“We are really grateful to Northern Initiatives. Not only did we get financial support, but community support.

NADIA & SHATAWN BRIGHAM
CO-OWNERS, GRNOIR
OPENED MID-PANDEMIC, DECEMBER 2020
This past year, my first as president of Northern Initiatives, has been full – full of learning, lending, awe, and gratitude.

While the world seemed to be simultaneously spinning out of control and standing still, Northern Initiatives stuck to our mission of helping underserved businesses survive and succeed.

In 2020, we had a 25% increase in loans closed, making 212 loan modifications to support our 268 customers. We set a record for the amount of technical assistance we provided to small businesses. In addition, we more than doubled the number of subscribers to Initiate, our TA platform. It is now being utilized across 33 states.

We’ve also created a new internal team that’s offering PPP assistance to businesses who’ve been left out of previous rounds of support. Most qualify for less than $10,000 in support – a dollar amount that is critical to their survival but less interesting to other lending institutions.

It is extremely gratifying to be able to alleviate some of the stress this pandemic has brought. Together, we’ll keep moving through whatever lies ahead.

**A YEAR LIKE NO OTHER**

**MARCH 13**
COVID-related closures begin

**MARCH 16**
NI starts contacting all 268 active loan customers

**MARCH 19**
First four COVID-related resources launched in Initiate

**MARCH 30**
98% of NI customers contacted to assess needs

**APRIL 1**
NI provides first $10K Express loan; first customer loan modification

**THE DETAILS**

17.5% of our customers received COVID Express loans

45.5% of our customers received COVID-related loan modifications

100% of our customers received access to technical assistance

12,344 staff hours logged on COVID-related small business assistance

**Resilience Personified**

**CAFÉ RICA**
BATTLE CREEK, MI

Brothers Jackson and Tristan Bredehoft honor their heritage daily by serving Naranjo coffee from Costa Rica, their mother’s home. When they were ready to turn their online and wholesale business into their own café, Northern Initiatives helped them open in downtown Battle Creek.

NI financed loans for equipment and working capital, as well as modifications and deferments during the pandemic. NI also provided coaching as Café Rica came up with clever ways to keep their customers happy, from curbside pickup to a coffee subscription program. Their quality food helps, too. And Café Rica is a breath of sweet smells in downtown Battle Creek.

**EXPANDED during COVID!**
Opened a new café and increased from 2 to 10 employees

**COVID RESPONSE:**
Offered curbside service, coffee subscriptions, new merchandise

**HOW NI HELPED:**
Stabilized cash flow, direct coaching assistance
Shatawn and Nadia Brigham had a longtime goal to run a business in keeping with their own values, including equitable and living wage pay and working with diverse vendors. They wanted to create a venue for Black professionals to network and relax in a warm environment after work - and to listen to wonderful music. They didn't plan on opening during a global pandemic, but they made it work. Although they'd planned a spring opening, the Brigham's persisted. And persisted. They finally opened GRNoir in December - when customers weren't even allowed inside the gorgeous setting - and they made it work by launching wine clubs, virtual tastings and carryout.

Stay On Course
**GRNOIR**
GRAND RAPIDS, MI

Jobs, Jobs, Jobs
**PM POWER GROUP**
WHITE PINE, MI

“Essentially what we’ll be doing is taking environmental waste and creating pure copper cylinders for sale into the market,” said Zach Halkola, COO of PM Power Group of Ontonagon. A loan from Northern Initiatives is helping create at least 35 jobs in a county with one of the highest unemployment rates in Michigan. Halkola is already thinking about his next round of hiring, as the White Pine Refinery prepares to install new boilers and tanks that will allow it to operate around the clock. Halkola also sees opportunity in recovery and recycling of more than copper. “What do we have that hits the trash that shouldn’t?” Could there be a more fitting rebirth for a coal mine?

**PM POWER GROUP**

POISED for GROWTH!

COVID RESPONSE:
Incorporated new safety protocols and continued operations

HOW NI HELPED:
Attained a federal grant that supports $695,000 in investment

**OUR BORROWERS**

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<th>Year</th>
<th>Minority Owned</th>
<th>Veteran Owned</th>
<th>Woman Owned</th>
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Stay On Course
**GRNOIR**
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Northern Initiatives is a Community Development Financial Institution. We're in business to provide loans and business services to small business owners and entrepreneurs who create jobs and enable the communities of Michigan and neighboring Wisconsin to thrive.

Northern Initiatives is an equal opportunity provider, employer and lender.