

IL SBDC AT WIU QC



3RD QUARTER **REPORT** 2024



<https://wiusbdc.org/>



INTRODUCTION

This quarterly report highlights the efforts and achievements of the Illinois Small Business Development Center at Western Illinois University, Quad Cities campus (IL SBDC at WIU QC), in fostering growth and empowerment within minority communities. Over the past quarter, our team has actively supported minority entrepreneurs and small business owners through certified, confidential guidance and skill-building workshops designed to enhance economic vitality and sustain business growth.

The IL SBDC at WIU QC has been instrumental in providing customized support that aligns with the specific challenges and goals of minority-owned businesses. By offering targeted training sessions, one-on-one advising, and collaborative events, we have helped pave new pathways for business development and contributed to a thriving local economy.

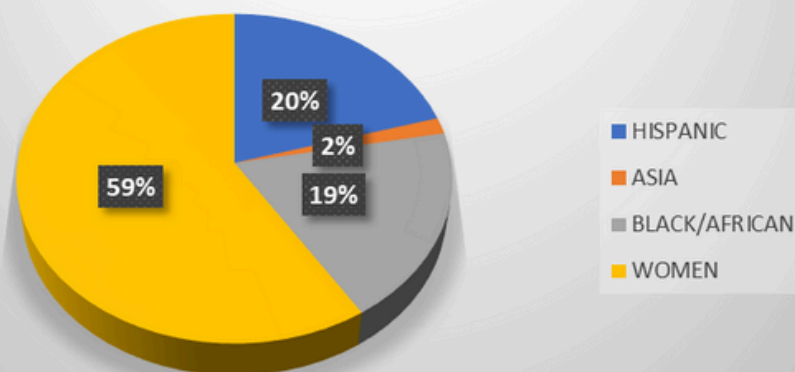
Our commitment remains firm in widening access and strengthening resources to help every entrepreneur succeed. We extend our sincere gratitude to our community partners and supporters whose collaboration has been essential to this mission, and we look forward to continuing to make an impact.

OUR METRICS

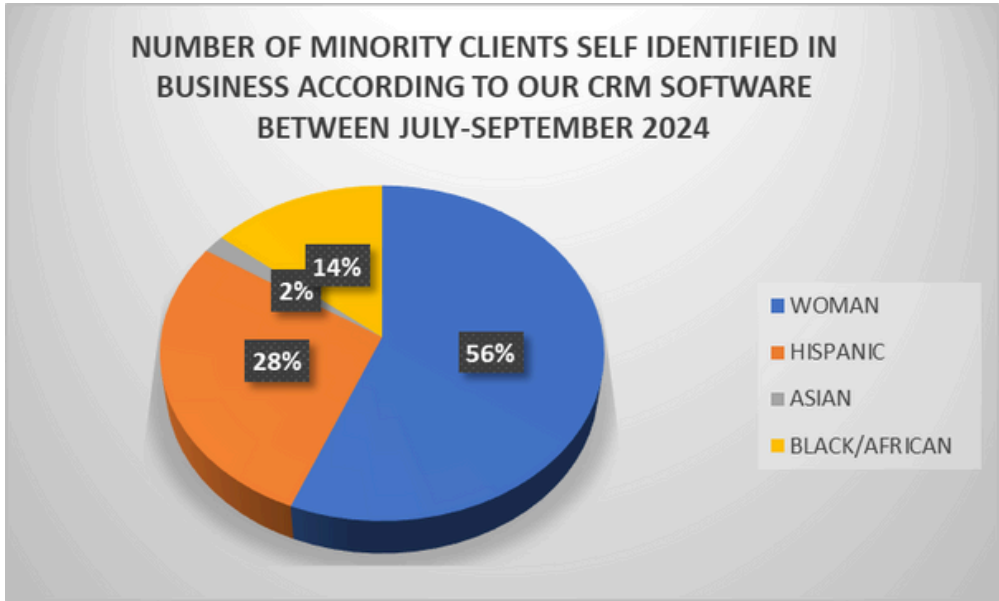
NUMBER OF MINORITY CLIENTS SELF-IDENTIFIED ACCORDING TO OUR CRM SOFTWARE RECEIVING ONE ON ONE CONFIDENTIAL SERVICES BETWEEN JULY-SEPTEMBER 2024

MINORITY CLIENTS	NUMBER	
HISPANIC	26	
ASIA	2	
BLACK/AFRICAN	24	
WOMEN	75	
TOTAL	127	Note: Consider that women are a minority group and that they are also belong other minority groups self-identified (Hispanic, Asian, Black/African American etc.)

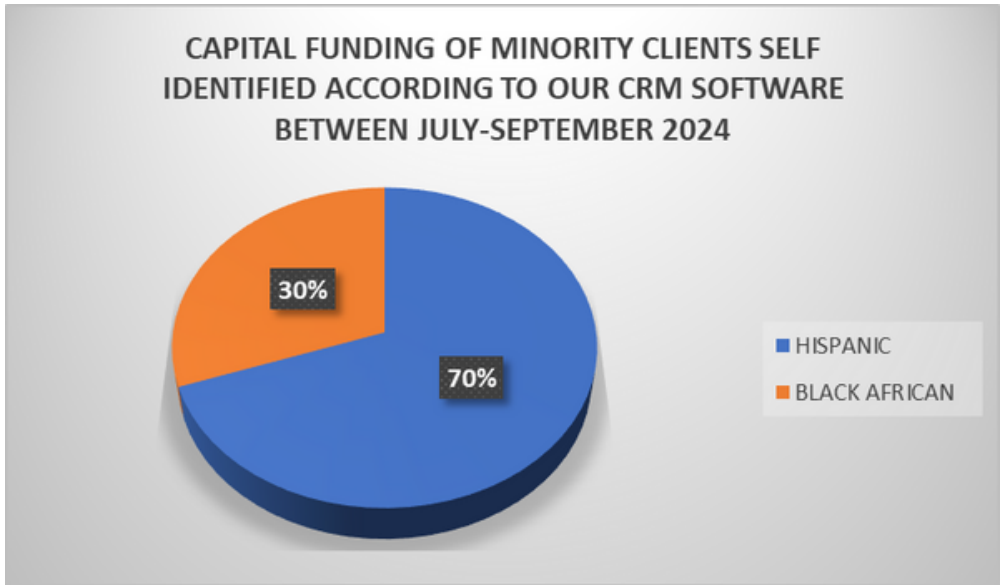
NUMBER OF MINORITY CLIENTS SELF-IDENTIFIED ACCORDING TO OUR CRM SOFTWARE RECEIVING ONE ON ONE CONFIDENTIAL SERVICES BETWEEN JULY-SEPTEMBER 2024



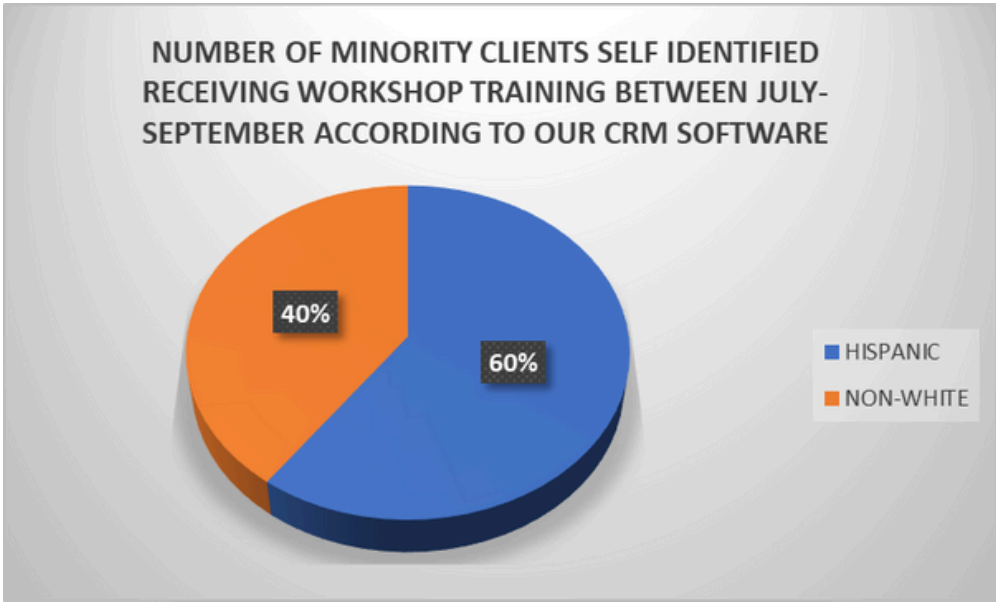
NUMBER OF MINORITY CLIENTS SELF IDENTIFIED IN BUSINESS ACCORDING TO OUR CRM SOFTWARE BETWEEN JULY-SEPTEMBER 2024		
MINORITY CLIENTS	NUMBER	
WOMAN	32	
HISPANIC	16	
ASIAN	1	
BLACK/AFRICAN	8	
TOTAL	57	Note: Consider that women are a minority group and that they are also belong other minority groups self-identified (Hispanic, Asian, Black/African American etc.)



CAPITAL FUNDING OF MINORITY CLIENTS SELF IDENTIFIED ACCORDING TO OUR CRM SOFTWARE BETWEEN JULY-SEPTEMBER 2024		
MINORITY CLIENTS	AMOUNT APROVED	
HISPANIC	\$158,000.00	
BLACK AFRICAN	\$69,000.00	
TOTAL	\$227,000.00	Note: Consider that women are a minority group and that they are also belong other minority groups self-identified (Hispanic, Asian, Black/African American etc.)



NUMBER OF MINORITY CLIENTS SELF IDENTIFIED RECEIVING WORKSHOP TRAINING BETWEEN JULY-SEPTEMBER ACCORDING TO OUR CRM SOFTWARE		
MINORITY CLIENTS	NUMBER	
HISPANIC	6	
NON-WHITE	4	
TOTAL	10	



THE SUCCESS STORY

ATLD MURALS

Atlanta Dawn, born and raised in the Quad Cities, always knew art was her calling. From her early days in kindergarten, where her natural talent became evident, she carried that love for art through middle and high school. She pursued formal training at the Milwaukee Institute of Art and Design and completed a summer program at the Kansas City Art Institute. However, the



message she kept hearing from those around her—that making a living through art wasn't feasible—began to take hold. Succumbing to that doubt, Atlanta left art school behind and enrolled in massage therapy school, while also setting out on an adventurous journey across the Pacific Northwest.

After returning home, Atlanta found herself waitressing and bartending, but art never left her heart. Her love for it quietly resurfaced as she began doing chalkboard art at the businesses where she worked. Business owners took notice, asking her to create more pieces for them. What started as a side hobby, done for very little pay to build her portfolio, gradually evolved into something much more significant. Without fully realizing it, Atlanta was paving the path to her future as a professional artist. The relationships she formed with local business owners became the backbone of her business, and her consistent dedication and hard work began to pay off.



Now in her fifth year as a full-time artist, Atlanta's business, ATLD Murals, has become a prominent fixture in the Quad Cities community. She began with window paintings for storefronts, changing displays every few months to maintain steady work throughout the year. This marked her first real taste of art as a viable business. As she expanded her connections and continued to build a reputation for her work, she took on increasingly larger projects, including dog portraits and other custom jobs around town. By the time the COVID-19 pandemic hit, she was already on the cusp of making art her full-time career, having decided to leave her bartending job to focus solely on her growing business.

Looking back, the decision to go all-in on art was a leap of faith, but it was one Atlanta knew she had to take. "I committed. I was like, I'm either going to go all in or fail," she says, reflecting on the pivotal moment she chose to make art her career. What she enjoys most about running her own business is the flexibility it provides, especially as a mother of two young children. While she works more hours than she would in a traditional job, the ability to arrange her schedule around her family's needs gives her a sense of freedom she deeply values. Plus, the sky's the limit when it comes to her income—how much she earns is entirely up to her, depending on how many jobs she chooses to take on.

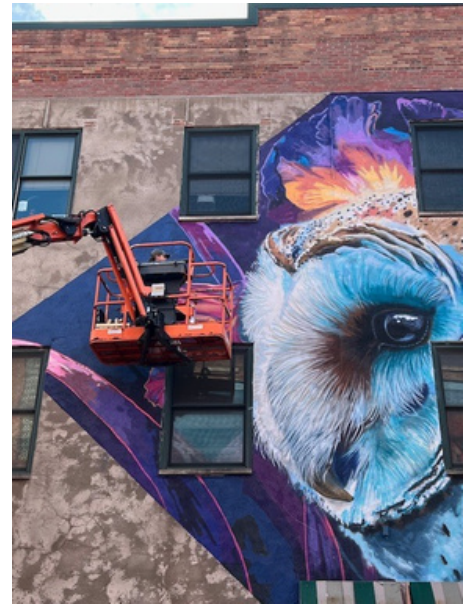
For Atlanta, ATLD Murals isn't just about creating beautiful artwork; it's about serving her community and enriching the environment around her. She loves being able to see the direct impact her murals have on revitalizing buildings and fostering a sense of engagement. Moving forward, she's excited to continue growing her skills and expanding her horizons. While her heart is rooted in the Midwest, she dreams of traveling to other cities to paint murals, broadening her creative scope and gaining new inspiration. In the meantime, she's also preparing to move into her new art studio at the Rust Belt. The space, which is being remodeled, will offer her a place to focus on creating smaller pieces for sale, such as mini murals and sign paintings, alongside working on her own body of work.

Atlanta's connection to the Small Business Development Center (SBDC) at Western Illinois University began in 2021, about a year into her full-time art career. She reached out to Ann Friederichs, Director of the Small Business Development Center at Western Illinois University, looking for guidance on how to better manage her growing business. "I went to her with questions about taxes and advice on how she thought my business was doing," she recalls. The relationship blossomed from there, with Ann offering support on everything from employee management to potential partnerships. Atlanta credits Ann with helping her navigate important steps like finding an accountant and securing insurance, crucial components that have helped her business thrive. "She's been so helpful and very nice, even when I haven't always responded quickly," Atlanta admits with a laugh.

As she reflects on her journey, Atlanta offers words of wisdom for those considering starting their own business: "Go all in and be consistent. Build relationships and connections with people. The best way to do that is by continually producing good work, having a good attitude, and being awesome." It's advice she's lived by herself, turning what began as humble chalkboard art into a thriving career that not only supports her family but also enriches her community. ATLD Murals stands as a testament to the power of passion, persistence, and the value of relationships.



Visit Atlanta's
website to learn
more!



SUMMARY OF THE QUARTER

This quarter's accomplishments underscore the Illinois Small Business Development Center at Western Illinois University, Quad Cities (IL SBDC at WIU QC), as a powerful catalyst for community development and economic resilience. The success story featured in this report is a testament to our dedication and meaningful impact in empowering entrepreneurs to build sustainable, thriving businesses that contribute to the vibrancy of our community.

We extend our heartfelt appreciation to our partners, especially the Quad Cities Chamber of Commerce, for their unwavering support and collaboration, which has been essential in broadening our reach and enhancing the quality of our services. We are equally grateful to the entrepreneurs whose hard work and determination fuel the progress of our region's economy.

To those considering their own entrepreneurial journey or seeking guidance to grow an existing business, we welcome you to explore the IL SBDC at WIU QC and benefit from our resources, expertise, and commitment to your success. Together, we are building a stronger, more prosperous community.



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