

# Dept. of Administration: Evers administration visit highlights over \$8 million in grants to support northwest Wisconsin small businesses

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**Superior, Wis.** – Today, Evers Administration officials celebrated an \$8 million investment in Northwest Wisconsin small businesses alongside local government, community, and business leaders. Wisconsin Department of Administration Secretary-designee Kathy Blumenfeld and Department of Financial Institutions Deputy Secretary Patti Epstein visited the Entrepreneur Fund to discuss how two grants from Governor Tony Evers' Badger Bounceback Initiative will help start, grow, and strengthen small businesses in a 12-county region of Northwest Wisconsin.

The Entrepreneur Fund received a \$5 million Diverse Business Investment Grant, which will expand access to face-to-face services and increase access to capital for diverse small businesses. Building on those investments, the Entrepreneur Fund is also receiving \$3 million from a Diverse Business Assistance Grant, which will provide technical support, training, and other essential assistance to help small businesses flourish in Northwest Wisconsin.

“Governor Tony Evers cares about Northwest Wisconsin and the businesses and communities that make places like Superior, Washburn, Ashland, and Hayward great places to live, work, and play,” said Secretary-designee Blumenfeld. “I’ve spent the last few months traveling all across our great state meeting with small business owners who received assistance from Governor Evers’ Badger Bounceback

programs and the outcomes are crystal clear - the Governor's investments are bringing our main streets back to life. We're so proud that the Entrepreneur Fund is a partner in this work and can't wait to see all that they do with an incredible \$8 million investment."

"This is a significant investment by Governor Evers in our region's small businesses and local communities of rural Wisconsin," said Shawn Wellnitz, CEO and President of the Entrepreneur Fund. "The investment will enable the Entrepreneur Fund to expand our coverage from one to thirteen counties in northern Wisconsin to support rural small businesses, drive community vibrancy and bring economic growth."

"The Entrepreneur Fund has a proven track record of putting the communities they serve first, making an impact in areas that need it most, and increasing financial inclusion," said DFI Deputy Secretary Patti Epstein. "These grant funds will help small business owners overcome disparities, negative economic impacts, and serve as a bridge for future growth and access to mainstream financing. We are excited to see the impact of these funds in northern Wisconsin in the days to come."

The Diverse Business Assistance and Diverse Business Investment Grants are part of a more than \$1 billion investment allocated by the Governor for economic resilience and support for small businesses and impacted industries. The Diverse Business Assistance and Investment programs were [first announced](#) in October 2021 to support equitable economic recovery statewide. Both grant programs are administered by DOA and funded through the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA). The first round of announcements was made in March 2022. The Diverse Business Assistance Grant program announced an expanded list of awardees in August 2022.

Visit [BadgerBounceback.wi.gov](https://BadgerBounceback.wi.gov) to view pandemic-related assistance information as well as the latest data and success stories about how COVID-relief investments are making a difference across the state. For updates on other recovery-related grant opportunities, sign up for the [Badger Bounceback update list](#).