

**Local Micro-enterprise Development Organization (MDO)
Yourtown, Virginia**

September 19, 2011

Sample Letter of Interest

Mr. Jeff Sadler
Program Manager
Virginia Enterprise Initiative
Virginia Department of Housing and Community Development
600 East Main Street, Suite 300
Richmond, VA 23219

Dear Mr. Sadler:

Local Micro-enterprise Development Organization (Local MDO) is interested in applying for a \$7,500 Planning Grant to expand the reach of our services into Virginia County.

Over the past two years *Local MDO* has grown its services to successfully serve micro-enterprises in the Commonwealth City Metropolitan Area. Over the last year, we made 15 loans that qualify as micro-loans (loans of under \$50,000 made to businesses with five or fewer employees.) Ten of our clients in the past year have driven into Commonwealth City from outlying areas for our services, and we believe that now is the time for our organization to more aggressively serve the region.

To begin our expansion, we intend to pilot an extension of services into Virginia County. We have already engaged in preliminary conversations with two partner organizations interested in hosting business training and technical assistance workshops. By reaching out into only one county we can establish a model that we hope to extend into other rural areas surrounding our region as well.

Local MDO offers training, technical assistance, micro-loans and post loan technical assistance. Our successful model, already proven locally will translate well with our potential partners, who have been referring clients to our programs for six years. However, by tailoring the training to the more rural community and holding trainings and assistance sessions in the community, we will better create a network of potential entrepreneurs, an important component of our model. This expansion will be aligned with a recently developed regional strategy to promote our region as a destination for outdoor travelers. A key element to the strategy is encouraging the development of outfitters and other outdoor-related entrepreneurs.

The extension of our program already has quiet support from key community leaders and partners of the outdoor strategy. With the help of a VEI planning grant, we can announce the effort county wide, and in a county-wide strategic discussion of local trends and assets. We will do this in a coordinated but phased approach that should set the groundwork for ongoing micro-enterprise development and produce real outcomes in the form of at least six business plans produced and at least one loan made in the rural county, an area that has not previously been served through Virginia Enterprise Initiative funding.

The pilot effort will consist of a staged strategy:

Phase One: **outreach and partnership** development to structure the pilot training program and recruit the first class

Phase Two: **Training and assistance** to the pilot
Business StartUp series one
Post class technical assistance

Phase Three: Building **business development strategies**
Business plan competition focusing on outdoor-related strategies
County wide entrepreneurship summit

Phase Four: Partnership assessment and planning next steps.

Our staff is extremely excited about this opportunity. There is more detail being developed on our plan each day, and we are looking forward to working with you on creating a structure and outcomes that meet the needs of the Commonwealth.

Please don't hesitate to contact me at 555-555-5555, sandy@localmdo.com if I can answer any questions or provide more detail on our services and track record.

Sincerely,

Sandy Smith
Executive Director