



Community Planning and Economic Development Department

# News Release

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*Minneapolis City Goals: A Safe Place to Call Home ▫ Jobs & Economic Vitality ▫ Eco-Focused ▫ Livable Communities, Healthy Lives ▫ Many People, One Minneapolis ▫ A City That Works*

## City of Minneapolis offers new program to help small businesses

***And, a call for proposals from non-profit business consulting organizations to support the program***

March 12, 2012 (MINNEAPOLIS) – Mayor R.T. Rybak and the Minneapolis City Council recently approved the Technical Assistance Program designed to assist small businesses with business planning, one-on-one training on topics such as accounting, legal and tax issues, marketing, and enrollment in classes for entrepreneurs.

The City has offered technical assistance in the past through its Great Streets program and through various City finance programs. The program’s funding of \$500,000 is being redirected and pooled under one program that can be used city-wide. Funding up to \$200,000 will be used to target small businesses categorized as “microenterprises” that are owned or established by low and moderate income individuals and employ five or fewer employees. There are no geographical boundaries of eligibility. Programming will administered by technical assistance service providers.

“Technical assistance is a crucial component of growing and maintaining new and existing businesses and fostering entrepreneurship, which, in turn, creates jobs and thriving business districts,” said **Cathy Polasky**, City of Minneapolis Director of Economic Policy and Development.

The City’s [call for proposals](#) from technical assistance service providers to administer the program is issued today. The City is seeking proposals from local non-profit organizations that provide technical assistance services to small businesses and microenterprises located in Minneapolis.

### **How City funding of technical assistance programs has helped small businesses:**

#### **Simba Craftware at Midtown Global Market**

Simba Craftware is a gift shop at the Midtown Global Market showcasing products created by artists from Kenya and other countries in Africa. With City funding, Midtown Global Market staff worked with owner, Martin Akinseye on merchandizing, product display and marketing strategies. Akinseye

implemented strategies to make the shop more educational, developed a website for customers to place online orders. Sales increased by 61% over December 2008 and by 349% over 2009.

### **Tortilleria La Perla**

Tortilleria La Perla, a tortilla manufacturer, had just recently moved into a new location at 1515 East Lake Street when corn and wheat flour prices unexpectedly tripled. With supply costs increasing and a new, larger mortgage and equipment loan, City funded assistance through the Latino Economic Development Council helped the business owners reevaluate and restructure their operations. Tortilleria La Perla is thriving and 40 jobs were retained.

### **The Hive**

The Hive is a full service chair rental salon with an eco-focused, natural and organic approach to hair care. Sisters Jennifer Cortez and Rebecca Bighley worked with the Metropolitan Consortium of Community Developers to develop a business plan and negotiate a lease for a space located at 400 Lowery Ave. NE.

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