

Dear Vermont Legislators:

February 10, 2020

When I started my business about 10 years ago, I went to Capstone Community Action's Micro Business Development to help me create a business plan.

I signed up for a workshop with Margaret Ferguson. It turned out I was the only person who attended because of Vermont weather... there was a snowstorm. I was pleased that the presenter did not cancel. We spent the duration of the workshop focusing on details of creating a business and much more. This workshop was the springboard for a long-lasting relationship with Capstone Community Action's Micro Business Development and Margaret. This workshop also taught me to look for funds and support through different sources. The first few years in business can be tough generating income. I needed to rely on external sources created to help small businesses.

In the next two years, I wrote a marketing grant proposal through the Small Business Center and was funded. This helped to launch my [sherryrhynard.com](http://sherryrhynard.com) website. A few years later, I went back to Capstone's MBDP to take a workshop on marketing. This workshop helped to refine my focus and language. I redesigned my brochure and business cards through this workshop.

Through the years, I have benefited from emails and conversation with Margaret. I was on track with my business but her years of experience with small businesses always provided gems of information and advice. She also made time for my inquires and continued to send me information about other workshops, conferences, and resources.

I love my work because I get to help people create positive change. There is nothing more satisfying than to see a smile or hear an enthusiastic tone of voice or laugh when a client shares the change that came about from the work we did together. One of my goals was to work with people who come from counties outside of Washington. This is happening regularly. Another goal was to work remotely, this is happening too.

I attribute the foundation of my success to the support I received because of Capstone Community Action's Micro Business Development. Small businesses do not often have the resources or knowledge to start a business, grow or troubleshoot their business. Capstone plays a vital role in helping to start, grow and sustain small businesses in our community. We need MBDP to expand not shrink. Small businesses need to grow in Vermont. This is what (the Statewide) MBPD excels at.

I was alarmed when I heard from Margaret that the legislature was contemplating cutting their budget. It made NO SENSE TO ME. Please leave this budget alone or if you do anything... give it more money so it can help businesses in our community thrive!!! If businesses thrive so will families, schools, and the wellbeing of our community. If you cut the budget, you are basically saying "Here you go Amazon, take a few more customers and dollars from our community."

Sincerely, Sherry Rhynard

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