SMIF's House Style Sheet

SMIF follows the Associated Press Stylebook (AP Style) and consults Purdue's Online Writing Lab to maintain editorial consistency.

Common AP Style references:

- **Commas:** Do not use the serial (oxford) comma. *SMIF supports entrepreneurs, child care providers and communities.* (no comma between "providers" and "and).
- **Dates:** Do not use st, nd, rd, or th with dates.
- **Direction:** Use lowercase when referring to directions on a compass. Capitalize regional terms when they refer to a commonly accepted proper name of an area. Given this, always use "**southern Minnesota**" and "**Greater Minnesota**."
- **Name:** Spell out or say "Southern Minnesota Initiative Foundation" in first mention. Thereafter, "SMIF" can be used. To reduce repetition, "the Foundation" can also be used, but "SMIF" is preferable. Never use "the" in front of "Southern Minnesota Initiative Foundation."
- **Numerals:** For ordinal numbers, spell out first through ninth and use figures for 10 and above when describing order in time or location.
- **Spacing:** Use a single space after a period.
- **Titles:** Lowercase people's titles: Pam Bishop, vice president of economic development.
- **Times:** Use figures and periods for a.m. and p.m. Spell out noon and midnight. Use a colon to separate hours from minutes, but do not use :00. *(Examples: 1 p.m., 3:30 a.m.)*

Consistent word use:

In order to uphold a company's brand, it is important to notice consistencies and inconsistencies. The following words have a pattern of repeated use at SMIF and should always be consistent:

- **Child care** (two words, no hyphen)
- When relevant, refer to child care providers as **child care business owners**.
- **kindergarten** should always be lower case. But **Pre-K** has capital P and K.
- BIPOC should always first be written out as **BIPOC (Black, Indigenous or People of Color)**. ("or" or "and" may be used interchangeably depending on context).
- **startup** (one word, no hyphen). i.e. *SMIF supports business startups.*
- **program** should be lowercase: Early Childhood programs. The Prosperity Initiative program.
- URLs should never include www. at the beginning (ie. Use **smifoundation.org** not www.smifoundation.org)
- Always capitalize the following when referencing programs:
    - Affiliate Funds
    - Community Foundations
    - Early Childhood
    - Economic Development
- Do **NOT** use the following words:
    - Daycare (always use child care)
    - Charity or charitable cause. If encouraging people to give to nonprofits, use the word nonprofits, not charity or charitable causes). Charity specifically refers to organizations that help people who are in need of help; i.e. poor, sick, etc.