
Michigan SBDC™

I'm J.D. Collins, Executive Director of the Michigan SBDC. The Michigan team consists of ~100 core consultants and specialty teams that address technology commercialization, cyber security, growth strategies, exporting, market research, and mobility.

I'm here today to discuss how Michigan established a robust relationship with our State and Regional SBA offices and demonstrate how that relationship resulted in better outcomes for Michigan's small businesses.

So what's the advantage of a tightly aligned small business partner network? That advantage became evident during the early days of the pandemic. To take you back, each day in March of 2020 a tsunami of information cascaded into the small business world, often leaving more questions than answers. That's when the Michigan SBDC invited the SBA Resource Partners into a daily huddle to distill information and distribute it to small businesses in terms easily understood. We coupled this information with co-hosted webinars that helped businesses navigate the early days of the pandemic, EIDL, and PPP applications. To say this was popular with our small business clients is an understatement. To put the demand into perspective, we average about 10 attendees per webinar during normal times. For a PPP webinar, we had over 3,000 attendees.

The business-friendly information and webinars were then posted on our website. Businesses devoured the information. Michigan had to upgrade its website service package 3 times to keep up with demand and keep the website from crashing. The collective efforts of the resource partners and our distribution of client-friendly information earned us the nickname, "***The Small Business Source of Truth.***"

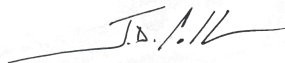
This story was made possible by the focused efforts to establish meaningful resource partner relationships. It's about people and relationships that go beyond names on paper. Yes, we have aligned strategies, defined goals, and clear communication. But it's also the fact that I know that our District Director Leketa Henderson has my back or that I've stood shoulder to shoulder in the trenches with VetBizCentral Director Abron Andrews. It's the deeper relationships that allow a focused partner response when needed.

It hasn't always been this way in Michigan so let me outline how we deepened our working relationship over the last 4 years:

- Established personal relationships and a deeper understanding of business issues. We accomplished this via monthly 1x1 director meetings to review strategic alignment, progress to goals, and service needs.

- Provided forums for Some Good News. Established quarterly resource partner meetings to share best practices and align programming.
 - Started a quarterly stakeholder video/newsletter.
- Collaborate with the SBA District Office to host an SBA Lenders Conference (Great Lakes Lenders Conference)
 - Planning this event deepens our understanding of each other's organization and builds cohesion within the team.
- Co-host events with SBA staff and resource partners.
- Hosted regional events with resource partners to introduce SBA products into the small business ecosystem.

Michigan's relationships with SBA resource partners resulted in nick-name-worthy services for the small business community. Thank you for the opportunity to testify today.



J.D. Collins
Executive Director, Michigan SBDC