



Date: March 8th, 2021

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Couleecap Awarded by Wisconsin Economic Development Corporation Entrepreneurial Support Program

(La Crosse, WI) Couleecap, in partnership with other area economic development groups, has been awarded a Wisconsin Economic Development Corporation (WEDC) Entrepreneurship Support Grant. This is the fifth year that Couleecap has received an award from this program and is one of 13 organizations receiving the award in the state. The funds will support projects meant to aid in comprehensive local recovery, continue adding resiliency to area small businesses, expanding entrepreneurial opportunity for area residents, increasing access to training and mentorship, and business and job development. The WEDC awarded \$529,000 in matching grants statewide.

Funds from this grant will allow Couleecap to offer various support, training, and mentorship programs including the nationally acclaimed CO.STARTERS Entrepreneurial Training Program, and the CO.STARTERS Generator Youth Entrepreneurial Training Program. With a continued respect to public health concern and the need to remain socially distant, Couleecap plans to continue offering CO.STARTERS cohorts virtually in 2021, and welcomes current and prospective entrepreneurs in La Crosse, Vernon, Monroe and Crawford Counties to participate. In addition to virtual cohorts, the CO.STARTERS Program has been revitalized and modernized to fit current contexts. “Whether you’re trying to start something new, are a serial entrepreneur, or are a current small business owner that’s looking to make adjustments to their model or add new lines of revenue—we are here to help,” Couleecap Business and Income Developer, Aaron Reimler, said.

Couleecap will also utilize CO.STARTERS training programs to meet unmet community development needs such as the rate of opportunity driven entrepreneurs, and extending entrepreneurial opportunity to recently displaced workers, low-income and ethnic minority subsets, and to help expand access to affordable childcare throughout South Western Wisconsin.

This award will help support local efforts to offer grants to area small businesses engaging in projects designed to increase resiliency and meet customers in new, health-conscious ways. The Launch La Crosse Resiliency Program, a partnership between Couleecap Inc., La Crosse County, the City of La Crosse, Downtown Mainstreet Inc., and the La Crosse Area Development Corporation, which launched in late October of 2020, has awarded nearly \$67,000 to date and is still accepting applications (more information at couleecap.org/business-recovery). Funds from the WEDC will continue to support these grants as well as future grant programs designed to catalyze recovery, growth, and the retention of vibrancy in our community’s central commercial districts.

“We are grateful for the continued support of the WEDC; especially at a time when our community needs it the most” said Reimler. “We’re excited to continue working with our partners to increase resiliency in area



small business owners, finding creative solutions to the unique barriers currently facing our small business ecosystem, and continue empowering new generations of entrepreneurs.”

Couleecap and partners are actively recruiting current and prospective entrepreneurs and small business owners in La Crosse, Vernon, Monroe and Crawford Counties to turn their ideas and vision into action with the CO.STARTERS Entrepreneurial Training Program. For more information or to claim your spot now, head to www.couleeco.com/costarters or contact Couleecap Business and Income Developer, Aaron Reimler, at (608) 782-5525 or aaron.reimler@couleecap.org

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About Couleecap

Couleecap fights poverty and promotes self-sufficiency, economic development, and social justice. We are People Helping People, and everyday our actions make a difference in the lives of people and families throughout the Coulee Region.

