



MN 
PROMISE ACT

A Promising Journey

**City of St. Paul HRA Presentation
November 19, 2025**



Round One *The Big Picture*



Total Awarded
\$9.58 Million



Grantees
652 Businesses



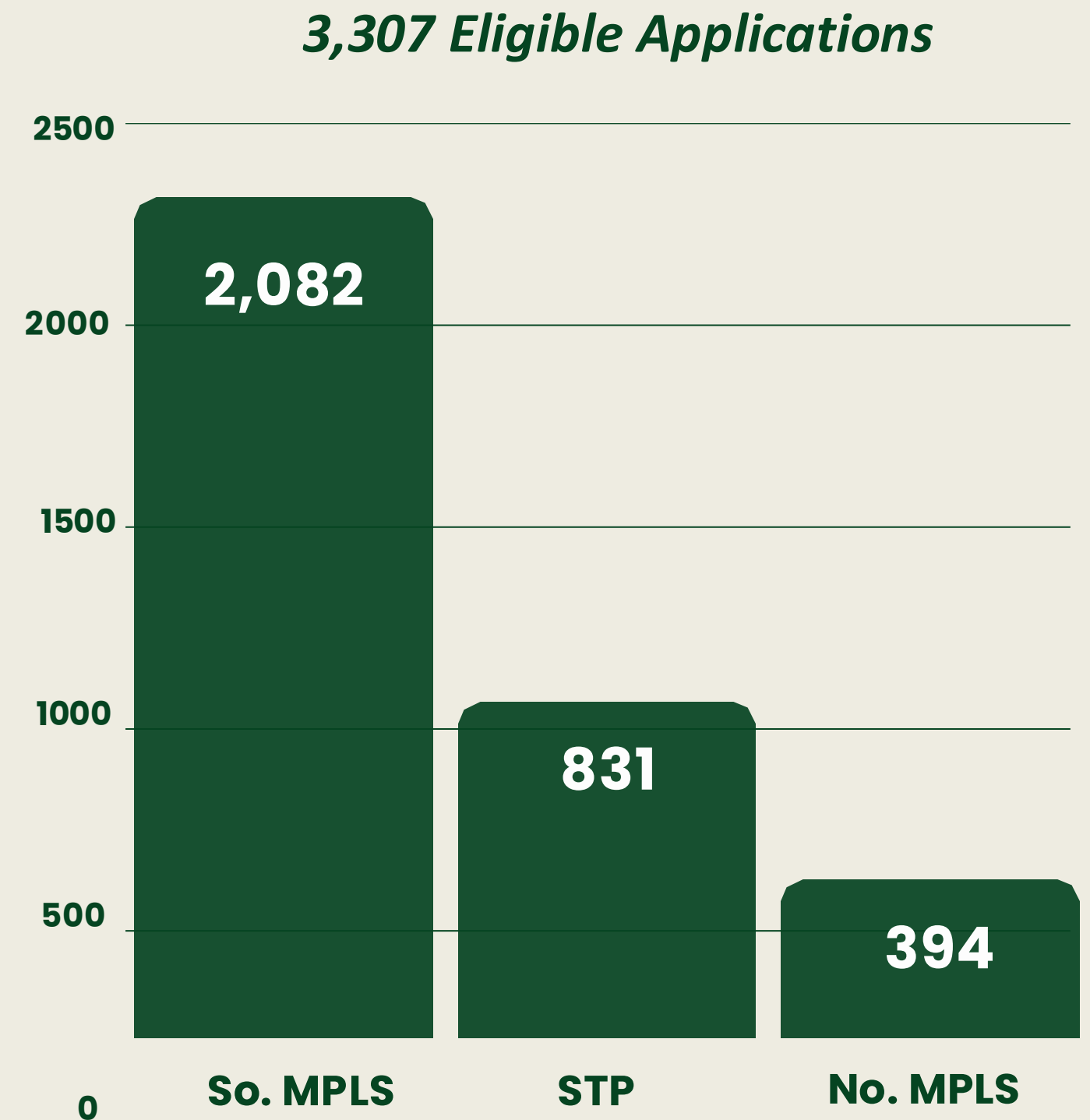
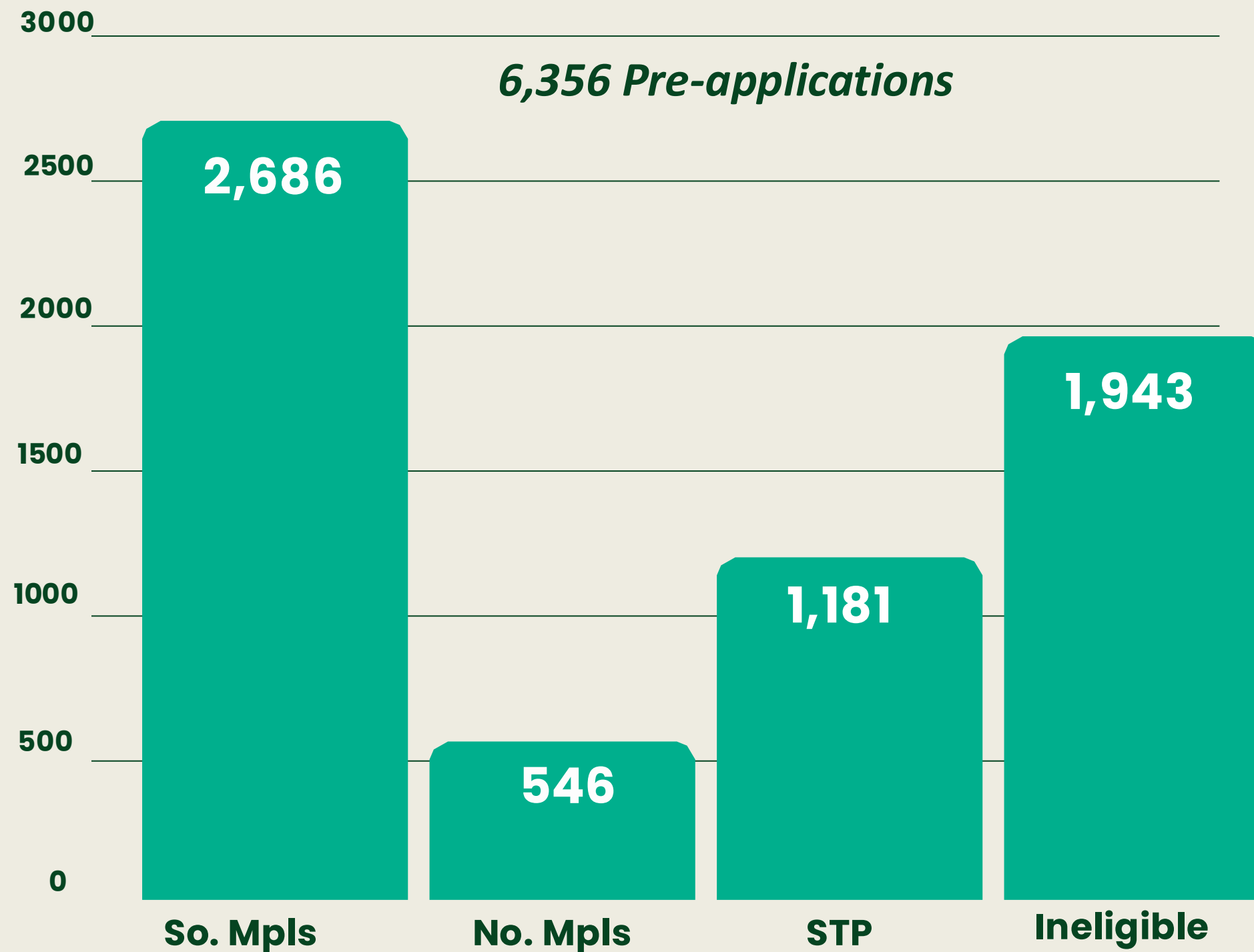
Average Grant Size
\$14.6K



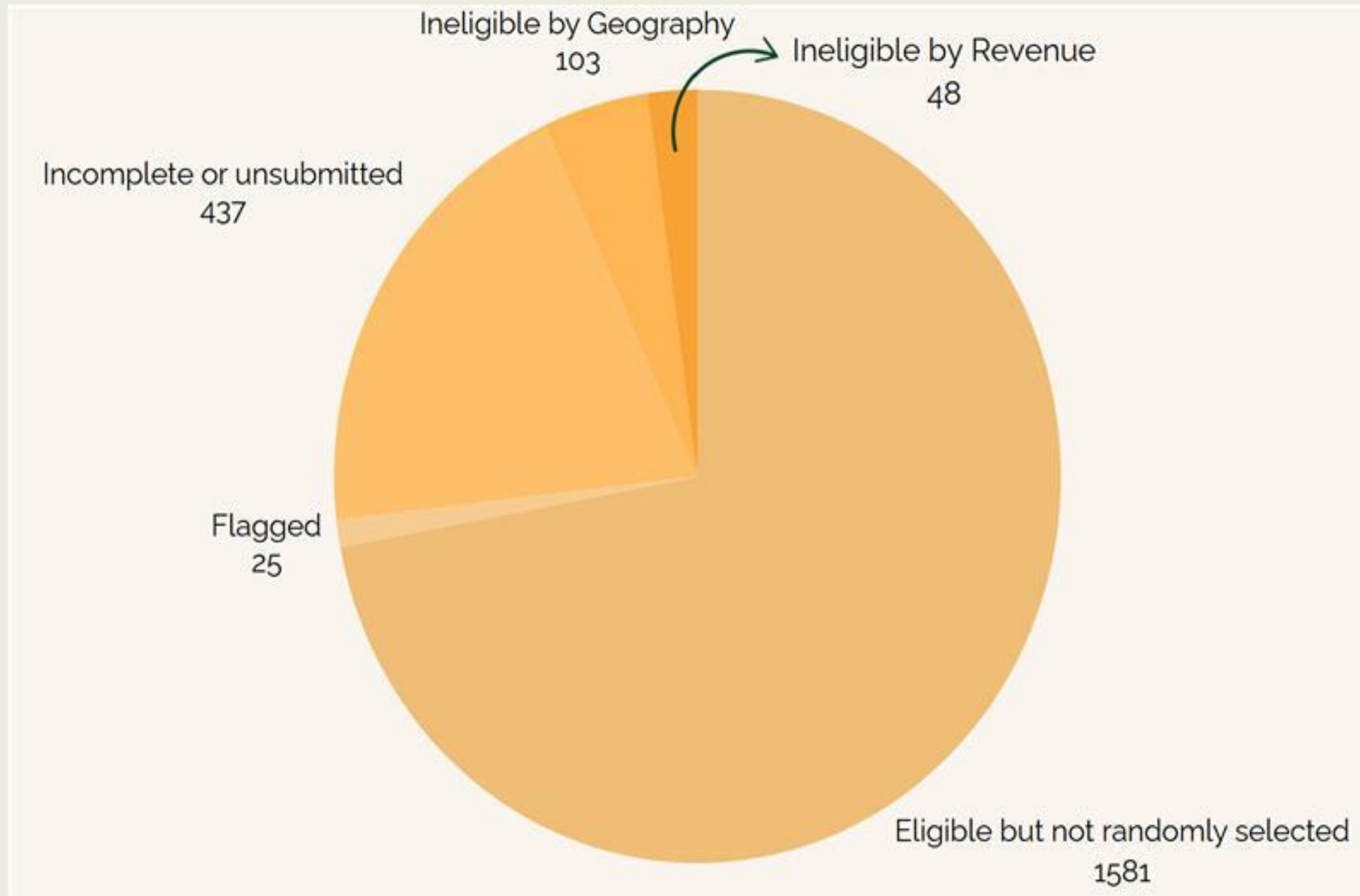
BIPOC Businesses
83%

As the Journey Began

Round One total pre-applications received: **6,356**



Ineligible in all geographies





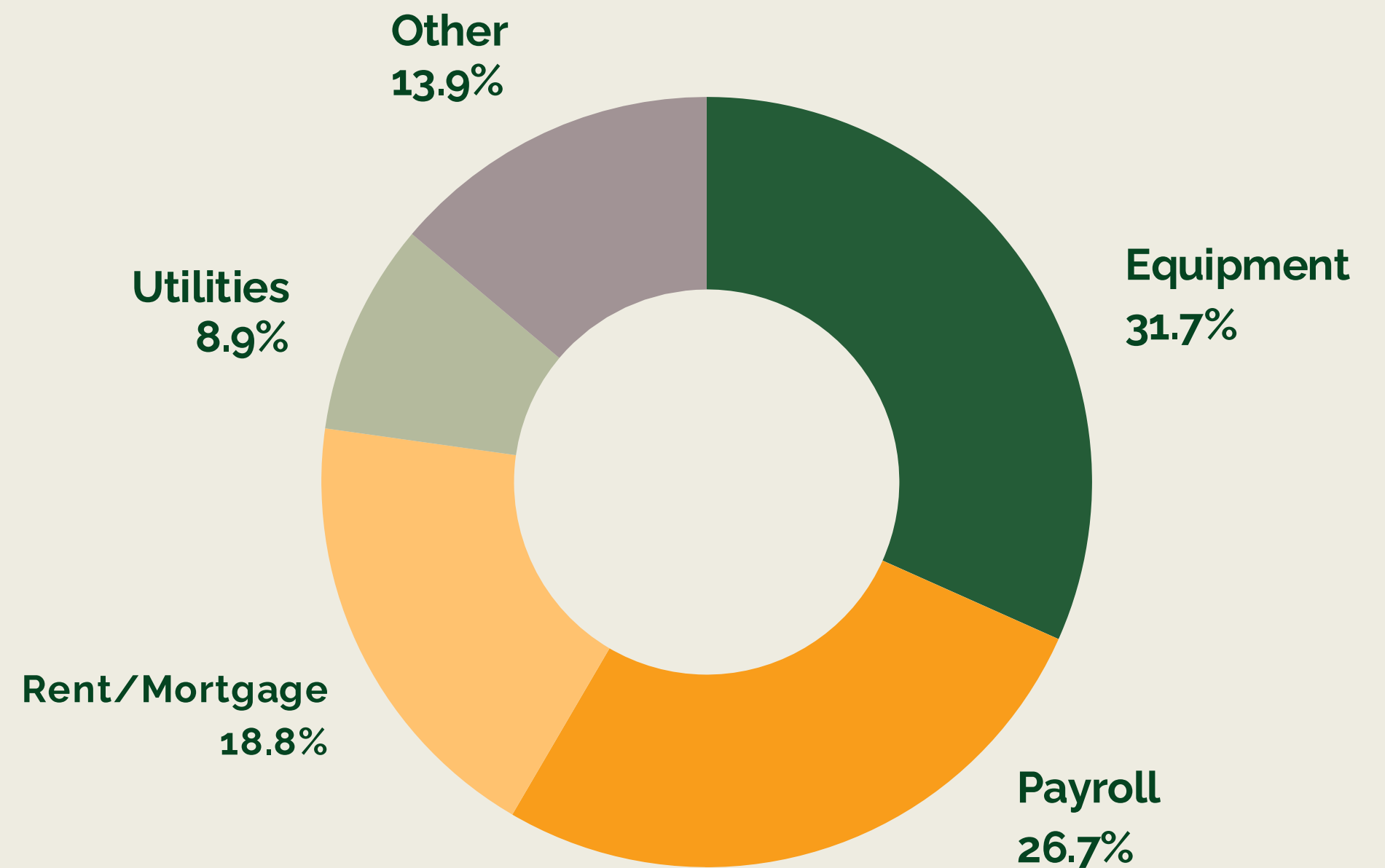
Round One

Impact in Saint Paul

- \$3.34 million distributed
- 198 grants awarded
- \$16.8K average grant size
- 91% BIPOC entrepreneurs



Grant Dollars Distributed and Uses



198 St. Paul Grantees and COUNTING!



Udo's Grocery
\$15,200



Homi Restaurant
\$47,300



Asian Flame Catering
\$17,500



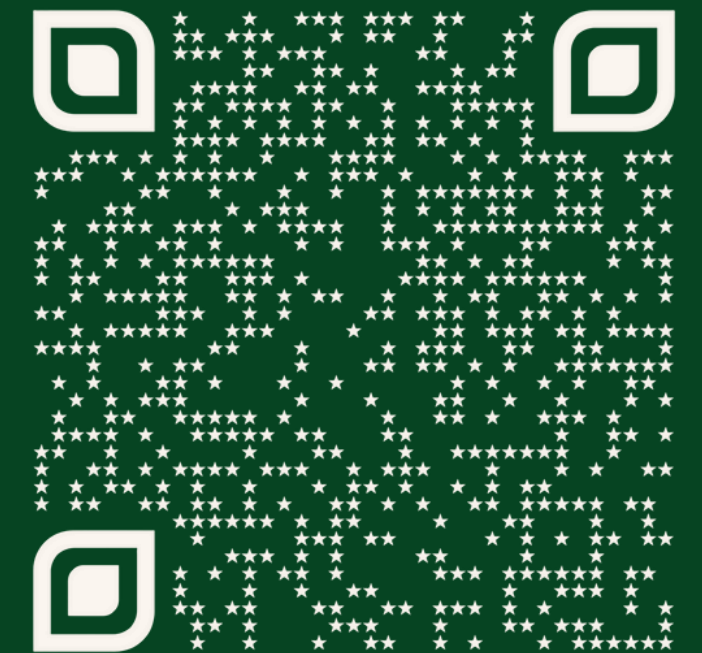
Get Gorgeous Salon
\$11,200



Taiko Arts
\$37,400



Tu Dance
\$42,500



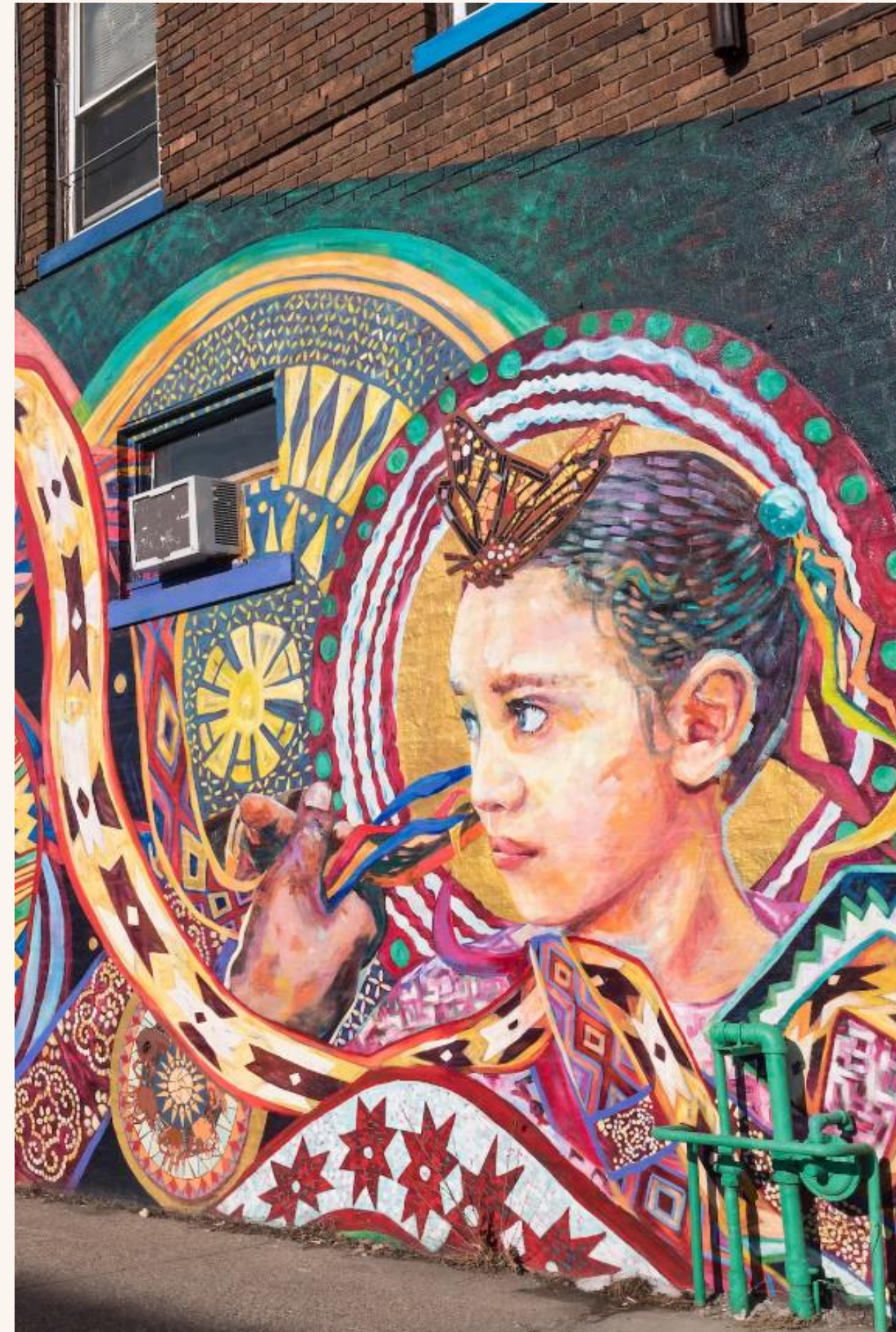
scan for more stories

MN 
PROMISE ACT

Round One Community Partners

We took a community-centered approach to delivering this program by partnering with more than a dozen organizations rooted in key PROMISE Act neighborhoods and representing diverse cultural communities. This ensured we reached the business owners the initiative was designed to support. Our Community Partners played a vital role by promoting the program, hosting events, reviewing applications, and providing technical assistance.

- African Economic Development Solutions, AEDS
- East Side Area Business Association, ESABA
- East Side Neighborhood Development Co, ESNDC
- Hmong American Partnership, HAP
- Latino Economic Development Center, LEDC
- MN Hmong Chamber of Commerce





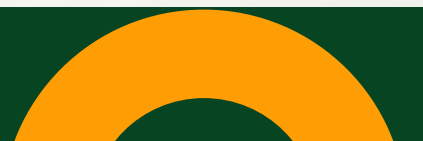
Round 1 Outreach Support

Prepare for Promise Info Sessions

Over 50 sessions held **1-2 times per week** virtually or in community which began in June 2024 and went through September 2024.

Application Labs

To meet the needs of applicants, we began offering 1:1 technical support through Application Labs near the end of Round. We held **17 total**, which became blueprint for increased support in Round 2.



Round 1: Key Findings

The first round of the PROMISE Act Grant Program generated tremendous interest, highlighting the need for equitable funding and the resilience of local entrepreneurs. Developing a program of this scale, something never done before, brought unique challenges and valuable lessons along the way.

Technical and Digital Divide

- 80% of applicants needed substantial support
- Many applicants lacked digital skills to navigate the portal

Communication

- Applicants struggled with email updates & tracking status

Taxes & Financial Literacy

Applicants had incomplete tax documents and struggled with required documentation



Next destination, Round Two



Stringent fraud mitigation and documentation will continue to be a crucial part of the grant review process to ensure proper stewardship of State funds.



Round Two

Turning Insights into Action

Based on what we learned from Round One, we made several strategic adjustments to improve the experience for applicants and ensure smoother program delivery in Round Two.

- **Expanded in-person assistance:** increased team capacity and four weekly help sessions
- **Enhanced support:** text reminders, phone calls, real-time status page
- **Improved resources:** comprehensive materials, searchable help center, self-screening tools
- **Applicant support system:** ticketing platform for timely responses to questions
- **Data & Storytelling:** see website



Round Two St. Paul Community Partners

- African Economic Development Solutions, AEDS
- Latino Communities United in Service, CLUES
- East Side Neighborhood Development Co, ESNDC
- Hmong American Partnership, HAP
- Latino Economic Development Center, LEDC
- Rondo Community Land Trust, RCLT
- WomenVenture



Round Two

By the Numbers

Round 2 is off to a steady start. While application numbers are coming in at a slower pace compared to Round 1, we're seeing a positive shift: applicants are more informed, better prepared, and actively engaged with the resources provided. This indicates that our expanded support systems and outreach efforts are helping applicants navigate the process with confidence. We have received a total of **1,803** Stage 1 Applications. Of those, **764 are eligible** and **1,039 are not eligible**.

In St. Paul:



Ineligible Applicants

By Ineligibility Reason

- Outside Geography Recipients **13**
- Did Not Take Home-Based Business Tax Deduction **80**
- Less Than 50% Employees in Minnesota **4**
- Missing 2024 Taxes and Extension **20**
- Nonprofit, Missing Form 990 Form **2**
- Nonprofit, Not Meeting Definition **6**
- Operation Requirement **10**
- Address is a P.O. Box **21**
- Previously Received R1 Grant **14**
- Exceeds Revenue Threshold **38**



Ineligible to Apply Self Screening Results

- Previously Received a PA Grant **103**
- Not Registered With the Secretary of State **107**
- Outside Geography **289**
- Used a P.O. Box or Virtual Mailbox **218**
- Less Than 50% of Employees Based in MN **8**
- Did Not Take the Home-Based Business Tax Deduction **160**
- Did Not Meet the Nonprofit Definition **49**
- Nonprofits That Could Not Upload Form 990 10
- **Did Not File 2024 Taxes** 247
- Not Continuing Operations for 12 Months **4**
- Revenue Exceeded \$750,000 Threshold **128**





Connect With Our Team

Our team is ready to assist applicants every step of the way. We've expanded in-person support with multiple weekly help sessions and increased team capacity to ensure personalized guidance. In addition, our applicant support ticketing system provides timely responses to questions, making it easier for businesses to get the help they need quickly and efficiently. Applicants can reach out for help in the following ways:



In-person
application labs



On-line
support form



Phone
(651) 379-8102

We encourage all applicants to use our centralized support system rather than contacting individual team members. This approach ensures an **equitable experience** for every applicant, regardless of personal or community connections, and guarantees that **all interactions are tracked** in our CRM to prevent anything from being missed.



Our Ask of You... Encourage Constituents to apply!!!



Goal to distribute \$50 million

MN PROMISE ACT



Questions