



SOUTHERN MINNESOTA
INITIATIVE FOUNDATION

May 2022

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Joe Martin
Le Sueur County
Courthouse
88 Park Ave S
Le Center, MN 56057-1600

Dear Mr. Martin and County Board,

The needs of a community come in every shape and size. Those who live in the wonderfully diverse communities of southern Minnesota know this better than anyone. Southern Minnesota Initiative Foundation's (SMIF) focus is on economic and early childhood development and community vitality – exactly where our region needs us.

Small businesses need resources and financial support more than ever.

Small businesses in Minnesota account for 99.5% of all businesses and employ 46.9% of employees in the state. Job vacancies across the state have increased to 5.2% - nearly double what is considered a healthy number. SMIF's lending and technical assistance has been instrumental in creating dozens of new businesses in our region.

Child care shortages continue to be a concern.

48% of parents with kids under 18 who quit a job in 2021 cited child care issues as a reason for leaving. The need for more child care availability is particularly acute in Greater Minnesota where the numbers of child care providers is not keeping pace with the need. SMIF's child care resources are keeping providers in business and addressing the shortage.

Volunteers to community organizations are experiencing burnout at increasing rates.

Approximately 63 million Americans, 25% of the adult population, contribute \$193 billion of their time in-kind to our communities. However, the volunteer rate is declining. SMIF's support for community project and community foundations is turning this trend around.

Because of generous supporters like you, communities in our region have seen improvement and growth in countless ways. With your help, together we are investing in the vitality of our region. **See the enclosed fact sheet to see how your contribution is making a difference in your county.**

Thank you for your gift of \$3,000.00 on 5/26/2021. Your support is changing lives and addressing the needs of our region. I hope you will consider a gift at the same level in 2023.

Sincerely,

Tim Penny
President & CEO

cc: Matthew Goldade, Board Member

