Vital economies begin with small businesses

Small businesses are responsible for creating two out of every three jobs in our economy. They reflect our growing diversity, as well. But, emerging entrepreneurs and small businesses can face some of the toughest obstacles to success, from developing necessary skills and industry know-how to accessing capital or securing loans. We help entrepreneurs navigate challenging headwinds through our backing of the Open to Business program.
Open to Business Program

To support entrepreneurs and small businesses in growing their enterprise, creating jobs, and contributing to the economic vitality of the region

Community impact
From 2012 to 2017, Open to Business provided meaningful technical support to 1900 business clients. The program also provided $7.8 million in direct or facilitated capital to small businesses, leveraging another $51 million in financing from other sources — resulting in the creation or retention of more than 932 jobs.

Diversity of participants accessing financing in 2017
- 43% Women entrepreneurs
- 51% Minority entrepreneurs
- 46% Low income entrepreneurs

“Hennepin County, through the Open to Business program, was our literal lifeline. We simply wouldn’t be here without them.”
– Tomme Beevas, Founder and Owner, Pimento Jamaican Kitchen (Pictured on front)

Who is eligible?
Entrepreneurs can access technical assistance free of charge through Open to Business.
Suburban cities can apply to Hennepin County to provide Open to Business programming to their community.

How does it work?
Hennepin County provides matching grants up to $12,500 to cities who contract directly with the Metropolitan Consortium of Community Developers (MCCD) to provide business assistance.

Hands-on help for small businesses and entrepreneurs
Technical and financial assistance including business plan development, feasibility studies, marketing, loan request preparation, finance projections and much more

Learn more
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