

MICROLENDING BY CDFIS: SMALL LOANS, BIG IMPACT

KB FLOWER FARM – KIM BAKER

RURAL FLOWER FARMER EXPANDS SUSTAINABLE AGRICULTURE WITH CDFI SUPPORT

Otway, OH

CDFI: ECONOMIC & COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT INSTITUTE (ECDI)

In rural Otway, Ohio, Kim Baker is building a sustainable agricultural enterprise rooted in traditional farming practices. After relocating from Columbus to a 60-acre property in Scioto County, Kim began transforming her family's land into KB Flower Farm, where she grows tulips, dahlias, sunflowers, and other specialty crops using environmentally responsible methods. Her farm relies on natural pest control—including 3,000 ladybugs, chickens, and pollinator bees—and she is working to expand her growing season with a greenhouse to meet year-round demand. To successfully transition from hobby gardening to commercial farming, Kim needed agricultural business training and access to capital—two resources not readily available to new growers without established revenue history.



ECDI provided a coordinated solution. Through the Women's Business Center, Kim completed small-business management classes in 2023, gaining essential knowledge in pricing, financial planning, and pitching to buyers. At the same time, ECDI's lending team worked closely with her to structure an agricultural microloan suited to a first-time farmer who could not qualify for traditional financing. The loan enabled Kim to purchase critical equipment, including a tiller and greenhouse supplies, allowing her to increase production, stabilize cash flow, and prepare for expanded market opportunities such as farmers markets, roadside sales, and future grocery store partnerships. She has since gone on to receive an additional capital injection in 2024, along with continued technical assistance support towards marketing to grow her brand. Together, ECDI's lending and training support helped Kim build a viable, sustainable farm business that strengthens her rural community and creates opportunities for her multi-generational family.

MEET DENNIA, CONNECTICUT SMALL BUSINESS OWNER

CDFI ASSISTANCE ENABLES EVENT PLANNER TO LAUNCH AND EXPAND HER SMALL BUSINESS

Bridgeport, CT

CDFI: GRAMEEN AMERICA, INC.

Dennia, a mom of three, owns a small event-planning business in Bridgeport, Connecticut. Before becoming an entrepreneur, she worked more than 40 hours a week as a hairdresser in a salon, often sacrificing time with her family to cover household expenses. After breaking her leg at work and being unable to return to the salon, Dennia decided to start her own party-planning business. A friend referred her to Grameen America, a CDFI microfinance organization offering low-interest loans with flexible repayment and a low barrier to entry—an appealing alternative to traditional banks with stricter requirements.

Beyond affordable loan capital, Grameen America provides free savings accounts, credit-building support, financial education, and access to a peer network. Grameen has invested \$40,000 in Dennia's business, enabling her to purchase essential supplies such as balloons, lighting, furniture, and décor for events ranging from birthdays and weddings to graduations. Owning her business has given Dennia more time with her children, helped her build emergency savings, and allowed her to hire three employees from her community. Dennia is one of thousands of entrepreneurs supported by Grameen America, which has disbursed more than \$6.6 billion in microloans nationwide to help underserved business owners achieve financial stability and support their families.

