulfillment, service, and joy to the work we do with our small business clients and partnerships.



## Our Vision

### ***Building Resiliency: Three Pillars of Small Business Sustainability***

- **Content and Curriculum:** Leading edge knowledge base, pedagogy, and practical tools to not just provide know-how, but change behavior by changing mindset.
- **Leadership/Self Awareness:** Cultivating the inner strength/awareness, communication skills, and leadership skills to resiliently respond to crises and grow business.
- **Community:** Building connectedness between clients, community-based networks, mentorship.

## OUR STAFF



**Angela Atkinson**  
*Director*



**Hannah Curtis**  
*Assistant Director*



**Michelle Flores**  
*Coordinator*



**Linda Kielian**  
*Administrative Assistant*



**Diego Leyes**  
*Spanish Program Outreach*



## OUR CONSULTANTS

The North Metro Denver SBDC consulting team is filled with dynamic, passionate, and highly experienced leaders. Each consultant complements the suite of expertise we offer and continually goes the extra mile for the clients they serve. Our consultants put our mission into action by offering guidance, access to resources, and support to help businesses grow and prosper. We are so appreciative of their dedication to help entrepreneurs through any stage of business and truly believe they are the heart of the SBDC.



# WORKFORCE



2022 continued to be an unsteady year for small business workforce development, hitting small business owners particularly hard. At the North Metro Denver SBDC, focus was placed on providing educational support to employers, encouraging strong recruitment and retention strategies to find and keep talented workers. According to [interactive state maps updated in February 2023](#), Colorado has 56 available workers for every 100 open jobs. This gap means there is a need for business owners to place high value on the workers they do have and rethink creative strategies for meeting the demands of their business. Responding to the labor crisis, the North Metro Denver SBDC hosted several free workshops tailored to human resource fundamentals and essential strategies for the current market issues. In addition to workshops, the North Metro Denver SBDC equipped small business owners with one-on-one human resources support for their specific business needs, provided by SBDC HR expert, Courtney Berg.

# SUPPORT FOR THE FOOD INDUSTRY



It is safe to say we are all aware of the unique challenges the pandemic presented to businesses in the food Industry. While some businesses were forced to close their doors for months at a time, others were spring boarding into new markets for the first time. While many were still grappling with recovery efforts from the initial shockwaves of the shutdown, the labor crisis only made things harder as the broad industry has [experienced the highest quit rates since July 2021](#), above 5.1% nationally. As entrepreneurs in the food industry continued to recover from the pandemic, the North Metro Denver SBDC recognized a gap in specialized content offered to such a prominent industry. Planning began, focused on identifying a resource that would better equip food entrepreneurs specifically (food trucks, cottage foods, food retailers, and restaurants). Discussions began with the highly acclaimed Food Venture Program, which offers a deep-dive into business topics food entrepreneurs should be familiar with and are presented by specialists known across the culinary industry.

In partnership with other SBDCs throughout the state, the North Metro Denver SBDC is proud to offer this programming to food entrepreneurs starting in 2023.



# DIVERSITY, EQUITY & INCLUSION



The reach of the North Metro Denver SBDC into the minority-owned business community began noticeably increasing over the pandemic and the momentum continued throughout 2022, thanks in large part to the efforts of Diego Leyes, the SBDC's Spanish Programs Outreach Manager. Diego spearheaded a brand new course, partnering with the Brighton Economic Development Corporation, to offer six weeks of digital marketing programming specifically to Spanish-speaking business owners.

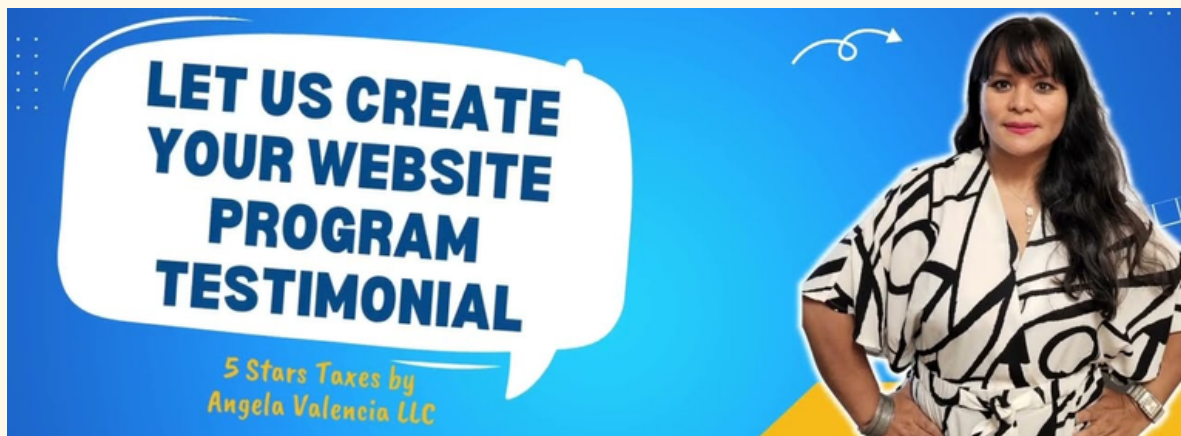
In another effort to support the online connectivity of Spanish-speaking businesses, Diego launched a website program, building a website for qualifying applicants and then teaching them the skills needed to manage and update the site. This project has seen great success and is being expanded in 2023.

Participation among Spanish-speaking business owners increased for both consulting and event attendance, jumping from 20% pre-pandemic to 29% collectively. Diego and Jesse Esparza both offer bilingual one-on-one consulting, Diego holds regular office hours at the Alliance Business Assistance Center in Thornton, and free remote workshops were held in Spanish throughout 2022 as well.



# DIVERSITY, EQUITY & INCLUSION

## NEW WEBSITE DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM



We are very happy to have been able to finish our second website of the Let Us Create Your Website program. On this occasion, we work with Angela Valencia, owner of 5 Stars Taxes by Angela Valencia LLC. Angela specializes in individual and business tax preparation. She had started having a lot of success with her Google Business Profile, but she didn't have a website yet. Therefore, she saw this program as an opportunity to take her business to the next level. It was a pleasure working on this project with Ángela and we are sure that we will continue working together so that her business continues to grow. Let Angela tell us in her own words her experience with this project and also with our services in general.

[Click here](#) for more information.

Estamos muy felices de haber podido terminar nuestro segundo sitio web del programa Déjanos crear tu website. En esta oportunidad trabajamos con Angela Valencia, propietaria de 5 Stars Taxes by Angela Valencia LLC. Angela se especializa en la preparación de impuestos individuales y comerciales. Ella había comenzado a tener mucho éxito con su perfil comercial de Google, pero aún no tenía un sitio web. Así que vio este programa como una oportunidad para llevar su negocio al siguiente nivel. Fue un placer trabajar en este proyecto con Ángela y estamos seguros de que continuaremos trabajando juntos para que su negocio siga creciendo. Dejemos que Ángela nos cuente con sus propias palabras su experiencia con este proyecto y también con nuestros servicios en general.

[Haga clic aquí](#) para mas información.

# COVID RELIEF FUNDING PROGRAMS (ARPA/SLFRF)



While many of the initial public health concerns from the pandemic are in the past, the economic concerns continue to prevail among many small businesses. As with changing tides, the barriers businesses are faced with have morphed over the past few years, but many entrepreneurs are still in need of ongoing support for their questions and specific situations. Examples of the types of issues businesses are now facing include repayment of COVID-19 financing, continued labor shortages, shifting workplace expectations, supply chain disruptions, as well as creating and maintaining a work-life balance after years of survival mode. Through ARPA/SLFRF funding, the North Metro SBDC is supporting clients through these needs and in 2022 specifically was able to provide 154 clients with over 400 hours of consulting specific to their recovery needs.

## SUCCESS STORIES

### Juniper & Honey

One example of labor support received in one-on-one consulting through the North Metro SBDC is a client whose floral business was growing, necessitating labor expansion. To accommodate the growth, the decision to hire two additional employees was made, bringing with it a collection of new policies, regulations, and best practices. Through consulting at the SBDC, this client received education about the new policies and processes, and was able to make an action plan to ensure they are being followed properly. Thanks to the SBDC's coaching and referrals to additional resources, Juniper and Honey Designs has been able to retain the new hires, benefit the business, and is even opening a new storefront in 2023.



**Juniper & Honey**  
*floral design studio*



**Anastacia Ovanessoff**



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### Room 310 Video



**Sophia Baldwin**



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An example of a client who has benefited from the pandemic relief support offered through the North Metro SBDC is Sophia Baldwin, owner of Room 310 Video. After reporting that her line of business was impacted by supply chain and labor market issues, Sophia received several one-on-one consulting appointments with SBDC advisors to work through strategies to address the problems she was facing. Recently Sophia reported that in 2022 she created one full time job and two part time jobs, increased her sales, and personally invested in her business.

Of her experience with the SBDC, Sophia says, "The SBDC is a lifeline. I'm still very new to the business world and they have guided me each step of the way. The internet does not always have the available/correct answers, which is why the SBDC and their one-on-one consulting services are an invaluable resource to any new entrepreneur, such as myself. Having the team to bounce off ideas and get advice is incredible. I've recommended the SBDC to at least 5-10 fellow entrepreneurs. I can't say anything else other than awesome things!"

# CLIENT TESTIMONIALS



**EXCELLENT**  
VERY GOOD  
GOOD  
AVERAGE

North Metro Denver Small Business Development Center (SBDC)  
3645 W 112th Ave Room C2061, Westminster, CO

5.0 ★★★★★ 46 reviews ⓘ

★★★★★  
Such a great resource for people at all stages of starting their own business. I'm so appreciative of the personalized support I've received.

★★★★★  
The best kept secret for small business owners. Plenty of great resources and tons of useful information.

★★★★★  
The SBDC has been invaluable to me as I have been starting and growing my business. I don't know where I would be without them. My consultant, Jesse, gave me the advice that I needed at the right time to make great decisions for my business. The programming offered by SBDC is also incredible! Thank you SBDC! I don't know where I'd be without you.

★★★★★  
(Translated by Google) How grateful I am for these resources out there

(Original)  
Cómo estoy agradecido por estos recursos que hay

North Metro Denver SBDC



# OUR SPONSORS AND PARTNERS



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## COMMUNITY PARTNERS

