

the  
**NEC**  
Northfield  
Enterprise  
Center

510 Washington Street  
Northfield, MN 55057  
507-786-9065

[NorthfieldEnterpriseCenter.com](http://NorthfieldEnterpriseCenter.com)



*3rd Quarter Report &  
Proposal for 2017 & 2018*



## History of the NEC ...

• In 2000 the Northfield EDA began discussing the need for a separate non-profit organization to **help with some of its economic development functions**. The EDA was interested in pursuing an incubator-type facility to attract and nurture businesses in the community. It also saw the need in facilitating partnerships with local colleges, banks and businesses to **help promote local entrepreneurship**.

• The EDA also recognized that city staff and the EDA board members themselves **did not have the time or expertise** to perform these functions.

• In February of **2001**, **three members of the EDA** (Joe Hargis, Tracy Davis and Jane McWilliams) incorporated the NEC

*“ In 2000 .... EDA began discussing .... help with some of its economic development functions.”*

*“ .... help promote local entrepreneurship.”*

*“ .... did not have the time or expertise ...”*

*“ .... 2001, three members of the EDA ...”*

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## Mission:

Strengthen existing and start-up businesses located in, or locating to Northfield, by providing personalized business counseling services and information in a confidential, one-on-one setting.

## Benefits:

- ✓ Entrepreneurs get needed help!
- ✓ Connection to local resources!
- ✓ Expanding tax base!
- ✓ Adding jobs to local community!
- ✓ Lesson burden on EDA and City staff!
- ✓ Lesson burden on local lenders!
- ✓ Community education!
- ✓ Increased quality of life!
- ✓ Connect with local colleges!
- ✓ Attractive for business relocation!
- ✓ Marketing perk for city!
- ✓ Money into local economy!
- ✓ Business center for local use!
- ✓ Helping local business find money!
- ✓ Helping local businesses grow!
- ✓ Helping entrepreneurs think things through before investing too early!
- ✓ Local businesses get more customers!

## Hello!



My name is Chris Whillock and I am the Executive Director of the Northfield Enterprise Center. I began at the NEC in August of 2015 and have been a small business owner for over 20 years.

Chris Whillock  
Executive Director  
NEC

I graduated from Winona State with a degree in advertising and have been involved with many organizations including: (14 years) director of the Carv-fest Woodcarving Festival, (6 years) director of Spike-fest volleyball tournaments (over \$10,000 raised) and other clubs and organizations.

I also was part of the Minnesota Inventor's Congress and participated in the MN Peak Performers and Brain-Co Advertising workshops.

The NEC is a fantastic program! I am proud to say I am part of this valuable asset to the community. Working with entrepreneurs and small business owners at the beginning stages of their journey is such a joy. Thank you for giving me this opportunity!

- Chris

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# Board of Directors



NEC President  
**Roberto Zayas**  
St. Olaf College



NEC Vice-President  
**Donna Rae Scheffert**  
Leadership Tools  
Consulting Co.  
*Former NEC Client*



NEC Sec/Treas  
**Troy Ros**  
Bursch Travel



**Leah Rich**  
Neuger  
Communications Group



**Jim Grieser**  
Astral Technology  
Unlimited, Inc.



**Tami Enfield**  
Brand Yourself  
Consulting  
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**David Jacobsen**  
Hero, Jorstad & Jacobsen  
Law Firm, P.A.

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# EDA - Scope of Services

The Northfield Enterprise Center shall perform the following services as its contractual obligated to the Northfield Economic Development Authority. These services are driven from elements in the **Comprehensive Economic Development Plan**, including:

1. Support small business development.
2. Increase connection with current and former college students.
3. Create entrepreneurial and innovative start-up opportunities.

The NEC shall:

- A. Counsel and Coach
- B. Business Incubator Support
- C. Business Education and Support
- D. Connect to Colleges
- E. Clement F. Shearer Micro-Grant
- F. Revolving Loan Programs of the EDA (separate\*\*\*\*)

\*\*\*\* The administration of the application and review processes of the EDA Revolving Loan Programs is separate from the Scope of Services, and funded on a loan-by-loan basis as identified in prior agreement.



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**A. Counsel and Coach**

- Business planning
- Business growth
- Acquiring/Selling a business
- General problem solving
- Financial options and resources
- Navigating city/other regulatory process
- Connecting to local community resources

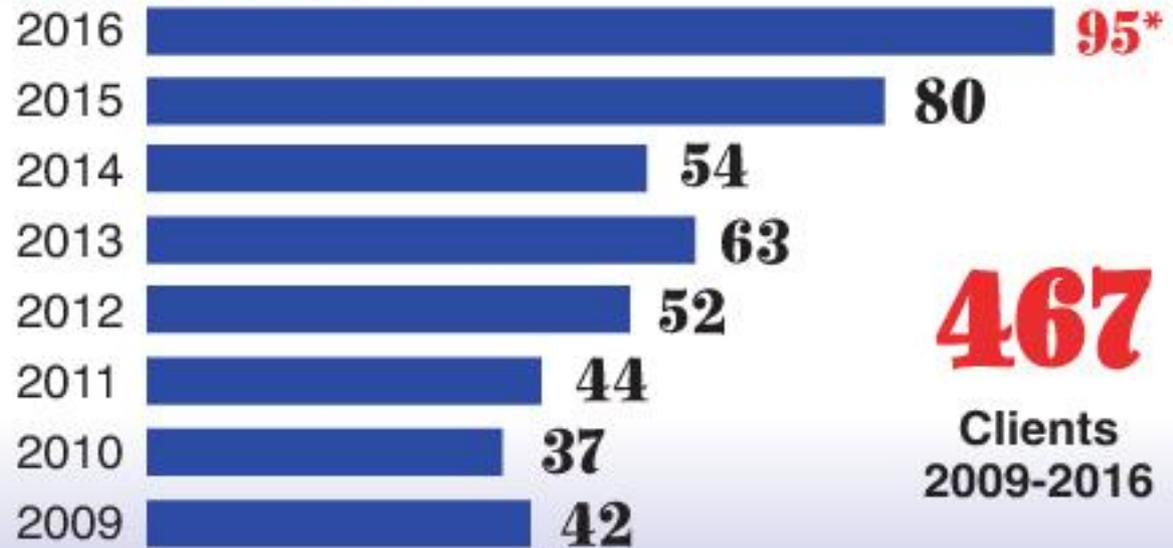
**E. Clement F. Shearer Micro-Grant**

- Marketing the grant program by:
- Web site links
- Distributing to businesses
- Review and recommendation
- Presenting an annual report

**38**

**Clement F. Shearer  
Micro-Grants  
Awarded Since 2001**

**Clients Served**



**Who ...**

- Service - 22%
- Consulting - 19%
- Food/Bev - 16%
- Retail - 13%
- Non-Profit - 6%
- Inventor - 6%
- Hospitality - 5%
- Art/Music - 5%
- Manufacturing - 5%
- Internet/Web - 3%

**What ...**

- New to NEC - 54%
- Repeat Client - 46%
- Outside Downtown - 73%
- Downtown - 27%
- Established - 57%
- Start Up - 43%

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## Marketing - 31%

- ✓ Discuss social media, **facebook**, e-news, mail lists.
- ✓ Local **inventor developed** new product.
- ✓ Discussed upcoming **trade show** booth, design, signs, marketing.
- ✓ Discuss target market, marketing plan, **ideas for increasing sales** and grants.
- ✓ Shared **design ideas for marketing flyer**, went with to local printer.
- ✓ Discussed **Google and SEO**.
- ✓ Fixed **web site issues** for client.
- ✓ Discussed **selling on Amazon**.

## Strategy - 30%

- ✓ Discussed a professional development program **business idea**.
- ✓ Expand **local food service** business.
- ✓ Grant discussion & ideas.

## Planning - 23%

- ✓ **New business idea**, shared business plan packet.
- ✓ Discussion regarding **investing in local start ups**.
- ✓ **New business idea** in art field.
- ✓ **Non-profit education start up**.

## Why ...

Actual examples  
from past  
few months ...

## Purchasing - 9%

- ✓ Talked about **purchasing a supply business** and moving it to the area.

## Other - 5%

- ✓ Provide list of **tax and legal professionals** in area.
- ✓ Helped with **digital transfer** of old files .... helped find **downtown office space**.

## Finance/Grants - 6%

- ✓ Talked inventory, financials and provided **local lender contacts**.
- ✓ Grant proposals discuss (2).



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## Mastermind

### B. Business Incubator Support

- In-depth support
- Regular, on-going support
- General business strategy
- Financial systems
- Goal setting/Milestones

Introduced in Napoleon Hill's book "Think and Grow Rich" ....

*"A mastermind group offers a combination of **brainstorming, education, peer accountability and support in a group setting** to sharpen your business and personal skills. A mastermind group helps you and your group members achieve success."*

- The Success Alliance

## 2016 Participants

*Nutritionist*

*Tool Distributor*

*Therapist*

*Travel Start Up*

*Manufacturer*

*Artist*

*Business Services*

*Technology*

*Consultant*

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### C. Business Education and Support

- Establish business training sessions
- Support business recruitment
- Make resources available



### # of Attendees

**21**

January

### 2016 Lunch & Learns

The WHY of Your Business - S. Carlsen

**16**

February

Facebook for Small Business - H. Sobrack

**10**

March

Digital Marketing - E. Christensen

**9**

April

Don't Hide Behind Your Brand - T. Fossum

**4**

May

Business Plan Basics - C. Whillock

**11**

July

Beyond the Sales Process - C. Tryhus

**10**

August

Memory Tricks - A. Putnam (sub)

**8**

September

Sign Language for Business - J. Duncan

October

Controlling Costs - R. Ross

November

Take Back Your Work Space - K. Buckmeier

December

Learn Faster, Remember Longer - A. Putnam

**A total of 89 Lunch & Learn attendees so far this year!**

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#### D. Connect to Colleges

Work with City, EDA, St. Olaf, and Carleton to provide opportunities to engage students in business development through paid, unpaid, and academic internship and community work study programs

*"The Northfield Enterprise Center (NEC) is vital in promoting upcoming businesses in Rice County. By developing **close relationships with clients**, it is able to provide core business strategies, tuned to each clients needs at minimal cost. Allowing the client to experience growth and change at their personal rate. **Thank you for providing me with this experience.**"*

**- Justice Onyemauchekukw  
Spring 2016 Intern**



- **January 2016 • Intern Simon**

*Updated NEC web site and wrote several articles and blog posts for future use, research*

- **February - May 2016 • Intern Justice**

*Wrote articles, worked on client web site, social media tutor, sat in on several 1-on-1 client meetings, online research, on-location business observation, trade show coaching .. and much more!*

- **January - Present 2016 • College Start Up**

*Currently we are providing space for a local College start up. They use the conference room for company meetings, work sessions, hiring employees and strategy sessions.*



- **First Place**

*Southern Minnesota Initiative Foundation's Seed Fund award*

- **Second Place**

*Carlson School of Management MN Cup*

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"Dear Council Members,

I understand that there is discussion concerning the future of the Northfield Enterprise Center, whether it **stays as an independent resource center or is absorbed by City Hall**. Currently the NEC is in an office downtown, staffed by Chris Whillock who is the part time Director. I've been with the NEC for over three years, the last year with Chris.

Chris is doing a fine job. He is in touch with business owners in the community and service organizations .... The business experience that Chris brings to his responsibilities makes him a credible advisor to new business start-ups or simply to help people with an idea that needs realization.

The job of consultant to new entrepreneurs is not easy. Many people don't come in with a business plan. Some need help with research and data. Others need help with financing, including loans and grants. **It takes patience and time to help new clients to articulate their business goals and to focus on plans and strategies.**

**The Northfield Enterprise Center is a city resource that isn't duplicated by other agencies nor is it likely to be. Some of the attraction of the NEC is its autonomy from City Hall and its obligation to client confidentiality.**

I hope that you will take into consideration the specific benefits of an independent NEC when considering its future."

- Susan Christie  
NEC Volunteer

**" .... takes patience and time to help new clients to articulate their business goals ..."**

**" .... isn't duplicated by other agencies ..."**

**" .... autonomy from City Hall .... client confidentiality."**

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*“ .... great resource ... ”*

*“ .... helped a number of our potential and current loan clients achieve funding.”*

“The Northfield Enterprise Center is a **great resource** for the Southern Minnesota Initiative Foundation in Rice County. Chris Whillock's one on one business assistance has **helped a number of our potential and current loan clients achieve funding**. Additionally, the monthly Lunch & Learn workshops provide valuable insight to small business owners and entrepreneurs on a variety of important subjects. **SMIF is proud to be able to partner with NEC.**”

- **John A. Katz, Business Development**  
Southern Minnesota Initiative Foundation

*“ .... SMIF is proud to be able to partner with NEC.”*

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"The NEC was recommended to me by another local business owner. My **1-on-1 session exceeded expectations**. Not only was Chris an excellent listener, he cited experience and suggested several marketing points that could be effected immediately. I **felt direction and encouragement**. Thank you."

- Barbara Krause

**"My 1-on-1 session exceeded expectations."**

**"I felt direction and encouragement."**

**"... audience of new faces."**

**"... gained new, local clients ..."**

**"... great way for me to build credibility ..."**

"When I spoke at your NEC Lunch & Learn this past year, I expected that the majority of the attendees would be people I already knew. I was delighted to find an **audience of new faces**. Since that time, I've both **gained new, local clients**, and developed relationships with an array of business owners across Northfield. My speaking at the NEC was a **great way for me to build credibility** within the Northfield business community. Thank you for the opportunity."

- Sarah Carlsen, CPCC  
Leadership & Change Coach

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"I still thank the friend who suggested checking out NEC when I was in the planning phase of starting my business. **NEC has been a part of my journey since the beginning two years ago.** I shudder at the thought of how things may have gone if I hadn't walked in those doors. The Director of NEC met with me 2-3 times a month and **kept me on track.** NEC connected me to SMIF which is where I received the funding for starting my business.

Starting a business was at times very overwhelming and isolating. **Without the support of NEC I may have given up.** NEC was then and still is now, providing me with positive support, creative ideas, resources, and a great environment to work in. I very much appreciate the support of NEC. I consider NEC one of the **top resources for running my business** and will continue to be a member through all stages of growth."

- Current NEC Client  
August 2016

*" NEC has been part of my journey since the beginning two years ago."*

*" .... kept me on track."*

*" Without the support of NEC I may have given up."*

*" .... top resources for running my business ...."*

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*“ .... grown my business  
year after year ... ”*

*“ .... find and hire  
2 St. Olaf  
graduates.”*

*“ .... other  
communities  
don't have.”*

*“ .... essential to  
the growth of this  
community ... ”*

“The confidential services of the NEC were invaluable to starting my business. I was given the tools along with direction and design a plan that worked with my lifestyle.

Since working with the NEC I have **grown my business year after year** and through the internship program (Hired Hands) I was able to **find and hire two St. Olaf graduates.**

Having this resource available to businesses, and the talented directors they hire, brings a level of sophistication to Northfield that **other communities don't have.**

Since receiving assistance through this organization I have contributed both financially and by volunteering at the NEC. The NEC is **essential to the growth of this community** and I am lucky to be a part of it.”

- Former NEC Client

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*“ ... linked me to valuable people who helped me ...”*

*“ ... I have clients throughout the area, state, region and nation”*

*“ ... provided pro bono services for three Northfield non-profits ...”*

*“ My annual giving to local non-profits is five figures.”*

“Embarking on a management consulting business after leaving the academic world was like being in kindergarten again. I had great enthusiasm, yet had to learn about business from the beginning. NEC worked with me shaping a business plan, developing a marketing strategy and materials, and connecting me with other business owners for ideas and inspiration. In addition, through educational sessions NEC **linked me to valuable people who help me** continue to grow and learn.

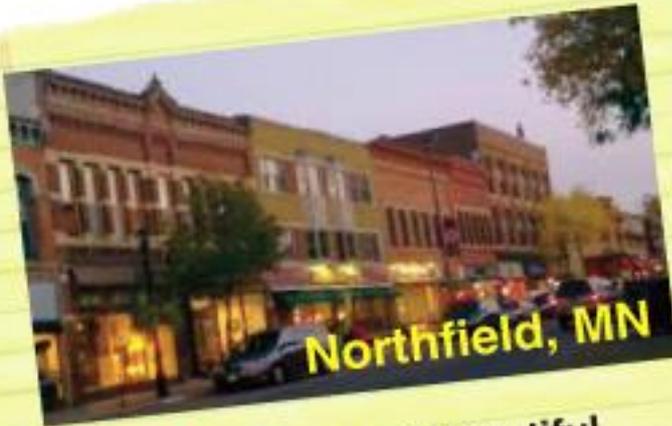
Now, six years later **I have clients throughout the area, state, region and nation.** I have mentored a new business owner, **provided pro bono services for three Northfield non-profits**, and provided contracts to several free lancers from Northfield. I pay for my graphic design, printing and other services as well as buy my supplies locally. **My annual giving to local non-profits is five figures.** When I needed a hand up, NEC was recommended to me and I couldn't be more grateful.”

- Former NEC Client  
August 2016

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## Just the Facts ...



✓ **Top 50 Most Beautiful Small Towns in America**  
CountryLiving - 2015

✓ **Top 20 Best Places To Retire**  
MONEY Magazine - 2015

✓ **2nd Best Small Town in the US**  
Livability.com - 2014

✓ **Best Place for a Well-Rounded Retirement**  
MONEY Magazine - 2014

✓ **Top 20 Safest Cities in Minnesota**  
Safe Choice Security - 2014

• “Return on investment .... \$1 public investment in incubator = \$30 in tax revenue.”  
- National Business Incubation Association

• “87% of incubator businesses stay in business and 84% stay in their communities.”  
- National Business Incubation Association

• “Business incubators can help reduce costs of launching and operating a startup by 40-50%.”  
- Center for Entrepreneurial Innovation

“Neighborhoods served by a successful independent business district gained, on average, 50% more in home values .....”  
- Independent We Stand

“For every sq. foot a local firm occupies, the local economy gains \$179 vs. \$105 for a chain store.”  
- Independent We Stand

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## Summary

**#1** - The NEC was established in 2001 by members of the EDA to perform functions that required more time and expertise.

**#2** - The NEC has been a valuable asset to the city of Northfield for 16 years: start up resources, valuable information, support, educational programs, referral services, networking activities, connections with the local colleges and non-profits, helping local lenders, aiding with loans and grants, strengthening local businesses.

**#3** - Investing in incubators and business development programs has a HUGE impact on the strength of a local community. Northfield has done very well over the past 16 years ...

Let's  
**Keep a Good Thing Going!**

The NEC is proposing a 2-year contract for 2017 & 2018 for \$60,000 each year:

## 2017 NEC Proposal:

<u>expense</u>	<u>monthly</u>	<u>yearly</u>	<u>2016*</u>
• Wages	\$2,667	<b>\$32,000</b>	\$25,272
• Rent	\$650	<b>\$7,800</b>	\$8,350
• Tax	\$500	<b>\$6,000</b>	\$5,820
• Intern	\$325	<b>\$3,900</b>	\$141
• Copier	\$225	<b>\$2,700</b>	\$2,766
• Accountant	\$192	<b>\$2,300</b>	\$1,825
• Insurance	\$158	<b>\$1,900</b>	\$1,632
• Phone/Internet	\$108	<b>\$1,300</b>	\$1,225
• Web Site	\$25	<b>\$300</b>	\$79
• Marketing	\$30	<b>\$360</b>	\$327
• Professional	\$25	<b>\$300</b>	\$1,150
• Events	\$20	<b>\$240</b>	\$827
• Office	\$20	<b>\$240</b>	\$336
• USPS	\$15	<b>\$180</b>	\$133
• Misc.	\$40	<b>\$480</b>	\$201
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<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$5,000</b>	<b>\$60,000</b>	\$50,084

\* as of 10/13/16

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