

May 4, 2026

House Finance Chair  
Representative Marvin L. Abney  
82 Smith Street  
Providence, RI 02903

Dear Chairman Abney and Honorable Members of the House Finance Committee,

I am a workforce program participant of **RIBBA**, and I am writing in strong support of **H7597**. I respectfully urge the Committee to pass this critical legislation, which will strengthen RIBBA's ability to expand technical assistance services, support workforce development, and drive economic growth for small businesses across Rhode Island.

H7597—Joint Resolution Making an Appropriation of \$200,000 to **RIBBA** is a critical investment in Rhode Island's small business and workforce ecosystem. **Small businesses** are the lifeblood of our local economy, and their success is directly tied to the success of our state. This funding also supports **workforce development**, which is crucial to Rhode Island because it builds a strong talent pipeline, driving long-term economic stability and statewide prosperity.

RIBBA has demonstrated a strong and measurable impact across Rhode Island:

- Business Growth: Over **6,000** small businesses reached, with **1,700+** receiving direct development support
- Economic Impact: Supported **50+** certified MWBEs, generating **\$30+** million in economic activity
- Capital Access: Helped clients secure **\$2.3+** million in capital to sustain and scale operations
- Job Creation: Contributed to the creation of **3,000+** jobs statewide
- Workforce Excellence: Trained **230+** individuals with a **98%** graduation rate, preparing talent for higher-paying roles and strengthening Rhode Island's workforce

Through my own experience, I have seen firsthand what is possible when professionals have access to the right resources, guidance, and opportunities. However, many professionals across Rhode Island are still working to move from survival to sustainability and growth. Organizations like RIBBA are essential in supporting participants through that transition and in strengthening the broader economic foundation of our communities.

Without targeted funding, RIBBA may be forced to reduce staff and scale back programs that serve vulnerable populations, emerging entrepreneurs, and professionals seeking access to high-quality training and upward mobility opportunities. This comes at a critical time, as Rhode Island continues efforts to strengthen community-based services and expand economic opportunity for all residents.

This funding is not simply an appropriation—it is an investment in:

- Job creation
- Workforce development
- Economic mobility
- Stronger communities across Rhode Island

In April, I graduated from Cohort IV of the emerging leaders program. I was able to experience firsthand all the passion and hard work that the staff at RIBBA puts into developing leaders with the potential to change Rhode Island, and the world, for the better. Through this program, I was able to gain the confidence to dream big about my future. I was inspired by my classmates as well as alumni who have elevated their status in society post-graduation. At their annual meeting, I was able to hear about success stories from the people RIBBA had supported; one person who went from an entry level job at a bank, to now managing a team and starting their journey in real estate and the other just opened their own business.

The success of professionals and small businesses is directly tied to the success of Rhode Island.

I respectfully urge you to act now. Please support the passage of **H7597** to ensure that RIBBA can continue providing critical services that drive economic opportunity and growth across our state.

Thank you for your consideration, your leadership, and your continued commitment to Rhode Islanders.

Sincerely,  
Karla Martinez Argueta; 77 Centre St. Pawtucket, RI 02860