

July 24, 2024

Joseph Gray  
Grow America  
1111 Superior Avenue East  
Suite 1114  
Cleveland, OH 44114  
[jgray@growamerica.org](mailto:jgray@growamerica.org)

**RE: Cease and Desist – Communication Concerning the North St. Louis Small Business & Nonprofit Grant Program**

Dear Mr. Gray,

As the SVP of Strategic Growth and the owner of the contractual relationship between St. Louis Development Corporation (SLDC) and National Development Council for Community Development, Inc. (Grow America) related to the North St. Louis Small Business & Nonprofit Grant Program (NSTL Grant Program), it has been brought to our attention that there may be miscommunication within engagement with business participating in the NSTL Grant Program.

I am required to communicate to you and instruct you to limit your engagement with local businesses related the scope of work as defined within your professional services agreement with SLDC, dated as of February 13, 2024 (Agreement).

As you know, Section VI.A. of the Agreement imposes a duty of confidentiality on Grow America. Pursuant to the Agreement, Grow America may not disclose any information – financial, project-related, or other – relating to the NSTL Grant Program without SLDC's express authorization. We expect that as part of your role as our business partner, you would also ensure you maintain a neutral stance regarding the issuance of grants and ensure your staff does not inappropriately interact with applicants regarding the grant determinations by SLDC.

Therefore, I am requesting that you and your team cease and desist any communication or on-going communication related to grant awards or applications under consideration within the NSTL Grant Program, limiting all communication to the enrollment into the training academy and

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the completion of the financial assessment. Moreover, we ask that you direct your staff not to communicate anything related to the evaluation, scoring or funding recommendation within the program. If the terms within this letter and your contract can not be maintained; we will be required to seek alternatives paths for alignment and/or resolution, including but not limited to termination of the Agreement for cause and other such remedies which may be available.

Grow America is a valued and critical partner in the successfully implementation of the NSTL Grant Program and the capacity building of local businesses that have engaged with the grant program. I hope that you understand the sensitive nature of the awarding and disbursing of over \$30MM to under invested businesses. If you have questions or concerns do not hesitate to contact me directly via email or formal letter. I appreciate your thoughtful response and positive consideration.

Sincerely,



Lance Marcus Knuckles  
SVP of Strategic Growth

cc: Neal Richardson, CEO  
David Meyer, Counsel