

News Release

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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No-Cost Marketing Services for Small Farmers & Food-Based Businesses in Northwest Region

NORTHWEST LOWER, MI – Together in partnership, the teams at the Northwest Michigan Small Business Development Center (MI-SBDC) and Taste the Local Difference (TLD), are working together to offer no-cost marketing services to small farmers and food-based businesses in the Northwest region. A soft launch of this program was rolled out in January and five small businesses are now working with both the SBDC and TLD on a variety of marketing needs from creating online stores, developing social media content, third party media strategy and more. Priority is given to businesses with ten or fewer employees and they must be for-profit entities.

“The Northwest region has been a leader in the state of Michigan’s ‘buy local movement’ for nearly twenty years and we know that it’s important for our small farmers, growers, producers, and other food-based businesses to get some much needed help as well. We’ve chosen to lend priority to those smaller sized operations as they weren’t often eligible for other traditional disaster assistance or grant relief programs,” said Annie Olds, Northwest MI-SBDC Regional Director at Networks Northwest.

Similar to the partnership that was announced last month with NMC’s Extended Educational Services (EES) relaunch of the *Business Development Certificate* program, this partnership was made possible by way of CARES Act funds that were awarded to the Northwest MI-SBDC as a means of program development for small business owners either in the name of training, hiring contractors to add consulting capacity, or hiring service vendors to support small business owners in this trying year. And Taste the Local Difference was top of mind as an important collaborator and partner.

“TLD’s goal has always been to help local farms and food businesses succeed,” says Tricia Phelps, CEO at Taste the Local Difference. “Partnership with the SBDC and Networks Northwest is a natural fit. Our combined strengths create a critical support team for these entrepreneurs, with an emphasis on building capacity and strategy. We’re thrilled to be developing this important partnership when our local food businesses need it most.”

(MORE)

The next opportunity to apply will open Friday, February 12, and close on Wednesday, February 17. To apply for these no-cost marketing services for your small farm operation or food-based business, go to localdifference.org/SBDC-NW, or contact either the Northwest MI-SBDC at sbdc@networksnorthwest.org or TLD at tricia@localdifference.org. The value of services for each awarded business ranges up to \$4,000 depending on needs. Services include:

- Online Store Set-up
- Email Template Design
- B2B Relationship Development
- Social Media Strategy and Content Creation
- Third Party Marketing

Applicants do not have to have a history of working with either the SBDC or TLD; however, those awarded will be expected to become a client of each partner organization.

About [Taste the Local Difference:](#)

Taste the Local Difference is Michigan's local food marketing agency and media company committed to educating consumers about the value of local food, and supporting food and farming entrepreneurs in building successful, well-connected, and thoughtful businesses.

About Michigan SBDC

The Michigan Small Business Development Center (MI-SBDC) provides expert assistance at no cost to entrepreneurs looking to start or grow a business. The Northwest Michigan Regional Center is hosted by Networks Northwest and serves the ten-county region including Antrim, Benzie, Charlevoix, Emmet, Grand Traverse, Kalkaska, Leelanau, Manistee, Missaukee, and Wexford counties. For more information, go to nwm.org/sbdc.

The Michigan SBDC State Lead Center is located at Grand Valley State University, Seidman College of Business, in Grand Rapids. Michigan small business owners may access the Michigan SBDC services by contacting 616-331-7480 or SDBCMichigan.org.

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NOTE to Media: Images are oftentimes available upon request by e-mailing Dan Boss at dan.boss@networksnorthwest.org and stating preferences for resolution, file format, and file size. Or phone (231) 929-5047. Check our online Media Room at: networksnorthwest.org/media

Founded in 1974, Networks Northwest facilitates and manages various programs and services for the 10-county region. These programs include Northwest Michigan Works, Small Business Development Center, Procurement Technical Assistance Center, various business services, and many different regional planning initiatives in response to our communities' requests and needs. You will see the broad spectrum of workforce, business and community services Networks Northwest offers if you visit our website, networksnorthwest.org

Networks Northwest's member counties are Antrim, Benzie, Charlevoix, Emmet, Grand Traverse, Kalkaska, Leelanau, Manistee, Missaukee, and Wexford.