

November 20, 2015

William Brigham
Director
Small Business Development Center
6 Executive Park Drive
Albany, NY 12203

Dear Bill:

I am writing in strong support of the innovative SEED (Small Enterprise Economic Development) program's nomination to be recognized for high sustainability performance through the Sustainability Tracking, Assessment, and Rating System (STARS). This program involves a cross-disciplinary and collaborative partnership with the Small Business Development Center (Albany Regional), University at Albany's Schools of Business and Social Welfare, and SEFCU (State Employees Federated Credit Union). Since 2011, SEED successfully has invested \$1.579 million of capital into the local economy and created or saved over 150 jobs.

SEED is comprised of the following main components:

- A revolving microenterprise loan fund to provide seed money for the creation of new businesses within distressed communities;
- Strong collaboration with existing state and federal programs;
- Capacity building, business development, and social support services including mentorship and technical assistance, education and training;
- Targeted outreach in the Capital Region and surrounding counties.

The goal of the program is to create and enhance sustainable economic and social development of distressed communities in New York's Capital Region and surrounding counties by fostering microenterprises, conducting outreach and offering related technical and social supports to jobless and underemployed workers and their families. In ways rarely seen in regional development initiatives, SEED combines social and economic development to improve opportunities for disadvantaged and underserved entrepreneurs. Low-income individuals including those of color, veterans, persons with disabilities, and victims of domestic violence from highly distressed neighborhoods in Albany, Schenectady and Troy and other surrounding towns and villages in the region are the focus of recruitment for new SEED-funded business entrepreneurs and employees.

By drawing on the resources of diverse sectors including social services and business, this program provides the necessary support to advance social entrepreneurship in distressed communities. I strongly believe that innovative, community based solutions are the key to solving many of the challenges facing our underserved neighborhoods.

Trinity Center
15 Trinity Place
Albany, NY 12202
P 518.449.5155
F 518.689.0379

Homer Perkins Center
76-82 Second Street
Albany, NY 12210
P 518.436.1104
F 518.436.1156

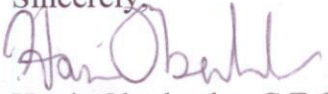
**Capital South
Campus Center**
20 Warren Street
Albany, NY 12202
P 518.694.4510
F 518.694.4540

Arbor Hill Center
47 North Lark Street
Albany, NY 12210
P 518.463.1516
F 518.463.2217

West Hill Center
341 Clinton Avenue
Albany, NY 12206
P 518.694.9191
F 518.694.9195

I am fully supportive of the SEED's nomination to the STARS program which serves as a model to be replicated in other communities in New York State and nationally where both inner-city poverty and rural poverty are a reality.

Sincerely,



Harris Oberlander, C.E.O.
Trinity Alliance of the Capital Region, Inc.