

# Bridging Small Business Support and Employment Law Compliance

A Toolkit For Community Development Financial Institutions (CDFIs)

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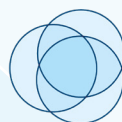
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# Why This Toolkit?

- This toolkit provides practical insights that CDFIs can use to expand their impact and support small business job quality and growth.
- Although there are many areas for small business technical assistance and support, this toolkit focuses on an ongoing, urgent, and at times complex issue for many small business owners: compliance with local and state employment law.
- Cities and states are passing innovative employment laws targeting issues like living wages, wage theft, sick and safe time, and paid leave to protect workers. These local labor standards provide a strong framework to support small business job quality when coupled with tailored outreach and support.
- This toolkit combines innovative insights from community organizing, academic research, community roundtables, and a new pilot program to identify strategies and potential interventions for CDFIs that work with small businesses, particularly those businesses that need more customized technical assistance and support with employment law compliance.
- CDFIs seeking to strengthen their support for small business owners on employment law compliance will find that the toolkit builds on deep research of the key sectors and networks in which small businesses operate, with the goal to identify moments and interventions that can set up businesses toward a high-road model.
- Drawing on insights from a promising Minneapolis pilot program begun in 2022 that braids together small business economic development opportunities with employment law compliance, the toolkit outlines specific strategies CDFIs can use to support small businesses with employment law compliance, including key community partnerships.

*This tool was developed by Workplace Justice Lab @ Rutgers University in partnership with the Aspen Institute Economic Opportunities Program as part of the Shared Success demonstration.*

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# Introduction

Many CDFIs are deeply committed to supporting small businesses through inclusive financing products and tailored technical assistance. This toolkit proposes that helping small businesses comply with employment laws<sup>1</sup> is an important part of the CDFI mission to promote economic well-being and small business success. When small businesses comply with existing employment standards, they are more viable and can avoid punitive action for noncompliance. Further, employment law compliance improves the quality of jobs for the employees of small businesses. This creates an engaged workforce that supports business growth and improves overall community economic well-being.

**Employment law compliance, however, is often not integrated into other small business technical assistance programs. This is a missed opportunity to strengthen small business development and improve economic well-being in the United States.** The Small Business Labor Standards Compliance Pilot has begun to show the benefits of a more integrated approach for businesses and the technical assistance agencies providing this support. Improving employment law compliance in small businesses can strengthen their business practices and add to their ability to access capital. Improving job quality in small businesses can help businesses be more resilient because better jobs lead to a stable workforce that is more able to address problems and challenges.<sup>2</sup>

To build knowledge and share practical insights with CDFIs and others interested in exploring this model to support small business owners, this toolkit shares what we have learned from several contexts — from academic research to insights from community organizing, community roundtables, and a new pilot program. We share options for this work at several capacity levels for you to consider in your own unique context. Because CDFIs are so varied, we include a broader range of content so that CDFIs can enter this work based on their specific position.

## Why Is Small Business Employment Law Compliance Important?

Underpayment of wages and benefits in the US is a serious problem. It is estimated that in 2021, over 4 million workers lost nearly \$19.8 billion in wages. This amount is higher than property theft — including robberies, burglaries, larceny theft, and motor vehicle theft — which cost Americans \$15 billion in 2019.<sup>3</sup>

Wage and benefit violations, now commonly called wage theft, include not being paid for all hours worked, not being paid overtime, being paid below the applicable minimum wage, and/or being misclassified as independent contractors and therefore not receiving full benefits.

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- 1 Employment law is this most accurate description for a collection of state and local laws governing employment standards. These laws are also referred to colloquially as labor law or labor standards. Local and state offices that have been set up to implement these standards are often called Labor Standards Compliance Offices.
  - 2 Kate Bahn and Carmen Sanchez Gumming, “Improving US Labor Standards and the Quality of Jobs to Reduce the Costs of Employee Turnover to US Companies,” Washington Center for Equitable Growth, December 21, 2020, <https://equitablegrowth.org/improving-u-s-labor-standards-and-the-quality-of-jobs-to-reduce-the-costs-of-employee-turnover-to-u-s-companies/> and “A Retailer Bets on Learning and Development: Goodwill Industries® of San Diego County,” Aspen Institute, February 4, 2019, <https://www.aspeninstitute.org/publications/retailer-bets-learning-development-goodwill-industries-san-diego-county/>.
  - 3 Daniel J. Galvin et al., “Alt-Labor and the New Politics of Workers’ Rights,” Russell Sage Foundation, 2024, [https://smlr.rutgers.edu/sites/default/files/Documents/Centers/WJL/WJL\\_immigration\\_databrief\\_May2025.pdf](https://smlr.rutgers.edu/sites/default/files/Documents/Centers/WJL/WJL_immigration_databrief_May2025.pdf).

Low-income workers, women, people of color, and immigrants are particularly vulnerable to wage theft. The cost to employees is dramatic. **Workers who were paid below the minimum wage lost an average of more than \$3,000 over the course of a year.<sup>4</sup> Addressing this issue can be a key part of rebuilding community vitality, particularly in the communities CDFIs serve.**

Small businesses account for a high percentage of wage theft violations. Studies have shown that wage theft violations are higher in businesses with under 100 employees than in larger businesses; minimum wage violations were almost twice as prevalent in these small businesses.<sup>5</sup> A study of complaints coming into the Minneapolis Labor Standards Enforcement Division found that 38% of complaints were directed at businesses with 20 or fewer employees.<sup>6</sup>

A common assumption is that wage theft is almost always an intentional business strategy. However, many businesses inadvertently violate employment law. Although the extent of willful versus inadvertent violations is a matter of debate, there is more agreement, particularly among labor standards enforcement officials, that they need more strategies to address wage theft violations that stem from a lack of access to information or systems support.<sup>7</sup> As an investigator in the Seattle Office of Labor Standards shared, “One of the things that makes me feel most guilty... is that the vast majority of [businesses against whom we have received a complaint of a violation] are small businesses owned by people of color or immigrants. It feels like most of our cases are pointed at people who didn’t know about the ordinance, didn’t know how to implement it, or didn’t know how to run the business....”<sup>8</sup>

This anecdotal evidence and other scholarly research suggest that violations from very small businesses are more likely due to capacity challenges.<sup>9</sup> Many small businesses are run by entrepreneurs of necessity — primarily women and minorities who form businesses because they face discrimination or other forms of restrictions in formal employment and are excluded from labor markets.<sup>10</sup> These businesses are less likely to have formalized accounting and bookkeeping systems or help from bookkeepers or accountants because of having fewer resources.<sup>11</sup>

Small business owners of color are also more likely to show more interest in gaining a better understanding of their business financials and in accessing one-on-one business advice than are white business owners (57% compared with 38%).<sup>12</sup> Against this backdrop, providing tailored one-on-one support to these small businesses addresses the

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- 4 Daniel J. Galvin et al., “Alt-Labor and the New Politics of Workers’ Rights,” Russell Sage Foundation, 2024, [https://smlr.rutgers.edu/sites/default/files/Documents/Centers/WJL/WJL\\_immigration\\_databrief\\_May2025.pdf](https://smlr.rutgers.edu/sites/default/files/Documents/Centers/WJL/WJL_immigration_databrief_May2025.pdf).
  - 5 Annette Bernhardt et al., “Broken Laws, Unprotected Workers: Violations of Employment and Labor Laws in America’s Cities,” National Employment Law Project, 2009, p. 30, <https://www.nelp.org/app/uploads/2015/03/BrokenLawsReport2009.pdf>.
  - 6 “The Minneapolis Small Business High-Road Labor Standards Intervention Pilot Project: Year One Assessment Review,” Workplace Justice Lab @ RU, Rutgers-New Brunswick School of Management and Labor Relations, <https://smlr.rutgers.edu/sites/default/files/Documents/Centers/WJL/Mpls%20Small%20Business%20Pilot%20Year%20One%20White%20Paper-3.docx.pdf>.
  - 7 See Stephen Clibborn et al., “The Employer Perspective on Wage Law Noncompliance: State of the Field and a Framework for New Understanding,” *Industrial Relations: A Journal of Economy and Society* 62, no. 4 (2023): 411–38; Yuval Feldman, *The Law of Good People: Challenge State’s Ability to Regulate Human Behavior* (Cambridge University Press, 2018).
  - 8 Hana Shepherd and Janice Fine, “Cities at Work: Administration and Politics in Local Workplace Standards,” 2025, p. 85.
  - 9 A. Wolf et al., “Generating Legal and Programmatic Legitimacy in Labor Law Enforcement Regimes within Immigrant and Minority Communities,” *Industrial Relations: A Journal of Economy and Society*.
  - 10 For more, see “Common Challenges for Immigrant and Systemically Marginalized Business Owners,” Workplace Justice Lab @ RU, Rutgers-New Brunswick School of Management and Labor Relations, [https://smlr.rutgers.edu/sites/default/files/Documents/Centers/WJL/MN\\_SBChallenges.pdf](https://smlr.rutgers.edu/sites/default/files/Documents/Centers/WJL/MN_SBChallenges.pdf).
  - 11 “Minneapolis-Specific Small Business Conditions,” Workplace Justice Lab @ RU, Rutgers-New Brunswick School of Management and Labor Relations, <https://smlr.rutgers.edu/sites/default/files/Documents/Centers/WJL/MinneapolisSpecificConditions.pdf>; David R. Fordham et al., “Accounting Information Technology in Small Businesses: An Inquiry,” *Journal of Information Systems* 33, no. 2 (2019): 63–75.
  - 12 “Study Shows Minority-Owned Small Businesses Still Heavily Impacted by Pandemic,” Block Advisors, April 21, 2022, <https://www.block-advisors.com/resource-center/news-center/minority-owned-small-businesses-heavily-impacted-by-pandemic/>.

dual community challenges of wage theft and small business viability.

Small businesses, labor standards enforcement agencies, and business support organizations report that challenges in setting up and using basic accounting and payroll systems can create problems for employees and business owners alike. These include challenges with strategic business planning; falling behind in employment and sales tax submissions and reporting; insufficient formalized records and documentation, resulting in potentially restricted access to private and public capital; mistakes in and/or underpayment of employee wages and benefits; employee turnover; and labor compliance complaints that lead to owing back wages or fines.<sup>13</sup> Lacking back office support<sup>14</sup> also makes it difficult to comply with various employment standards like paid sick leave laws, most of which require employers to keep track of employee hours to calculate the amount of leave for which employees are eligible.

When small businesses can provide high-quality jobs to their employees, the employees are often better able to stay in those jobs and contribute to the business with the goals of strengthening business success and improving community well-being.<sup>15</sup>

## The Complex Landscape of Employment Laws

Businesses face a patchwork of laws — from the federal, tribal, state, and sometimes local levels — that govern their employment practices. These laws establish standards for providing good jobs for employees in a community and thus provide an opportunity for community growth. However, for very small businesses without a dedicated human resources department, keeping track of changing requirements is no small feat. Figuring out how to set up systems for proper tax and payroll compliance is yet another hurdle. As a result, all too often, very small businesses fail to meet minimum employment standards and thus they contribute, intentionally or not, to the phenomenon of wage theft. This degrades the quality of life for their employees and harms small business viability and access to capital.

In this section, we share an overview of the most common employment laws that have passed at the state and municipal levels and, if available, a list of the jurisdictions where they have passed.

### Minimum Wage

Currently, 30 states have a minimum wage law that sets the standard above the federal wage standard (currently \$7.25 per hour, with a \$2.13 tipped wage), and 65 municipalities have separate minimum wage standards.<sup>16</sup> A list of state minimum wage laws can be viewed [here](#), and a list of city and county laws can be viewed [here](#).

13 Andrew Wolf et al., “The Minneapolis Small Business High-Road Labor Standards Intervention Pilot Project: Year One Assessment Review,” Workplace Justice Lab @ RU, Rutgers-New Brunswick School of Management and Labor Relations, May 2024, <https://smlr.rutgers.edu/sites/default/files/Documents/Centers/WJL/Mpls%20Small%20Business%20Pilot%20Year%20One%20White%20Paper-3.docx.pdf>.

14 Back office support refers to the business functions that are not customer facing but critical to business success, such as accounting, payroll, and human resources management.

15 Kate Bahn and Carmen Sanchez Cumming, “Improving US Labor Standards and the Quality of Jobs to Reduce the Costs of Employee Turnover to US Companies,” Washington Center for Equitable Growth, December 21, 2020, <https://equitablegrowth.org/improving-u-s-labor-standards-and-the-quality-of-jobs-to-reduce-the-costs-of-employee-turnover-to-u-s-companies/> and “A Retailer Bets on Learning and Development: Goodwill Industries® of San Diego County,” Aspen Institute, February 4, 2019, <https://www.aspeninstitute.org/publications/retailer-bets-learning-development-goodwill-industries-san-diego-county/>.

16 “State Minimum Wages,” National Conference of State Legislatures, July 1, 2025, <https://www.ncsl.org/labor-and-employment/state-minimum-wages/>; “Inventory of US City and County Minimum Wage Ordinances,” UC Berkeley Labor Center, July 1, 2025, <https://laborcenter.berkeley.edu/inventory-of-us-city-and-county-minimum-wage-ordinances/>.

### **One Fair Wage: Eliminating Tipped Wage Differential**

This policy gradually eliminates the subminimum wage standard for tipped workers. Seven states and several cities have passed this policy.

### **Wage Theft**

Many cities and states have passed legislation to address wage theft. Typically, these include a variety of policy measures to ensure employers inform employees about the wage and benefits they will receive in advance of employment and set clear standards for timely payment of wages.

### **Sick Leave**

These initiatives provide employees with job-protected time off for illness or for caring for sick family members. Earned sick time laws allow employees to accrue a minimum number of paid hours of time off. Eighteen states have paid sick leave laws, as do 21 cities and counties.<sup>17</sup> A list of these cities and states can be viewed [here](#).

### **Paid Family and Medical Leave**

These programs provide an employee with paid time off to care for a new child or a serious illness or that of a family member. These programs are funded by small payroll contributions by the employee and employer. Fifteen states and the District of Columbia have [these programs](#).<sup>18</sup>

### **Ban the Box**

These policies provide protection against discrimination in the hiring process for those having a criminal record.

### **Fair Scheduling and Predictive Scheduling**

This reform sets standards for providing employees with adequate advance notice about their work schedules. Close to a dozen states and cities have set fair scheduling standards. A list of these cities and states can be viewed [here](#).

### **Secure Choice and Mandated Pension Plans**

To help more employees plan and save for their retirement, numerous states and a few cities<sup>19</sup> have established public pension systems. These systems ensure employees can continue to contribute even as they move between jobs. The programs require employers over a certain size to make this and/or another retirement savings option available to their employees.

This patchwork of laws, combined with the fact that standards are constantly updated and new standards are passed, can make it difficult for small business owners to keep track of and understand their responsibilities under these laws. The evolving legal context also makes it difficult for small business technical assistance providers, including CDFIs, to stay updated.

<sup>17</sup> Sophia M. Mitchell, "State Paid Sick Leave Laws," US Department of Labor Women's Bureau, December 2024, <https://www.dol.gov/sites/dolgov/files/WB/StatePaidSickLeaveLaws.pdf>.

<sup>18</sup> "State Paid Family Leave Laws Across the US," Bipartisan Policy Center, January 16, 2024, <https://bipartisanpolicy.org/explainer/state-paid-family-leave-laws-across-the-u-s/>.

<sup>19</sup> Rachel Blakely-Gray, "State-Mandated Retirement Plans: Don't Get Tripped Up," Patriot Software, March 18, 2025, <https://www.patriotsoftware.com/blog/payroll/state-mandated-retirement-plans/>.

For businesses on tribal land, employment law is often an even more confusing mix of tribal, federal, and/or state law. Tribal governments have inherent sovereignty rights and authority to create their own employment law and regulate employment on tribal land. Some federal employment laws explicitly exclude tribes. The application of



Community Bookkeeper Labor Law Trainings sponsored by the City of Minneapolis provide an opportunity for Labor Standards Enforcement Division (LSED) staff to meet Community Bookkeepers outside of enforcement cases.

other federal and state employment laws has been decided when tribes have entered into agreements with the federal government or other entities. Still other federal and state employment and labor laws have been subject to court cases. Rulings in different jurisdictions have arrived at different conclusions — leaving a patchwork of guidance.<sup>20</sup>

When small businesses do not have adequate supports for understanding the local and state employment standards laws that are designed to improve job quality, compliance with the laws can be confusing. This is particularly a concern in places where there are new laws but inadequate governmental or community resources to provide information to small business owners about the laws' requirements.

When new employment standards are first passed, elected officials and community members often advocate for resources to ensure businesses have access to clear information and supportive resources to help them meet the requirements. The government entities tasked with enforcing these laws are attentive to the unique needs and contexts of small business owners and can be important partners in improving job quality through the adoption of these legal standards.

Even some rules that are largely governed by state and federal law and have not significantly changed over time are still confusing for many small business owners. A significant example is the misclassification of employees as independent contractors. In many small business sectors, it has become common industry practice to hire independent contractors to save money on taxes and employee benefits. This informal community practice leads many small business owners to assume that they are allowed to decide whether to hire a person as an employee or contractor. However, clear state and federal rules exist about the conditions under which an independent contractor is engaged. Misclassification is a major contributor to employment law violations.

<sup>20</sup> For more information, see the following resources: Starting on p. 6, this Spring 2025 Indian Law Newsletter, [Application of Federal Labor & Employment Law in Tribal Country](#), provides a concise overview of decisions affecting federal, state, and tribal employment and labor law. This publication from the state of Michigan, [How State and Federal Laws Apply to Tribal Employment](#), is an example of how this complex area of law can be more successfully shared with small business owners and the technical assistance providers who serve them. For more information on Tribal Employment Rights Ordinances — tribal laws designed to ensure Native Americans receive their fair share of employment, training, and contracting opportunities on or near reservations — see the information and resources from the [Council on Tribal Employment Rights](#).



## How can you learn more about your tribal, state, and city small business employment laws?

*Because no sources of information have all the information across cities and states, consulting several sources can be helpful. Here are suggestions about where to find employment law information for your community.*

**State labor agency.** Your state labor agency is a good first stop for information. Some states have good webpages with information for small businesses. Although a few have dedicated pages for small business owners, more often information for business owners is available by policy area. Many state labor agencies have staff in field offices dedicated to regularly providing training to small business owners.

**City labor agencies.** Some cities that have passed ordinances for local employment standards have also established a city agency to educate workers and business owners about the ordinances and to ensure compliance with the law.

**State economic development agencies.** State economic development agencies often compile information useful for small business start-ups.

**Tribes' support offices.** Tribes' departments of revenue, small business, and/or economic development may have resources to help small business owners navigate employment law on tribal land.

**National organizations tracking employment policies.** Many groups that advocate for employment policies keep up-to-date lists of where these policies have been passed.<sup>21</sup>

**Payroll companies.** Payroll companies vary in how well information about state and local employment law is integrated into their payroll setup services. However, given the lack of other sites for comprehensive information, they remain a good additional source of information.

**Lawyers specializing in small business support and employment law.** Lawyers – whether in private practice or through pro bono legal clinics – who target their services to small business owners, including setup, may be a good source of comprehensive information about employment law. They can navigate which law takes precedence and the practical effects for small business owners. Some lawyers further specialize in serving diverse client and community needs.

**Bookkeepers.** Local bookkeepers vary significantly in their knowledge about local employment law. Although some bookkeepers provide up-to-date guidance as part of their services, others may have specific areas of specialized knowledge. It is a good practice to discuss their familiarity with local employment law requirements to ensure you select the best partner for this information.

### Resource: Community Partnerships to Support Small Businesses Compliance With Employment Laws

In most communities, technical assistance support for small businesses is siloed and/or difficult to access. Information and functions are spread out, and agencies do not often communicate with one another. CDFIs that work closely with very small businesses are uniquely positioned to build partnerships to help bridge these divides. **Appendix A** provides detailed suggestions for identifying and developing key partnerships for this work.

<sup>21</sup> "Inventory of US City and County Minimum Wage Ordinances," UC Berkeley Labor Center, July 1, 2025, <https://laborcenter.berkeley.edu/inventory-of-us-city-and-county-minimum-wage-ordinances/>; "Workplace Rights Hub," A Better Balance, <https://www.abetterbalance.org/know-your-rights>; "Minimum Wage Tracker," Economic Policy Institute, <https://www.epi.org/minimum-wage-tracker/>.

# Overview of the Small Business Labor Standards Compliance Pilot

In Minneapolis, the City Labor Standards and Employment Division saw that a disproportionate number of complaints coming into their office about employment standards violations were from employees of very small businesses. They felt their current tools of investigation, requiring payment of back wages and occasionally fines, were not successfully addressing the root causes and conditions that led to noncompliance among these businesses.

## Phase 1: Supporting Small Businesses Through Back Office Functions

The Minneapolis Small Business Labor Standards Compliance Pilot was launched in 2022 to address the challenge of the systemic problems that give rise to employment standards violations.<sup>22</sup> Phase 1 of the program provided small businesses with back office software and support, including payroll processing, employee time tracking, and bookkeeping. The goal in subsidizing software and support to systematize back office functions was to help small businesses maintain good jobs that meet labor standards and more successfully grow their businesses. One hundred businesses applied, and 50 small business owners were accepted into Phase 1 of the pilot. They were offered employment law training, a free year of bookkeeping, payroll and timekeeping software, and eight hours with a community bookkeeper to strengthen their financial and payroll knowledge and systems.

**Phase 1 of the pilot demonstrated that many small business owners welcome one-on-one support to learn about the laws and back office systems that make compliance and business management easier.** Phase 1 also demonstrated that we overestimated the importance of free software to these businesses and underestimated how valuable the individualized support from technical assistance providers would be to these small business owners so they could successfully implement new back office systems.

We also identified untapped networks of technical assistance for providers interested in adding employment law compliance to their menu of services: community bookkeepers and CDFIs. As part of the project, we talked with technical assistance providers about what they needed to make supporting compliance with employment law a more regular service they offered to their small business clients. Phase 2 is built around this feedback.

## Phase 2: Training and Supporting Business Technical Assistance Providers

Phase 2 of the pilot, which is in progress, has focused on training and supporting the organizations that support small businesses. It includes the following:

- **Free training on employment law**

In partnership with city and state labor agencies, we created and delivered free training on employment law to more than 80 bookkeepers, CDFI staff, and other technical assistance staff. These trainings have ranged from 90-minute online presentations to eight-hour in-person training with

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<sup>22</sup> For more about the specific conditions relevant to small businesses in Minneapolis, see “Minneapolis-Specific Small Business Conditions,” Workplace Justice Lab @ RU, Rutgers-New Brunswick School of Management and Labor Relations, <https://smlr.rutgers.edu/sites/default/files/Documents/Centers/WJL/MinneapolisSpecificConditions.pdf>.

exercises and opportunities for people to connect with each other. Community bookkeepers have been particularly eager to attend. They identified cost as a barrier to attending, so the trainings are free of charge.

- **Roundtables and cross-agency discussions**

Successful strategies to support small business owners often need engagement from multiple siloed agencies and technical assistance providers. To address this challenge, we have brought together individuals and agencies that do not often partner with each other. Our in-person training and roundtable meetings provide a space for community bookkeepers to build relationships, learn, and share emerging challenges with city agencies. Regular meetings between city labor enforcement offices, small business technical assistance offices, and nonprofit technical assistance providers help identify opportunities to better meet small business needs.

- **Subsidized support for community bookkeepers to engage their small business clients**

In phase 2, we recruited 10 bookkeepers to deliver subsidized services to up to 10 clients to come into compliance with workplace standards laws. We subsidized up to 14 hours of their time for each client for engagement, education, and work to set up or modify their books and payroll systems. A small fund is also available to partially subsidize new software if the bookkeeper identifies that as a key client need. Key steps in the process included the following:

- Bookkeepers shared a list of 10 clients they thought were a good match for the program; we reviewed their list to ensure they met pilot and funder criteria.
- We worked with bookkeepers to develop and assess different messages — including balancing the business and community benefits of compliance alongside the costs of noncompliance — to increase client interest in participating in the program.



To date, 32 community bookkeepers have attended the day-long Small Business Labor Compliance training as part of the pilot program. Pictured here are the participants and trainers from our August 2025 training.

- Bookkeepers complete an initial assessment of client needs and make recommendations for a plan to obtain the assistance needed to come into compliance.
- Bookkeepers continue to meet with their clients to carry out the plans while regularly reporting their experiences with clients and invoicing their services.
- Bookkeepers complete a final assessment of changes made and any outstanding areas of concern. A short interview with the small business owner by pilot staff is completed to confirm service delivery and effectiveness.

Pilot Phase 2 is a strong collaborative partnership among the Workplace Justice Lab@Rutgers, Neighborhood Development Center, a CDFI based in St. Paul, Minnesota, and the City of Minneapolis's Labor Standards Enforcement Division. Appendix A shares our experience identifying and developing key partnerships for this work.

[Appendix B](#) provides specific suggestions for bookkeepers, including a sample assessment form they can use with their clients and suggestions for following up with bookkeepers as they complete their work.



The day-long Small Business Labor Compliance training includes small group hands-on exercises to help community bookkeepers problem-spot issues and get to know one another.

# Opportunities and Considerations for CDFIs: Getting Started

Given the diverse communities that different CDFIs serve, each CDFI can help support employment law compliance among the small businesses it works with in different ways. This section provides guidance to help you assess how your institution might incorporate various strategies into your ongoing work.

First, we provide a series of questions to help clarify the level of community need for these services. Second, we show how your existing work might lead to new strategies to help your small business clients improve job quality through employment law compliance. Then we review four possible program levels — each with different types of actions — for you to consider given your community context and organizational capacity.

After reading these sections, see [Appendix C](#) for a worksheet to help you identify how you might take next steps and the costs and benefits to your organization of doing so.

## Evaluating Your Context

Addressing employment law compliance as part of your small business support strategies may be worthwhile for many reasons. First, it may be helpful to evaluate your context.

### **1. Have employment laws been proposed or recently passed in your state, city, or county?**

The proposal or passage of these laws provides an opportunity for CDFIs to help support small businesses. Provisions to allocate funding for small business outreach as part of the bills are an important component of successful program rollouts. CDFIs might be part of contracts to do outreach and propose using funds for small business technical assistance to help with implementation. Business owners are most open to guidance when informed of new employment laws. Some businesses become more willing to invest in compliance with these laws after they have been identified as out of compliance. CDFIs might provide immediate support and practical guidance to correct errors and prevent repeated compliance problems.

### **2. Have small businesses mentioned challenges with employment law compliance?**

Do these types of issues surface in conversations with small businesses? Do your small business clients ask for help on these topics, such as how to hire their first employee or how to comply with newly passed legislation? Do advisors hear “red flags” in terms of potential violations such as workers being misclassified as 1099 contractors? If you hear these types of issues from clients, your small business advising may benefit from incorporating compliance-related content.

### **3. Do existing public or private technical assistance programs serve small business owners?**

If government or private funds already exist for small business technical assistance (for example, as part of a city's small business technical assistance office), CDFIs can apply for these opportunities to provide services and make the case that back office assistance and bookkeeping support should be included in the service portfolio.

#### **4. Do elected officials or other policy leaders advance employment policies and/or champion small business issues?**

If so, this suggests an opportunity for funding the kinds of programs and resources suggested in this toolkit.

### **Evaluating Your Fit**

Your CDFI might be well positioned to take on this type of work based on your existing profile of services, or you may think about how you can move in the direction of doing this type of work.

#### **1. Do you provide services to small businesses?**

If you do not do substantial work with small businesses, pursuing the strategies we suggest here would be a heavy lift for you.

#### **2. Do you have an established training and/or technical assistance program for small business owners?**

If so, you likely already have the systems in place to incorporate employment law compliance and best practices into your technical assistance package. If not, pursuing the strategy we describe here to improve job quality through employment standards compliance and technical assistance will require establishing such an approach.

#### **3. Do you work with many new businesses?**

Integrating business financial tools, executive strategies, and bookkeeping at the start-up phase can be most successful because that is when businesses are most open to advice and setting up systems.

#### **4. Are many of the businesses you serve behind on financial accounting and/or their tax filings and are therefore ineligible for your capital access programs?**

If so, you might think about accounting and bookkeeping support to help these businesses become eligible for capital access.

#### **5. Do you serve many immigrant, racially marginalized, and/or low-income business owners?**

Many entrepreneurs of necessity, which includes entrepreneurs from immigrant and racially marginalized communities, start with fewer resources or support networks because of historical and current discrimination and exclusion. Access to tailored technical assistance can be a key step toward accessing capital to build their business and improve job quality. These very small businesses may not connect with the typical channels of communication about employment laws because of language barriers and less regular contact with government communications and support. If your organization already serves these populations, you have many of the relationships and tailored support systems that make delivery of employment law support most effective.

#### **6. Do you work with clients on strategies to advance their ability to provide high-quality jobs?**

If so, you can likely make the case to your small business clients that this type of technical support, including ensuring their compliance with employment laws, is a key aspect of improving their job quality.



The community bookkeepers who have joined the pilot program as Core bookkeepers have been a key source of information about the challenges and needs of, and emerging issues among, the small business clients they serve. Pictured here are the pilot program Core bookkeepers at our August 2025 Roundtable meeting.

## Strategic Options: Four Levels of Employment Law Compliance Support

Following are four levels of participation and accompanying strategies that CDFIs might pursue based on their context and the fit of their existing services and client population. These suggestions are grounded in insight from our Small Business Labor Standards Compliance Pilot program and from work we have done with labor agencies across the country. Given that most CDFIs have limited capacity for new initiatives, we suggest ways of integrating compliance with employment laws into existing programming. We also share options for more comprehensive programs that interested CDFIs could undertake.

### Level 1: Add Focused Small Business Technical Assistance to Loan and Financing Programs

- Adopt “not now” instead of a “no” approach with clients who do not meet credit criteria to keep the door open to businesses that have fewer resources or networks of support.
- If you identify a lack of financial and tax records as a barrier to lending, refer small business clients to trusted community bookkeepers who can assist small business owners with their systems and records.
- Consider adding technical assistance to your lending program to help clients address recordkeeping barriers. This can be done by including in-house staff and/or with contracts to community bookkeepers.

### Level 2: Add to Existing Small Business Technical Support Programs

- Plan training for your business advising staff on employment law (consider including state and/or tribal labor agency staff and/or a local small business employment lawyer).
- Add employment law questions to your small business client intake process to identify common issues and needed support.
- Build a requirement for review of a client’s financial and payroll systems to ensure compliance with access to credit programs.
- Add training in the basics of employment law to the menu of small business support services.
- Support businesses with payroll setup that complies with employment law.

- Build employment law compliance services for your clients into proposals for public and private funding.
- Set up a service contract with a community bookkeeper (trained in employment law basics) as part of your technical assistance team.
- Monitor public policy discussions about new workplace standards laws that are being considered locally and at the state level. Document the issues that small business clients face to make the case to public policy leaders for adding outreach, training, and back office support on employment law compliance.

### **Level 3: Build Partnerships for Employment Law Trainings**

- Meet with state, tribal, county, and/or city labor standards compliance office staff.
- Share interest in helping small business owners understand employment law.
- Hold joint training for your agency staff and client small business owners on Zoom or in person.
- Cohost regular compliance training for small business owners.
- If a new employment law is in development, use this opportunity to generate interest among business owners.
- Explore whether the agency has outreach funds for additional training.
- Explore recruiting and training small business technical assistance providers (CDFIs and community bookkeepers) in employment law.

### **Level 4: Build Partnerships for Technical Assistance**

- After building successful training partnerships, explore tribal, state, and local labor agencies to develop deeper partnerships through compliance technical assistance.
- Meet with policy leaders and public and/or private agencies to make the case for small business technical assistance that combines financial literacy with employment law compliance. Services can include compliance assessments, financial literacy training, compliant payroll setup, and/or funding for software upgrades.
- If public small business assistance programs exist, see if funds can be expanded to include technical assistance in employment law compliance.
- If a new employment law is in development, make the case for designated technical assistance funding as part of the law's implementation.
- Plan for training technical assistance providers.
- Plan for outreach to small businesses.
- Plan for documenting results.



# Applying Findings and Insights from the Small Business Labor Standards Compliance Pilot

## Strategies for Working With Small Businesses on Compliance

In this section, we share a few key observations from studies and our own lessons learned from the Minneapolis Pilot about understanding, planning for, and building support programs to address the specific challenges that underresourced small businesses face in complying with employment laws.

### Plan to Provide Ongoing Support

In the Minneapolis Pilot program, businesses required customized one-on-one support to navigate both the technical issues they faced when setting up legally compliant human resources systems and their interactions with city government.

### Building Trust and Relationships

To overcome issues of trust and capacity, it is important to have extensive and intensive approaches to reaching and engaging business owners.

### Multiple Avenues and Times

Even after businesses enrolled in and committed to the Minneapolis Pilot Project, we needed to be persistent in our initial outreach and relationship building. We engaged with owners by email, phone, and text, according to the mode that worked best for each owner. We visited their businesses to better understand their overall operations and build deeper relationships. We kept our interactions positive and the door open; we found that many owners returned for additional support when they had more time in the day or when they experienced an urgent crisis.

### Action Steps and Timing

We established the action steps business owners needed to take and problem-solved with them when they had time. Scheduling a next check after every encounter, along with sending reminder texts or calling, helped build momentum with many clients. Remember, business owners are not always at their desks looking at emails as they cut a client's hair or make a burger!

### Balance One-on-One Support and Networking

The Minneapolis Pilot included both one-on-one support sessions and group training. Pilot participants shared that they often feel isolated. They appreciated the networking opportunities and knowing that other owners struggled with similar issues and concerns. They needed and greatly valued the one-on-one hands-on support and technical assistance.

## Messaging

In the Minneapolis Pilot, we found that being out of compliance with employment law was often seen as less risky than being out of compliance with tax law and was therefore addressed with less urgency. To help focus more attention on the issue of compliance, we used the following messaging with business owners:

*Minneapolis and Minnesota have laws about how much businesses need to pay their employees and how much sick leave they should get. Employees talk and others hear. By treating your employees by the book, you can build a reputation as an important member of the community, AND you can avoid possible fines from the government or lawsuits from employees.*

## Tailor Outreach to Business Size

Smaller businesses might require more intensive one-on-one support or technical assistance and customized tools; larger businesses may need advanced consultations. Understanding what support businesses need at each stage of their development is key to getting their attention.

## Manage Expectations

Emphasize that building solid compliance practices can be an ongoing process rather than a one-time fix. Outline potential costs (e.g., time, resources) for setting up compliance systems but also highlight cost savings in the long run (e.g., avoided fines, lawsuits).

## Trusted Community Intermediaries

The Minneapolis Pilot Project confirmed that many small businesses turn to their communities for help and support. These community service providers are often informal or underresourced themselves, which requires a focus on capacity building to promote compliance among their clients. Engagement and program implementation with community intermediaries allow this type of support program to grow.

## Interventions by Business Size

Tailor your approach to businesses according to the key challenges they face at each stage of their development:

### New Businesses

- **Focus:** Steps in initial business setup.
- **Opportunity:** Owners are often more receptive to guidance and establishing good practices early on.
- **Key support:**
  - Offer new business compliance checklists and training modules for a quick ramp-up. (Samples are available [here](#) and [here](#).)
  - Set up business accounts and recordkeeping.
  - Focus on basic rules governing contractors versus employees.

### One to Five Employees and/or Contractors

- **Focus:** Ensure employer employment law knowledge.
- **Opportunity:** Businesses of this size can often be overwhelmed trying to manage books on their own. They can be more open to asking for help and/or to working with a good bookkeeper.
- **Key support:**
  - Review rules governing contractors and recommend a shift to employees if needed. (Note that this is a major area of confusion. Be clear about what is and is not allowed under the law.)
  - Review the owner's knowledge of other employment laws.
  - Review payroll systems to ensure proper tracking of minimum wage, overtime, tips, and sick days (if provided and/or required).
  - Recordkeeping, wage and hour compliance, and effective bookkeeping systems must be established from day one.
  - Identify payroll and financial management roles the business owner and/or key staff can take on and the support they need to succeed in these roles.

### 6 to 20 Employees

- **Focus:** Formalizing HR policies, managing growth, ensuring proper worker classification, and avoiding misclassification.
- **Opportunity:** At this size, business owners have often hired managerial staff. Some may have strengths that the business owner can tap.
- **Key supports:** More robust accounting software, guidelines for handling part-time versus full-time employees, and onboarding processes.

### 20+ Employees

- **Focus:** Advanced compliance planning and deeper human resources policy development.
- **Opportunity:** Can afford more sophisticated payroll software best designed for business needs (e.g., tracks available hours, employee location).
- **Key supports:** Consultations with specialized employment law attorneys, more complex reporting, and employee management systems.

# Conclusion

This toolkit provides concrete suggestions for CDFIs that work with small businesses to help them comply with employment laws. Drawing on lessons from a pilot program in Minneapolis, Minnesota, we suggest specific strategies to pursue and types of relationships to develop to support small business compliance and growth and community welfare.

We close with a few quotes from Small Business Labor Compliance Pilot participants about the benefits they gained from the program:

*“Before the program I felt ashamed — I am running a business, but I don’t know about business. But at the first meeting — I see I am not the only one who does not understand accounting and how to run a business! The (program’s) bookkeeper was so patient with me and all my questions. I can now read my profit and loss. Before I had no clue. Now I am really participating in my business — in the financing part. It is really helpful. Before the program I didn’t do sick time; I thought since I was so small, it didn’t apply to me. But now I know I have to, and it is all set up in my new payroll software. This program is a gift for me. Someone at the city cares about me as a small business owner, and that feels nice.”*

Cafe Owner with 12 Part-Time Employees

*“When you are a small business, you are trying to juggle so many different things. And if it’s something you don’t know or understand, it’s easy to put it on the back burner. What was most valuable about the program was having someone to talk to and connect to and having the accountability. We had a regular meeting and action steps. And the bookkeeper was very small business oriented. Before, we were working with too big of a firm. It was a disconnection. Now I feel like I have someone who is on my side. Now I am using QuickBooks Online and a payroll software, and it is so much easier. And we are all set up for sick time!”*

Shop Owner with Three Employees

We hope this toolkit offers some additional strategies for CDFIs to use in their mission to provide financial and technical assistance to small business owners. Assisting small businesses with back office systems, including employment law compliance, can support small business success and improve job quality for small business employees, which improves community economic and social well-being. It also increases the viability of the small businesses themselves by strengthening their labor force and by avoiding costs associated with noncompliance.

# Appendix A

## Suggestions for Identifying and Developing Partnerships for Supporting Employment Law Compliance Among Small Businesses

We provide suggestions for identifying potential key partners for CDFIs interested in supporting small businesses to come into compliance with employment standards. Key partners include community bookkeepers, government small business technical assistance offices, labor standards enforcement agencies, elected officials, and business associations. We include a discussion of how they can be helpful, how they provide support for small businesses regarding employment law compliance, and ways to engage them in a partnership that provides back office support for small businesses. We have ordered the potential partners such that those who might be most useful earlier in the process of being involved in such efforts (i.e., beginning at Level 1 as described earlier) come first, and those partners that are more useful once the infrastructure is well established appear later.

### Community Bookkeepers

#### Initial Orientation

Bookkeepers recognize the problem of noncompliance with employment standards among their clients, but they are generally not trained in employment law compliance. Most understand that it is in their clients' best interest to come into compliance. Some assume that clients will not come into compliance without a direct threat of financial penalties from a government agency. Others believe that clients will respond to evidence of the positive impact that coming into compliance has on the community.

#### Roles They Can Play

- Ensure crucial, customized, and experienced support to help formalize systems and improve financial health of these small businesses.
- Have discussions with their clients about the importance of compliance with employment standards laws.
- Hold formal contracts with city business technical assistance providers to do outreach to and provide support to their clients.
- Participate in trainings on employment standards and how to help their clients come into compliance with the CDFI or city government.
- Provide information to CDFIs or city business assistance offices about their clients' needs.
- Provide feedback to labor enforcement offices or CDFIs about what is confusing or most difficult for their clients regarding employment laws.
- Advocate for city funding to support their work in this area.

### The Case You Can Make to Them to Partner

- Participating in a program to be trained in local, tribal, and/or state employment laws improves their use to their clients. Helping their clients come into compliance with these laws will involve formalizing their accounting and bookkeeping systems.
- Adding employment law compliance to their business offerings can expand their pool of business clients and revenue. Bookkeepers who partner with CDFIs use these referrals as a source of revenue for themselves and can add staff to expand their businesses to meet clients' needs. Offering a training certificate can help bookkeepers advertise this capacity to their clients.
- Improving their clients' employment standards compliance will help the community overall as the clients strengthen their businesses and provide good jobs.
- Meeting and connecting with other community bookkeepers may be valuable to them if they are not part of other networks or associations.

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## City or State Small Business Technical Assistance Offices

### Initial Orientation

Many government small business technical assistance offices design their programs around small business requests for services. These requests more regularly focus on access to credit and other outward-facing services such as help developing websites. Technical assistance offices often cite a lack of demand from small business owners for back office services. However, business owners are often reluctant to admit they need help with internal systems support. They often feel like they "should know" how to run a business. City agencies can also start with an orientation that explains how back office systems are the business owners' responsibility.

### Roles They Can Play

- They can add bookkeepers to their technical assistance providers, either on staff or by funding local CDFIs and other small business technical assistance providers to provide this service.
- They can train all their existing technical assistance providers in basic employment law and provide resources for additional support.

### The Case You Can Make to Them to Partner

- Business owners, especially entrepreneurs of necessity, most often get into business with a love and knowledge of their product — be it tacos or T-shirts. Few come to business knowing how to manage invoices and/or rules for setting up a contractor or an employee.
- Make the connection between strong financial records and gaining access to capital.
- Share your experiences with books that that have been poorly managed and the results.
- Many small business owners believe that payroll companies will guarantee employment law compliance. That is not the case, and additional technical assistance is needed to ensure proper setup, especially when local job quality laws exist.
- Back office issues can hinder access to credit and are best addressed early on with businesses.

## Labor Standards Enforcement Agencies

### Initial Orientation

Most city and state labor agencies are aware of the challenge of bringing smaller, underresourced businesses, particularly those in communities that do not have strong connections to or positive experiences with government, into compliance. In a complaint-based enforcement system, complaints often disproportionately come from small businesses. Some of the agencies see this as a central challenge to their work because it undermines their mandate to enforce the laws in an equitable manner. However, most of these agencies are underresourced — they have significantly fewer staff than they would need, they have limited funds for outreach, and they may face constraints when partnering with community organizations to do that outreach. Many of these agencies are also open to partnering with other government offices to tackle this challenge but have been met with silence or resistance.

### Roles They Can Play

- These agencies can build relationships with other government offices that communicate with small businesses to ask them to integrate employment standards training and compliance into their own work.
- They can provide employment standards training to CDFIs, groups of community bookkeepers (perhaps through CDFIs), and other government offices.
- They are available to support community bookkeepers if they have questions while helping their clients come into compliance.
- They can provide evidence to city council members or CDFIs regarding the types of violations of underresourced small businesses to help better understand the nature of the problem and what type of support is needed for those businesses.
- They might be open to providing bookkeepers with assurances of safe harbor for their clients who undertake good faith efforts to come into compliance.

### The Case You Can Make to Them to Partner

- Because of the mismatch between the source of complaints and underlying rates of violations across the economy, an equitable application of enforcement in a complaint-based system requires outreach to and support for small businesses (plus, it is often politically popular).
- When resources for outreach and enforcement are inadequate, partnerships are an effective way to expand the scope of existing efforts.
- Partnering with CDFIs and networks of bookkeepers to provide information about employment laws and guidance on compliance to their clients can reach populations that are often missed.
- Partnerships with government services like business technical assistance providers can amplify outreach efforts if they integrate outreach about the laws into their policies and procedures in a way that goes beyond the traditionally limited reach of government agency efforts.

## Elected Officials

### Initial Orientation

Like several other constituencies, some elected officials may not have heard their small business constituents asking for support with employment law compliance. However, they will likely have heard about challenges small business owners have had complying with new employment laws and regulations. And most elected officials are looking for opportunities to demonstrate their support of small businesses.

### The Case You Can Make to Them to Partner

- Use all city and state technical assistance program talking points mentioned earlier.
- The program can be a win-win to provide support to small businesses, especially when introducing new good jobs regulations.

### Roles They Can Play

- Include funding for small business outreach and back office technical assistance compliance support in any new job quality initiatives.
  - Request city and state small business technical assistance programs.
  - Facilitate communication and joint planning between agencies and nonprofits to better serve small business owners.
- 

## Business Associations

### Initial Orientation

Most business associations cater to larger businesses that have staff and/or professional support to stay informed and compliant. Business associations often follow a policy approach of fewer regulations and standards. Neighborhood and ethnic business associations and chambers of commerce may have more very small businesses for whom these issues will resonate. They may also have little capacity to engage.

### Roles They Can Play

- Offer educational programs for their members.
- Advocate for funding for small business outreach and back office technical assistance compliance support in any new job quality initiative legislation.
- Some business associations have small grant funds that could help fund this work.

### The Case You Can Make to Them to Partner

- Businesses that play by the rules are undercut by businesses that do not.
- Academic reports show that for many very small businesses, noncompliance is unintentional. It stems from a lack of information and resources.
- All businesses and the community will be better off improving job quality among these small businesses.



## **Small Business, Employment, and Labor Law Attorneys and Legal Aid Associations**

Attorneys who specialize in labor, small business, and/or tribal law may also be good potential partners. They can have a comprehensive knowledge of the law and how it applies to small business owners. They may see this partnership as part of their mission and/or as a way to expand their business. These individuals may be interested in participating in training and support for compliance among small businesses.

## **Tribal Support Systems**

If you are working with small business owners located on or near tribal land, you may also want to explore where tribal supports are available. Tribes' department of revenue offices or the offices that issue small business licenses and collect sales tax may be able to support these initiatives by identifying experts in labor and employment law compliance within their nation and/or connecting businesses and/or bookkeepers interested in participating. These partnerships may also help ensure compliance with Tribal Employment Rights Ordinances — tribal laws designed to ensure Native Americans receive their fair share of employment, training, and contracting opportunities.<sup>23</sup>

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23 "Most Frequently Asked Questions About TEROs," Council for Tribal Employment Rights, <https://cter-tero.org/tero-faq/>.

# Appendix B

## Resources for Training and Supporting Community Bookkeepers

### Materials to Recruit and Engage Community Bookkeepers

The Pilot created a range of materials to engage bookkeepers in a conversation about employment standards and training, including the following:

- [Sample flyer](#)
- [Handout](#)

### Sample Training Materials

The pilot has completed training for small business owners and bookkeepers that range from 60-minute Zoom training to an eight-hour in-person training on employment law in the city of Minneapolis and state of Minnesota. This training has been done in conjunction with city and state labor agency staff. We have worked together to streamline the material so that the most common and overlapping areas of employment laws are the focus of the presentation. Sample training materials include the following:

- [Minneapolis 60-minute slide deck](#)
- [Minnesota day-long training flyer](#)
- [Participant packet](#)
- [Community Bookkeeper Labor Standards Certificate training slides](#)

### Steps for Vetting Bookkeepers to Add as Pilot Bookkeepers

As bookkeepers indicated interest in being considered as core bookkeepers who would be paid to do outreach and provide services to their clients, we conducted several screenings to see if they would be a good fit.

**Look for flags.** Our first step was to ensure the bookkeeper was not flagged on any city, state, or federal lists for fraudulent business practices. We also completed Google searches to read customer feedback.

**Interviews.** We then conducted in-person interviews with possible candidates. Questions were focused on better understanding their clients, services, and accounting basics.

**Training.** All core bookkeepers were required to attend our eight-hour in-person employment standards training.

**Client list.** The final step before formally onboarding clients was to have them produce a list of 10 clients who met the Pilot service requirements.

## Sample Assessment Form Bookkeepers Can Use With Their Clients

We created an intake form to track what issues bookkeeper clients experienced with financial management and employment law compliance. Bookkeepers were reimbursed for submitting completed assessments. A final assessment is also required to document the work attempted and is completed with the client ([sample blank form](#); [sample completed form](#)).

## Software Support: What We Have Done and Learned

In 2023, in preparation for Phase 1 of the Pilot, we conducted research comparing various accounting and payroll software platforms for ease of use, support services, clarity on employment law compliance, and cost. We chose the QuickBooks Online basic package, Gusto payroll software, and Deputy timekeeping software for more complex client needs. Although some of our Phase 1 clients were quick to enroll and adopt the new software, many were reluctant to leave systems they were familiar with and already knew. In Phase 2, we offer a matching fund to allow some clients to upgrade their software — on a platform of their own choice — to meet expansion needs. We also learned that bookkeepers often form partnerships with payroll companies and receive discounts when they direct a block of their clients to a particular payroll company. They become familiar with that service and may urge clients to use that service.

## Materials to Engage Small Business Owners

Our bookkeepers used a variety of messages and outreach strategies to engage their clients in the Pilot service package. Many brought up the Pilot in regular meetings with clients. Others sent emails to clients and/or advertised these services on their websites. These are some of the materials that bookkeepers and the Pilot program have produced:

- [Flyer](#)
- [Outreach Q&A](#)

# Appendix C

## Evaluating Your CDFI's Position: A Tool

### 1. Which of the four engagement levels seem most interesting to you?

- Level 1: Add focused small business technical assistance to CDFI capital access programs
- Level 2: Add on to an existing small business technical assistance program
- Level 3: Build partnerships for employment law training
- Level 4: Build partnerships for technical assistance

### 2. What community needs would this new program meet?

### 3. What would be your vision of a successful program in one year? In five years?

### 4. What existing CDFI programs can be tweaked to begin this effort?

### 5. What city and community partners and funders might be open to helping the effort?

### 6. What might we ask them each to contribute?

### 7. Would other resources be needed for our CDFI to launch this effort?

### 8. Given the costs and benefits, is this a program that:

- is too much of a stretch for us right now?
- we should explore further with an internal team?
- we should explore further with community partners and funders?
- we can begin to build into an existing CDFI program?
- we should look to build into a grant or city policy initiative?
- Other:

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*Learn more about the Shared Success demonstration at [as.pn/sharedsuccess](https://as.pn/sharedsuccess).*

# Learn More

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## ABOUT THE ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITIES PROGRAM

The Aspen Institute Economic Opportunities Program (EOP) advances strategies, policies, and ideas to help low- and moderate-income people thrive in a changing economy. We recognize that race, gender, and place intersect with and intensify the challenge of economic inequality, and we address these dynamics by advancing an inclusive vision of economic justice. For over 25 years, EOP has focused on expanding individuals' opportunities to connect to quality work, start businesses, and build economic stability that provides the freedom to pursue opportunity. Learn more at [aspeninstitute.org/eop](https://aspeninstitute.org/eop).

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## ABOUT THE WORKPLACE JUSTICE LAB

The Workplace Justice Lab (WJL) uses research and partnerships to tackle economic inequality by strengthening innovations in government and grassroots organizations. We conduct research on the enforcement of workers' rights, collaborate with public agencies and worker organizations, and build communities of learning through training, webinars, and direct support. Our work focuses not just on what government should do but also on how to do it — reimagining labor standards enforcement to center the most impacted communities and ensure policies deliver their intended impact. It is a multi-institutional partnership anchored by the [Workplace Justice Lab @ Rutgers University](#) and including the [Workplace Justice Lab @ Northwestern University](#) and the [Pilipino Workers Center of Southern California](#).

## ABOUT NEIGHBORHOOD DEVELOPMENT CENTER

Neighborhood Development Center (NDC) is a nonprofit organization that offers business training, lending, and technical assistance to entrepreneurs in the Twin Cities area. NDC believes in the power, drive, and daring of local entrepreneurs to transform their lives and revitalize their neighborhoods. NDC provides the tools and resources entrepreneurs need to help realize their dreams. For more information, visit [ndc-mn.org](http://ndc-mn.org).

#### ABOUT THE MINNEAPOLIS LABOR STANDARDS ENFORCEMENT DIVISION

The Minneapolis Labor Standards Enforcement Division oversees investigations and compliance with the City's Workplace Regulations ordinances, which currently include sick and safe time, minimum wage, and wage theft ordinances. The city's labor standards affect all employees and employers across the city. The work of the division is performed in support of the city-wide goal of economic inclusion so that all workers and families are supported and can thrive. Learn more at [minneapolismn.gov/government/departments/civil-rights/labor-standards-enforcement](http://minneapolismn.gov/government/departments/civil-rights/labor-standards-enforcement).

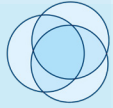
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