

11M-193



# Office of the Minnesota Secretary of State

## Minnesota Public Benefit Corporation / Annual Benefit Report

Minnesota Statutes, Chapter 304A



Read the instructions before completing this form

Must be filed by March 31

Filing Fee: \$55 for expedited service in-person, \$35 if submitted by mail

The Annual Benefit Report covers the 12 month period ending on December 31 of the previous year.

Notice: Failure to file this form by March 31 of this year will result in the revocation of the corporation's public benefit status without further notice from the Secretary of State, pursuant to Minnesota Statutes, Section 304A.301

1. File Number 11M-193
2. Corporate Name: (Required) Cogent Consulting SBC
3. The public benefit corporation's board of directors has reviewed and approved this report.
4. In the field below, enter the information required by section 304A.301 subd. 2 or 3 for the period covered by this report, (see instructions for further information): Note: Use additional sheets if needed. (Required)

Please see attached report.

5. I, the undersigned, certify that I am the chief executive officer of this public benefit corporation. I further certify that I have signed this document no more than 30 days before the document is delivered to the secretary of state for filing, and that this document is current when signed. I further certify that I have completed all required fields, and that the information in this document is true and correct and in compliance with the applicable chapter of Minnesota Statutes. I understand that by signing this document I am subject to the penalties of perjury as set forth in Section 609.48 as if I had signed this document under oath.

Susan Hammel  
Signature of Public Benefit Corporation's Chief Executive Officer

12/30/22  
Date (Must be dated within 30 days before the report is delivered to the Secretary of State for Filing)

### Email Address for Official Notices

Enter an email address to which the Secretary of State can forward official notices required by law and other notices:

team@coagentconsulting.net

Check here to have your email address excluded from requests for bulk data, to the extent allowed by Minnesota law.

### List a name and daytime phone number of a person who can be contacted about this form:

Susaa Hammel 651.318.2800  
Contact Name Phone Number

Entities that own, lease, or have any financial interest in agricultural land or land capable of being farmed must register with the MN Dept. of Agriculture's Corporate Farm Program.

Does this entity own, lease, or have any financial interest in agricultural land or land capable of being farmed?  
Yes  No



**Annual Benefits Report, CY 2022**  
**Cogent Consulting SBC**  
**Dec. 30, 2022**

After 20 years in business, Cogent Consulting converted to a Specific Benefit Corporation in 2018. We are an independent, strategic, financial, and impact investing firm empowering purpose-driven organizations. Impact investing is defined as “Investments made with the intention to generate positive, measurable social and environmental impact alongside a financial return” (Global Impact Investing Network).

We work with a diverse set of mission-driven investors and entrepreneurs through evidence-based and actionable advice. Our work serves foundations, corporations, social entrepreneurs, and impact-investing place-based ecosystems. Our clients include many nonprofits: LISC Twin Cities & Duluth, Partnership in Property Commercial Land Trust, First Children’s Finance, Greater Green Bay Community Foundation, Betterway Foundation, Ashoka, Community Foundation of Greater Des Moines, and the Barra Foundation, to name a few. Please see our website for more information: <https://www.cogentconsulting.net/>.

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Pursuant to Section 304A.101 of the Minnesota Statutes, Cogent Consulting SBC pursues the following benefit purpose as listed in its articles:

*To empower purpose-driven organizations that drive positive social impact in their communities.*

Cogent Consulting, SBC accomplishes its specific benefit purpose with all of our clients and pro bono work. Our work from the past year includes the following:

1. Cogent has supported numerous organizations in establishing and expanding client-specific impact investment strategies. Projects examples include:
  - a. Developed an investment framework to address social determinants of health in a nonprofit client’s local community.



## COGENT CONSULTING

- b. Helped a foundation client adapt its focused set of grant-making goals to serve as a framework for its impact investment objectives.
  - c. Created customized indexes of potential investment opportunities aligned with clients' impact goals.
  - d. Identified potential investors for a Community Development Financial Institutions fund (CDFI fund) client to help it succeed in its mission of supporting early childhood development.
2. Cogent is active in both educating the general public and spreading awareness of impact investing within the local and national philanthropic community.
  - a. Throughout the past year, Cogent hosted events for members of the local community to learn about impact investing and build connections.
  - b. In a partnership with LISC, Cogent held training workshops on impact investing for Twin Cities-based BIPOC property developers to grow their businesses.
  - c. Cogent founder and CEO, Susan Hammel, CFA, has served as a speaker on numerous panels and educational workshops, speaking to the Minnesota Nonprofit Law Conference, Prosperity Now, Hirtle-Callaghan, Mission Investors Exchange, the Junior League of Minneapolis, CommunityGiving, and many others about impact investing. Susan Hammel also serves as Executive-in-Residence for the Minnesota Council of Foundations.
  - d. Cogent Principal, Terri Barreiro, has facilitated numerous conversations for participants of the Impact Investing Community of Practice.
3. In collaboration with the Minnesota Council of Foundations and RBC Global Asset Management, Cogent launched the Minnesota Impact Investing Initiative (MI3). Managed by RBC Access Capital, the MI3 fund generates a competitive market rate return while also providing positive social and environmental benefits to Minnesota and its residents, such as through investments in affordable housing and small business lending. Notably, Cogent generated the first \$25 million of the total \$100 million raised thus far.
4. Much of Cogent's work throughout the past year has been within our team and network.
  - a. Cogent is proud to have become more racially and generationally diverse, adding strong, diverse voices to our team.

- b. Cogent employed two summer and two winter student interns. Interns learned about impact investing through hands-on projects and on-the-job shadowing and received mentorship from various other members of the Cogent team.
  - c. Cogent is grateful for our ecosystem partners in all of the work we've done, including Hirtle Callaghan, Impact Hub MSP, Minnesota Council on Foundations. Cogent is also incredibly grateful for generous Minnesota donors and angel investors, who are engaging in the Investors4Impact project thanks to presenting partners, the McKnight Foundation and Hennepin County, as well as project sponsors GMHF, Sunrise Banks, Centered Wealth.
5. Through our work with our partner organizations and clients, the Cogent team has developed a deeper understanding of numerous key social issues and stakeholder groups. As we've learned more about specific challenges, we have been able to add several new dimensions to our own DEI screening.
- a. Cogent has gained greater knowledge of Indigenous communities across the U.S. and how to make targeted, effective investments in their communities. Cogent has also developed a better understanding of intermediary investment organizations, such as Indigenous CDFIs.
  - b. Cogent has acquired a better understanding of the nuanced challenges faced by people of color in the property market in gaining access to capital, and how to address these challenges.
  - c. Cogent has strengthened its understanding of the social determinants of health and how negative health outcomes can be mitigated.

Despite many successes this year, Cogent encountered several challenges in most effectively pursuing our specific benefit purpose.

- a. The Coronavirus pandemic and consequent restrictive measures limited Cogent's ability to grow our network and disseminate information about the resources it offers. (Conversely, however, the business world's embrace of virtual communication has enabled Cogent to acquire clients it otherwise wouldn't have due to geographic distance).
- b. Impact investing remains an evolving field. Individual investors are typically wary of modifying their investment frameworks and thus tend to lack both the knowledge and motivation to incorporate ESG values into their investment strategies. This is exacerbated

by misinformation and political backlash targeting impact investing. Within endowment investing, there remains a continued focus on fiduciary duty without consideration for mission alignment. Non-profit organizations that *do* have social justice objectives often lack information about how they may pursue equity via investing in lieu of philanthropy. The future success of impact investing hinges on investors and organizations being willing to adapt and learn new practices.

- c. There is a general lack of transparency and information is poorly shared among organizations involved in impact investing. Even organizations that have incorporated ESG values into their investment portfolios seldom publicly share information about investment standards, strategies, or impact.

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The undersigned, Sole Director of Cogent Consulting SBC, has reviewed and approved this 2020 Annual Report.

  
Susan Hammel (Sole Director)

12/28/22  
Date



**Work Item 1367623300038**  
**Original File Number 11M-193**

STATE OF MINNESOTA  
OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY OF STATE  
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**01/20/2023 11:59 PM**

*Steve Simon*

Steve Simon  
Secretary of State