



BUSINESS MENTORS

The Southland Development Authority (SDA) is a non-profit business organization designed to recover and grow the economy of the South Suburbs. Launched in 2019 by business, civic and political leaders across the Southland, the SDA brings the resources and capacity necessary to achieve transformative and inclusive economic growth for our region.

SDA Stimulus Program

The SDA, with its Small Business Development Center (Illinois SBDC @SSEGI), recently launched the [Equitable Recovery Stimulus Program](#) (“Stimulus Program”) – which provides targeted, industry-specific, technical and financial assistance to Southland businesses. It targets any business impacted by the pandemic – prioritizing manufacturing, TD&L, key retail and other amenities, and firms owned by people of color. The Stimulus Program’s goal is to save and grow as many businesses as possible in ways which drive long-term inclusive economic growth.

The Stimulus Program is executed through an extensive network of collaborators. First, an outreach team identifies and engages firms in the Southland in need of assistance. Firms are then connected to Relationship Managers, who screen businesses and match them with an appropriate mentor.

Mentors provide highly tailored technical and financial advisory services that range in depth and duration – and vary by industry and stage of firm growth. Types of assistance provided to businesses may include securing short-term emergency funding, creating and executing re-opening plans, strategically pivoting a firm’s operations through new business plans, products and marketing efforts, and helping secure financial resources to execute the new plans. Mentors are supported by specialists (e.g., architects, e-commerce consultants), partner programs (e.g., cohort-based entrepreneurship classes), and financial partners – which can be called upon by the mentor to support a businesses’ specific needs.

Join the SDA as a Mentor or Specialist

Given the range of business needs in the Southland, the SDA is recruiting mentors and specialists with a variety of experience, to be paid per business based on summary workplans and budgets developed with the mentors and firms.

Mentor preferred qualifications include:

- Significant real-world business experience (in firms in the industry being mentored)
- Expertise in business planning and operations
- Business coaching and other relevant experience working with businesses preferred

Specialists must have proven expertise and experience working with businesses in a specific area currently in demand, including architects, e-commerce, marketing, technology, supply chain and related consultants, lawyers and accountants, among many others.

If you are interested in serving as a mentor or specialist to save and grow Southland businesses, please contact: Matt Schuneman, matt@rw-ventures.com.