

**Hub Direct Grant
Round 2 Awardees (February, 2025)**

\$5,000 Awardees

Jamie Way of Wayfinder GIS- Norton Shores

Focused on the preservation and modernization of historical cemetery records and location information, Wayfinder GIS provides a much-needed preservation and technical service in mapping and preserving cemetery data and geographic layout. Grant funds will be used to purchase equipment, update software, and purchase additional services to support development.

Aziza Adams of Aziza'Eshe- Muskegon

Regarded highly for her beautiful results and professional products, Aziza is a licensed cosmetologist and local entrepreneur serious about contributing positively to people's lives and the planet. Her all-natural, organic fragrance line has recently launched and offers personalized consultations to tailor scents to individual preferences. Elevating her skills to merge nature's finest ingredients with artistry, the grant will expand the production of her all-natural, eco-friendly fragrances.

Alyssa Merten of Claybanks Pottery- New Era

A beautiful pottery studio established in 1980 along Lake Michigan's shoreline, creating high-fire stoneware pottery. The natural beauty of West Michigan inspires every handmade pottery piece and offers a variety of pieces from home décor, kitchen, and table pieces to yard and garden. A new electric kiln will be purchased with grant funds to meet growing production needs.

Adam Bizar of Cradle Me- Grand Rapids

A start-up company focused on making us all more comfortable by addressing critical issues in the cushion industry, such as compressed layers, hot spots, and uneven pressure distribution. Cradle Me has created an inexpensive, novel, self-lubricating polymer composite powder to coincide with their cushion/ enclosure system. Funds will be used for IP protection and purchasing raw materials and mixing equipment.

Tay McBride of Store in a Box- Muskegon

Envisions a future where convenience and affordability are standard parts of urban living. To create and support inclusivity, Store in a Box aims to bridge the gap for individuals facing barriers like transportation by fostering a more connected, supported, and thriving community. This will revolutionize the way families access household essentials. Grant funds will be used to purchase needed equipment.

Alec Magaluk of Heritage Hill- Spring Lake

Heritage Hill completed over \$200,000 in renovation and capital projects in 2024, providing our communities with superior, affordable housing options. With their grant award, funding will be used to purchase a mobile workshop to streamline routine renovation tasks and repairs, ensuring residents continue to have access to safe and beautiful homes.

Stephanie Briggs of [The Firey Collection](#)- Norton Shores

Offers custom and unique handmade items to capture and celebrate life's milestones. Grant funds will support the business's growth by purchasing inventory and investing in new software.

\$10,000 Awardees

Brian Woods of [Big Skinny's](#)- Hesperia

This Newaygo County-based business started in a home kitchen over twenty years ago and now operates in a 2000-square-foot space. The company not only provides its famously flavored pretzels in a myriad of locations but is also incredibly active in its community. Big Skinny's provides its product to support local school teams and clubs with successful fundraisers to support youth participation without the added cost to families. They will be using grant funds to improve their infrastructure with new machinery.

Parker Aerts of [Infinity Staffing Professionals](#)- Muskegon

A West Michigan leader in providing innovative workforce solutions for the region's industries and businesses looking to meet the challenges of a constantly evolving economic landscape. Infinity works to unite businesses, provide opportunities to marginalized communities to bridge discrimination gaps and help partners create a more diverse workforce. Grant funds will be used to purchase new and innovative recruiting software and obtain additional industry certifications.

Candace Casados of [Kavana Bees](#)- Scottville

Located in Mason County, Kavana Bees supports local agriculture and promotes environmental stewardship through expert pollination services and quality bee products. The grant will be used to offer additional services to support proper transport requirements to get honeybee colonies to smaller farm operations for crop pollination, improving the service to small-scale farms and orchards in the local community.