



Ms. Sharon K. Nichols
State Director Mississippi Small Business Development Center
P.O. Box 1848
University, MS 38677-1848

RE: Cyber Awareness Letter of Support

Dear Ms. Nichols:

On behalf of the Oxford-Lafayette County Economic Development Foundation, I am pleased to have this opportunity to submit a letter of support for the University of Mississippi's Mississippi Small Business Development Center's (MS-SBDC) proposed Center for Growth, New Markets and Innovation that will connect university-based resources, as well as federal, state and local resources with small businesses who are seeking to grow, enter new markets, addressing cybersecurity preparation, as well as innovation and tech commercialization of new products and services, creating an innovative approach to entrepreneurship led economic development.

This proposal includes a partnership effort between the University of Mississippi and Mississippi State University to pilot an innovation hub for cyber awareness. Most important, this initiative will provide a successful model to help small businesses be proactive in addressing cybersecurity issues and allow SBDC to support communities across the entire state.

According to SBA's Mississippi Small Business Economic Profile for 2021, 99.3% of existing businesses in Mississippi are small businesses. Assistance for existing small businesses in Mississippi is paramount to ensuring the state continues positive economic growth and the state maintains sustainable sales tax revenue. The UM SBDC Center for Growth, New Markets, Innovation and Cyber Awareness will add another crucial service to support our long-term goals and objectives and further support economic development advocacy for small businesses.

We look forward to working with the MS-SBDC Center for Growth, New Markets, Innovation and Cyber Awareness. These efforts will lead to the strengthening of the small businesses, increase jobs and sustainability of the small businesses in Mississippi.

Respectfully,

Jon C. Maynard
President/CEO



Michael Watson
SECRETARY OF STATE

Ms. Sharon K. Nichols
State Director Mississippi Small Business Development Center
P.O. Box 1848
University, MS 38677-1848

April 18, 2022

Dear Ms. Nichols:

I am pleased to support the University of Mississippi's Mississippi Small Business Development Center's (MS-SBDC) request for funding for the proposed Center for Growth, New Markets and Innovation. Connecting university-based resources, as well as federal, state, and local resources with small businesses who are seeking to grow, enter new markets, address cybersecurity preparation, as well as innovation and tech commercialization of new products and services, and creating an innovative approach to entrepreneurship led economic development is a meaningful function of our MS-SBDC.

This proposal includes a partnership between the University of Mississippi and Mississippi State University to pilot an innovation hub for cyber awareness. Most importantly, this initiative will provide a successful model to help small businesses be proactive in addressing cybersecurity issues and allow SBDC to support communities across the entire state. Cybersecurity is an ongoing issue about which we all should be concerned.

According to SBA's Mississippi Small Business Economic Profile for 2021, 99.3% of existing businesses in Mississippi are small businesses. Helping support small businesses in Mississippi is paramount to strengthening our state's positive economic growth as well as our national economy. The UM SBDC Center for Growth, New Markets, Innovation and Cyber Awareness will further support economic development advocacy for small businesses.

We look forward to working with the MS-SBDC Center for Growth, New Markets, Innovation and Cyber Awareness. These efforts will help strengthen, sustain, and protect small businesses, leading to an increase in jobs for the backbone of our economy.

Please accept my sincere regards.

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Michael Watson".

MICHAEL WATSON
Secretary of State
State of Mississippi

Ms. Sharon K. Nichols
State Director
Mississippi Small Business Development Center
P.O. Box 1848
University, MS 38677-1848

Dear Ms. Nichols:

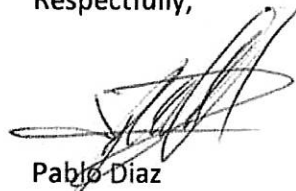
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We look forward to working with the MS-SBDC Center for Growth, New Markets, Innovation and Cyber Awareness. These efforts will lead to the strengthening of the small businesses, increase jobs and sustainability of the small businesses in Mississippi.

Respectfully,



Pablo Diaz
President & CEO
Vicksburg-Warren Economic Development Partnership