

Ecosystem Guide to Small Business Support Hubs & SmartZones

POWERED BY THE MICHIGAN ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION

Ecosystem Guide

This guide is designed as an internal resource for all SmartZones and Support Hubs. The purpose of this document is to provide an ecosystem directory, including a snapshot of each Support Hub's activities, a summary of the unique program attributes, such as geography served, target businesses (by sector, stage, demographic, etc.) and contact information. Additionally, Michigan SmartZones are also listed along with the MEDC Entrepreneurial Ecosystem-Supported Programs available through all SmartZones.

The MEDC anticipates that Hubs and SmartZones will use this information for Hub-to-Hub or Hub-to-SmartZone connections, ultimately enabling stronger ecosystem referrals based on knowledge of the types of services being offered statewide.

Using This Document

- 1) The key is designed to note whether the participating organization is a SmartZone and/or Support Hub, and if they are a Hub whether they're providing direct grants to small businesses.
- 2) This document is intended to assist Support Hub-to-Hub or Hub-to-SmartZone referrals. In its current form, this is a document for internal grantee use and is not intended for broader distribution to external customers or business owners.
- 3) This document is maintained by the MEDC Small Business Services Team. If your organization needs to request edits, please email Cheryl Greer (greerc2@michigan.org).

ICON KEY

- Support Hub
- SmartZone
- Direct Grants
- Offering State-wide Services



MICHIGAN ECONOMIC
DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION

Small Business Support Hubs Program Overview

The Small Business Support Hubs (SBSH) program will cultivate a more inclusive, accessible and integrated entrepreneurial ecosystem through investments in operations and programming, business support services and direct grants to eligible small businesses.

Twenty-seven Small Business Support Hubs were selected to receive funding through this program and are anticipated to support 20,000 Michigan businesses over the next three years. The program will leverage the knowledge of more than 20 years of Michigan Economic Development Corporation (MEDC) SmartZone impact to create a statewide network of entrepreneurial hubs equipped to serve the launch, sustainability and growth needs of small businesses through direct support and network referral relationships.

The program is funded by a one-time appropriation using American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) dollars to create and operate programs to support small businesses disproportionately impacted by COVID-19.

Program Goals

The SBSH program will:

- Position Support Hubs to increase the number of businesses served through new and scaled programming, technical assistance and other support services.
- Increase access to regional and statewide small business support resources.
- Expand the geographic reach of network partners into underserved and rural areas.
- Raise the national profile of Michigan's small business ecosystem.

<https://www.michiganbusiness.org/services/small-business-support-hub/>

20Fathoms

Summary:

20Fathoms will expand the geographic and demographic reach of its services in support of small businesses throughout the 10-county, northwest lower Michigan region by leveraging the success of its operations in Traverse City and building on existing and establishing new partnerships to increase the pace and breadth of small business formation and growth.

- This expansion means investing in personnel and resources at 20Fathoms to scale its program offerings and the distribution of those scaled resources through coordinated partnerships that expand its reach.

Support Hub Contact:

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20 Fathoms
David@20fathoms.org
989-350-1986

Gateway

Representative Contact:

Cameron Young
cameron@20fathoms.org
231-944-9226

Target Businesses:

All small businesses

Coverage Area:

Grand Traverse, Benzie, Leelanau, Manistee, Wexford, Missaukee, Kalkaska, Antrim, Charlevoix, Emmet counties

Battle Creek Food Reimagined | Battle Creek Unlimited

Summary:

Battle Creek Food Reimagined (BCFR) is part of Battle Creek Unlimited, an economic development organization that serves Battle Creek. BCFR's vision is to become a vibrant and inclusive food innovation hub for startups and young food companies to thrive in southwest Michigan.

BCFR leverages the city's legacy in food innovation, aggregation of food assets and community engagement that makes it the perfect location for a food innovation hub. The Support Hub designation complements BCFR's SmartZone, enabling it to increase capacity, deliver food sector-specific programming and provide access to accelerator-licensed food facilities.

Some of the planned programming in collaboration with its partners include:

- Food and beverage incubator programming for startups
- Food and beverage cohort-based accelerator for early and growth-stage
- Food finance accelerator
- Investor's network
- Food entrepreneurial networking events
- Access to BCFR's food manufacturing ecosystem and business support

BCFR is working towards a centralized food hub that will include an accelerator kitchen, demo kitchen and small-scale food manufacturing space (not yet available).

bcfood.org

Support Hub Contact:

Gabriela Perez-Hernandez
Battle Creek Unlimited
perez@bcunlimited.org
269-962-7526

SmartZone Gateway

Representative Contact:

Gabriela Perez-Hernandez
Battle Creek Unlimited
perez@bcunlimited.org
269-962-7526

Target Businesses:

Food entrepreneurs in manufacturing, packaged foods and food businesses

Coverage Area:

Berrien, Branch, Cass, Calhoun, Kalamazoo, St Joseph, Van Buren, Allegan, Barry, Eaton, Jackson, Hillsdale counties

SmartZone Services:

As a designated Michigan SmartZone, Battle Creek Unlimited has access to MEDC Entrepreneurship Ecosystem-Supported Programs ([see page 23](#)).

Can-Do Kalamazoo ●●

Summary:

Can-Do Kalamazoo is positioned and ready to create positive, far-reaching impacts for entrepreneurs who have been systemically disenfranchised. As the ecosystem becomes even more collaborative, programs and services will evolve so that duplication is eliminated and community resources are put toward impactful entrepreneurial programming that removes barriers to SEDI entrepreneurs. Plus, the hub will connect with other hubs, bringing regional and statewide change. Can-Do Kalamazoo will lead its creative and motivated ecosystem to the next level at a time when the ecosystem and regional partners are primed for positive change and equitable business outcomes for all entrepreneurs. Building this infrastructure now will enable its ecosystem to be impactful for years to come and is an important part of the diverse, thriving communities we all want in Michigan.

Can-Do Kalamazoo ensures that entrepreneurs progress in their business development. Deep collaboration between strategic partners will be facilitated by regular check-ins, strategic planning retreats and working groups so we can achieve our common goal of equitable business opportunities, revenue generation and wealth building for SEDI entrepreneurs.

Support Hub Contact:

Lucy Dille
Can-Do Kalamazoo
lucy@candokalamazoo.org
269-492-0261

Target Businesses:

All small businesses; new business owners, microbusinesses and aspiring entrepreneurs

Coverage Area:

Kalamazoo, Calhoun, Van Buren, Berrien, Branch, St. Joseph counties

Central Upper Peninsula Small Business Support Hub ●●

Summary:

Alongside identified strategic partners, the Lake Superior Community Partnership (LSCP) has established the Central Upper Peninsula Support Hub. The support hub will contract with partner organizations to place small business resource navigators on the ground in seven counties to help small businesses understand their needs and available resources to address them. The support hub will serve as a central location for small business efforts in the region, reducing overlap and meeting businesses where they are. Additionally, the support hub will expand the availability of resources from the LSCP, Innovate Marquette, and Accelerate UP to all seven counties (currently, most are only available in Marquette County) and connect businesses to student teams from Northern Michigan University to address identified challenges via the new NMU Main Street Program.

Funds will also be used to purchase software that is otherwise unavailable in the region and cover marketing costs to maximize outreach. Activities of the support hub will be overseen by a strategic advisory council consisting of seven partners: the LSCP; Accelerate UP; Innovate Marquette; NMU; SBDC; Keweenaw Bay Indian Community; and Sault Tribe Inc.; each of which will bring expertise, resources and networks to benefit the support hub's work.

Support Hub Contact:

Erica Huss
Lake Superior Community
Partnership
erica@marquette.org
906-226-6591 ext. 108

Target Businesses:

All small businesses

Coverage Area:

Alger, Baraga, Delta, Dickinson, Marquette, Menominee, Schoolcraft counties

Summary:

The Centrepolis Accelerator is accelerating the growth of Michigan's advanced manufacturing, innovative hardware entrepreneurs and small manufacturers by providing access to funding, experts and key business and product development resources. The Support Hub will bolster the operations and programming of Centrepolis, focusing on expanding crucial product development and lab prototyping services tailored to aid small businesses adversely affected by the COVID-19 pandemic. The proposed initiatives encompass a comprehensive suite of services:

- Idea 2 Product Cohort: A structured program guiding entrepreneurs through the ideation and product conceptualization phases.
- Customer Creation and Growth Cohort: Targeted support for small businesses to enhance customer acquisition and foster sustainable growth.
- Product Development Services: Specialized assistance to refine and optimize product development processes, ensuring efficiency and innovation.
- Prototyping: Access to state-of-the-art lab facilities for prototype creation, enabling businesses to bring their ideas to life.
- Tech-Thursdays Entrepreneurial Training: Regular training sessions aimed at equipping entrepreneurs with the latest technological insights and business strategies.

In addition to these operational enhancements, Centrepolis plans the allocation of over \$400,000 in direct grants to small businesses. This financial infusion will provide a lifeline to enterprises grappling with the economic fallout of the pandemic, fostering resilience and enabling them to navigate the current challenges effectively. The multifaceted approach outlined in this proposal underscores a commitment to not only revive small businesses but to also empower them with the tools and resources needed for long-term success in an evolving business landscape.

Support Hub Contact:

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248-721-3192

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SmartZone Gateway Representative Contact:

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rlenhard@ltu.edu
248-709-2331

Target Businesses:

Cleantech, Industry 4.0, industrial decarbonization and circular economy technology startups as well as small businesses

Coverage Area:

Statewide

SmartZone Services:

As a designated Michigan SmartZone, Centrepolis - LTU has access to MEDC Entrepreneurship Ecosystem-Supported Programs. These programs are listed in this Guide on pages [23-24](#).

Chippewa County Economic Development Corporation ●●●

Summary:

With this immediate funding, Chippewa County Economic Development Corporation (CCEDC) and Headwaters North intend to add skilled professionals with expertise in finance, marketing and general business services to serve as the entrepreneurial hub to deliver training and coaching services to small businesses impacted by COVID-19. The hub will function as a centralized resource center and ecosystem that assists small businesses at various stages of their business. This arrangement will provide the region with a Small Business Support Hub that can provide invaluable resources to businesses in need of guidance. Supported by Chippewa, Luce and Mackinac counties, Bay Mills Tribe and Sault Tribe, we intend to provide available office space, mentorship programs, training, workshops, assistance with access to funding points, networking events, incubation of business startups, market research and help in obtaining legal assistance. By dedicating personnel and staff from Headwaters North, the region can benefit by utilizing a much-needed business support resource in the eastern Upper Peninsula for both the near and long term.

Support Hub Contact:

Chris Olson
Chippewa County EDC
chrisolson@chippewacountyedc.com
906-495-5631

SmartZone Gateway Representative Contact:

Marilyn Clark
Headwaters North
mjmclark@gmail.com
906-370-9483

Target Businesses:

All small businesses

Coverage Area:

Chippewa, Luce, Mackinac counties

SmartZone Services:

As a designated Michigan SmartZone, Sault Ste. Marie EDC has access to MEDC Entrepreneurship Ecosystem-Supported Programs. These programs are listed in this Guide on pages [23-24](#).

Detroit Economic Growth Association ●●

Summary:

The Detroit Economic Growth Association (DEGA) Support Hub will provide a suite of business assistance and financial support to Detroit's small businesses through a network of community-based physical sites across the city of Detroit, including Highland Park. The hubs will be managed by DEGA in collaboration with six organizations.

DEGA will coordinate support by centering business owners and shepherding and strengthening support across organizations. In this way, business assistance will not be siloed, but be provided as part of an overall strategy to maximize the potential for success for each business. District business liaisons will help entrepreneurs to navigate city departments and troubleshoot issues.

Programming will be delivered by six organizations in addition to DEGA: Black Leaders Detroit, Build Institute, Highland Park Community Kitchen, Metro Detroit Black Business Alliance, Milestone Growth Capital and ProsperUs.

The DEGA Support Hub will serve 3,000 small businesses over a three-year period and will be accessible remotely and at 20+ physical locations. The physical locations are located in 16 different zip codes in the city of Detroit and Highland Park, where a total of approximately 540,000 people reside and 10,583 businesses are licensed.

Support Hub Contact:

Laura Corp
Detroit Economic Growth Corporation
lc corp@degc.org
313-483-4110

Detroit Economic Growth Association (continued)

Target Businesses:

All small businesses

Coverage Area:

Wayne County

Eastern Michigan Small Business Network

Summary:

Eastern Michigan Small Business Network (EM-SBN) intends to: expand the SBDC's counseling services across Region 6, including into underserved and rural areas; grow the Port Huron SmartZone-Support Hub to serve technology and non-technology small and startup businesses by establishing affiliate locations in all counties of Region 6; establish geographically located referral services in legal, accounting/finance, marketing, translation, and other sectors; administer small business grants; assist in launching two new co-working facilities in the region; and effectively administer and market these programs and resources.

The scope of work will include hiring 2.5 new Small Business Development Center counselors through a sub-recipient agreement, and one grant manager/program administrator position at EM-SBN. In addition, EM-SBN will extend its Emerge Fund pre-seed fund and eight-week bootcamp to companies located in the region.

Support Hub Contact:

Stacy Elliott
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selliott@edascc.com
810-689-8414

SmartZone Gateway Representative Contact:

Kanchan Wankhede
EDA of St. Clair County
kwankhede@edascc.com
810.937.2003

Target Businesses:

All small businesses

Coverage Area:

Huron, Lapeer, Sanilac, Shiawassee, St. Clair, Tuscola counties

SmartZone Services:

As a designated Michigan SmartZone, EDA of St. Clair Co. has access to MEDC Entrepreneurship Ecosystem-Supported Programs. These programs are listed in this Guide on pages [23-24](#).

Flint and Genesee Economic Alliance ●●

Summary:

Flint & Genesee Economic Alliance and its partners propose an expansive endeavor to bolster small businesses in Genesee County, especially those affected by the COVID-19 pandemic. This ambitious initiative revolves around unprecedented technical support and assistance tailored for SEDI-owned businesses. The strategy emphasizes capacity-building within the economic alliance, augmenting existing services and introducing wraparound support. Essential components include data-informed counseling, capital access coaching, personal finance mentorship and robust networking opportunities. A small business help desk will serve as the primary touchpoint, connecting businesses to vital resources. Expansion plans include the launch of affiliate hub locations across the county, necessitating critical staffing enhancements. Collaborations with prominent partners, such as SBDC, Doxa Development, Metro Community Development and Flint & Genesee Business Bridge, enrich the array of available services, from financial management to mentorship and networking. The varied programs offered by our partners will empower entrepreneurs and connect SEDI-owned businesses, also enabling participants to become eligible for a regranting opportunity.

Ultimately, this initiative aims to cultivate a robust support ecosystem, offering tailored aid and fostering growth for small businesses within the county.

Support Hub Contact:

Allison Newman, Grant Administrator
Flint & Genesee Economic Alliance
anewman@flintandgenesee.org
810-600-1435

Karena Hamlet, Program Director
Flint & Genesee Economic Alliance
khamlet@FlintandGenesee.org
810-600-1440

Target Businesses:

All small businesses

Coverage Area:

Genesee County

Grand Rapids Center for Community Transformation ●●

Summary:

The Grand Rapids Center for Community Transformation will administer and cultivate an ecosystem of partnering support organizations designed to help entrepreneurs navigate services throughout their entire life cycle within the city of Grand Rapids, with a primary focus on the Madison Square neighborhood in Kent County. Resources may also be deployed to surrounding counties based on availability. Support will be provided through all phases of entrepreneurship through a more centralized hub of networked partners.

Programming and services will focus on:

Supporting ideation and conceptualization of the business

Establishing a business and ensuring its survival within the first 3.5 years of operation

Increasing revenue and reaching profitability, including raising additional capital and accessing contracts

Increasing working capital to support growth and expanding into new geographies, demographics or additional product commercialization

Capturing success of the business and creating a virtuous circle of support, through further expansion or exit.

Support Hub Contact:

Jodi Albaitis
Grand Rapids Nehemiah Project
jodi@grcct.com
616-577-7792

Grand Rapids Center for Community Transformation (continued)

Target Businesses:

All small businesses

Coverage Area:

Kent, Ottawa, Muskegon, Kalamazoo counties

Great Lakes Bay - Small Business Hub

Summary:

The Great Lakes Bay-Small Business Hub (GLB-SBH) is a collaborative effort designed to strengthen the existing entrepreneurial hub created through the SmartZone networks established over 20 years ago.

The GLB-SBH's three main goals include:

- Strengthening small business satellite hubs in four existing CoWork-RC facilities in Isabella, Bay, Midland and Saginaw counties. The GLB-SBH will increase operational and capacity-building support, increase the geographic reach of the small business support delivered and provide direct business support to small businesses focusing on minority-owned business inclusion.
- True magic lies in the connectivity of partners and resources that exist. The core of the partnerships around the Support Hub includes CMURC, regional chambers of commerce, economic development organizations and the Small Business Development Center (SBDC). All these partners work alongside each other and support one another at a high level across the region.
- A new collaboration for expanded services was also created in Clare County, located at the Harrison Market, in partnership with the Middle Michigan Development Corporation (MMDC).

Support Hub Contact:

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CMU-RC
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989-202-6036
For more information visit:
www.cmurc.com/glbsbh

SmartZone Gateway Representative Contact:

Elissa Gagne
CMU-RC
elissa@cmurc.com
989-954-8141

Target Businesses:

All small businesses

Coverage Area:

Bay, Clare, Midland, Isabella, Saginaw counties

SmartZone Services:

As a designated Michigan SmartZone, CMU-RC has access to MEDC Entrepreneurship Ecosystem-Supported Programs. These programs are listed in this Guide on pages [23-24](#).

Lean Rocket Lab

Summary:

The Lean Rocket Lab is a co-working and meeting space, startup incubator, and Industry 4.0 business accelerator located in Jackson. It serves as a hub for innovation, entrepreneurship and economic development.

Lean Rocket Lab will expand its LOCAL program in the following ways:

Elevate the annual capacity of the LOCAL Fellows Cohort Program from 10 to 30 or more teams, while also introducing a fast track to lending readiness component (1:1 technical assistance) to expedite businesses' path to securing capital.

Form satellite hubs to extend the program's reach from Jackson County to encompass Hillsdale and Lenawee counties through sub-awardee agreements with Lenawee Now and Hillsdale EDP

Elevate the caliber and quantity of technical assistance through strategic partnerships with American 1 Credit Union and SBDC to drive lending readiness

Support Hub Contact:

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Lean Rocket Lab
alex@leanrocketlab.org
517-581-3840

SmartZone Gateway Representative Contact:

Ken Seneff
Lean Rocket Lab
ken@leanrocketlab.org
517-914-2486

Target Businesses:

All small businesses

Coverage Area:

Jackson, Lenawee, Hillsdale counties

SmartZone Services:

As a designated Michigan SmartZone, Lean Rocket Lab has access to MEDC Entrepreneurship Ecosystem-Supported Programs. These programs are listed in this Guide on pages [23-24](#).

Lansing Economic Area Partnership

Summary:

The Lansing Economic Area Partnership (LEAP) is the economic development agency for the tri-county region of Clinton, Eaton and Ingham counties. LEAP and its management of the Lansing Regional SmartZone act as "air traffic control" for the region to direct businesses, whether they are at the idea stage or a Fortune 500 business, to the right resources at the right time. LEAP and its partners across the tri-county region offer support to all small businesses (both high-tech and Mainstreet) through technical assistance, programmatic partnerships, as well as direct grants. Its partners include Michigan State University Broad College of Business and Burgess Institute for Entrepreneurship & Innovation, the MSU Research Foundation, Capital Area SBDC, Bold Growth, Allen Neighborhood Center, Downtown Lansing Inc., Transformation GEMS, Best Practices Consulting, The Fledge and the Melanated Business Alliance.

Support Hub Contact:

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LEAP
harrison@purelansing.com
517-702-3387

SmartZone Gateway Representative Contact:

Ryan Nelson
LEAP
gateway@purelansing.com
517-702-3387

Target Businesses:

All small businesses

Coverage Area:

Clinton, Ingham, Eaton counties

Lansing Economic Area Partnership (continued)

SmartZone Services:

As a designated Michigan SmartZone, LEAP has access to MEDC Entrepreneurship Ecosystem-Supported Programs. These programs are listed in this Guide on pages [23-24](#).

Michigan Founders Fund

Summary:

Michigan Founders Fund (MFF) is the largest network of high-growth founders and investors in the state. MFF's network of entrepreneurs and investors have each pledged 1% of equity or carry to support impactful local organizations throughout the state who are doing the work to better our communities and enrich quality of life.

MFF will strengthen and expand its existing support for high-growth founders throughout Michigan. Additionally, it is launching the Michigan Tech Equity Accelerator, which will close the opportunity gap for early-stage (seed or pre-seed stage, high-growth companies looking to scale) SEDI entrepreneurs by providing proven and focused startup training, skills, resources and networks over a 12-week timeframe.

The accelerator will incorporate a mastermind model approach and follow core Michigan Founders Fund principles, focusing on founder fellowship that is built upon shared exchange and deeper connectivity to each cohort participant. Some sessions will even be led by the founder participants through their own business case studies. There will be two accelerator cohorts offered annually, each cohort serving up to 15 individual SEDI entrepreneurs (up to 30 total served annually).

Support Hub Contact:

Pete Martin
Michigan Founders Fund
pete@michiganfoundersfund.org
586-405-4966

Target Businesses:

All small businesses

Coverage Area:

Statewide

MTEC SmartZone

Summary:

MTEC SmartZone is proposing a multi-tiered initiative designed to bring together regional small-business support partners and provide stage-appropriate assistance to small businesses within the Keweenaw area and the broader Upper Peninsula.

This program will support small businesses through in-depth, tailored support through new and existing programs; standardized direct programming and services; and educational programming, online resources, coaching and educational events to capitalize on regional strengths and address the challenges unique to the region through a partnership between MTEC, KEDA and other regional partners.

Even during COVID-19, MTEC was able to continue to expand its offerings and improve its outcome metrics while expanding existing, successful programs and initiatives in scope and geography within the highlighted counties and broader Upper Peninsula (all rural areas impacted by COVID-19).

Support Hub Contact:

Cheryl LeClaire
MTEC SmartZone
cleclaire@mtectsz.com
906-483-2675

Jason Mack
MTEC SmartZone
jmack@mtectsz.com
906-523-1927

SmartZone Gateway Representative Contact:

Jason Mack
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906-523-1927

Target Businesses:

All small businesses

Coverage Area:

Houghton, Keweenaw, Baraga, Ontonagon, Gogebic, Iron counties

SmartZone Services:

As a designated Michigan SmartZone, MTEC has access to MEDC Entrepreneurship Ecosystem-Supported Programs. These programs are listed in this Guide on pages [23-24](#).

Muskegon Innovation Hub

Summary:

The Muskegon Innovation Hub aims to support small businesses impacted by COVID-19 and strengthen the West Michigan ecosystem, including creating a business accelerator for underserved businesses, fostering inclusivity through partnerships, expanding outreach and elevating Michigan's small business profile nationally. Proposed activities encompass an accelerator program, an artist gala, a lecture series, workspace enhancement, staffing, CRM software upgrade, marketing and coach certification.

Anticipated outcomes involve delivering effective coaching, supporting 35 underserved businesses, engaging 40 local artists, improving workspace for 150 entrepreneurs and reaching 250 entrepreneurs through lectures. The initiative strives to bolster economic growth and community resilience in West Michigan.

Support Hub Contact:

Kevin Ricco
Muskegon Innovation Hub
riccok@gvsu.edu
616-331-6901

SmartZone Gateway Representative Contact:

Kevin Ricco
Muskegon Innovation Hub
riccok@gvsu.edu
616-331-6901

Target Businesses:

All small businesses

Coverage Area:

Muskegon, Oceana, Newaygo, Mason, Ottawa (northern), Kent (western) counties

Muskegon Innovation Hub (continued)

SmartZone Services:

As a designated Michigan SmartZone, Muskegon Innovation Hub has access to MEDC Entrepreneurship Ecosystem-Supported Programs. These programs are listed in this Guide on pages [23-24](#).

Operations School ●●

Summary:

Operations School Inc. aims to provide early-stage entrepreneurs with the curriculum, capital and community needed to manage and scale their operations. Located inside Centric Place, a first-of-its-kind hub for Black arts, culture and entrepreneurship in Farmington Hills, Operations School provides bootcamp-style learning experiences, technical assistance, one-on-one coaching and ecosystem navigation support to assist entrepreneurs with accessing resources.

With an emphasis on engaging those most impacted by COVID-19, Operations School highlights systems, automation and delegation strategies to help participants develop sustainable operations. Small Business Support Hub funding will empower Operations School to support 1,000+ entrepreneurs annually.

Support Hubs Contact:

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Operations School
info@rachealallen.com
313-530-9102

Stacie Hunter
Operations School
Stacie@rachealallen.com
313-587-6454

Target Businesses:

All small businesses; early-stage

Coverage Area:

Oakland, Wayne, Macomb counties

Otsego County Economic Alliance Inc. ●●

Summary:

Otsego County Economic Alliance's (OCEA) mission is to champion economic growth while enhancing the quality of life in Otsego County through public/private partnerships. As a nonprofit 501(c)(3) corporation, OCEA has been successful in providing business development services and programs for 22 years.

As a Support Hub, OCEA will be able to provide dedicated staff to entrepreneurial programs and services throughout not just Otsego County, but other counties in Region 3 (Montmorency, Roscommon, Crawford, Ogemaw, Oscoda) that struggle with the capacity to provide economic development to their communities.

OCEA will provide a diverse, comprehensive menu of entrepreneurial services to include mentorship through SCORE, incubator space and assistance, one-on-one consulting services, grant funding and trainings/workshops that have not previously been available in the northeastern region of Michigan.

Support Hub Contact:

Lisa McComb
Otsego Co. EDA
lisa@gaylord-otsego.com
989-731-0288

Target Business:

All small businesses

Coverage Area:

Otsego, Oscoda, Roscommon, Crawford, Ogemaw, Montmorency counties

ProsperUs Detroit

Summary:

ProsperUs Detroit is leading RISE Michigan, a collective of minority and ethnic chambers, business services organizations and nonprofit organizations with demonstrated impact on Black, Latino, immigrant and other underrepresented entrepreneur communities. Through coordinated efforts, RISE connects entrepreneurs to technical assistance, resources and support for stabilization and growth.

It supports inclusive business development by focusing on creating access to resources for socially and economically disadvantaged business owners throughout Michigan. Its organizations invest in programs that provide relevant and robust technical assistance to low-income entrepreneurs, entrepreneurs of color, immigrant entrepreneurs and other disadvantaged groups.

Through technical assistance program models, they ensure that entrepreneurs access capital and grow their businesses. This is possible through direct investments toward affordable and flexible capital products that are accessible to low-income entrepreneurs and other socially and economically disadvantaged businesses.

Support Hub Contact:

Paul Jones
ProsperUs Detroit
pjones@prosperusdetroit.org
313.586.1948

Target Businesses:

All small businesses

Coverage Area:

Wayne, Genesee, Kent, Oakland, Macomb, Ottawa, Muskegon counties

SBAM Foundation

Summary:

The SBAM Foundation (SBAMF) and the Small Business Association of Michigan (SBAM) have joined forces to tackle the profound repercussions of the COVID-19 pandemic on established late first-stage and early second-stage small businesses across Michigan, with a particular focus on those belonging to marginalized communities.

Its collective vision is to establish entrepreneurial hubs in SBAM's engagement zones throughout the state. These hubs will cater to a diverse array of small business cohorts, including women-owned, minority-owned, veteran-owned enterprises, industry and trade-focused enterprises and others, all of whom have been disproportionately impacted by the pandemic. Its overarching goal is to provide relevant educational content, support and resources that are specifically tailored to the unique needs of each community.

At the core of its approach is a commitment to collaboration and partnership. SBAMF and SBAM will work closely with local and regional trade organizations, community leaders and other stakeholders to ensure that its efforts are aligned with the needs and priorities of each engagement zone. By leveraging existing networks and building new partnerships, it will maximize its impact and reach a broader audience.

SBAMF and SBAM welcome referrals of established small businesses from other Support Hubs.

Support Hub Contact:

David C. Rhoa
SBAM Foundation
david.rhoa@sbamfoundation.org
517-492-1232

Target Businesses:

Late first-stage, early second-stage

SBAM Foundation (continued)

Coverage Area:

Statewide

Small Business Support Program from Ann Arbor SPARK

Summary:

Ann Arbor SPARK will collaborate with local community partners to expand services for small businesses.

- Howell Chamber of Commerce will provide a Small Business Innovation Hub.
- Jewish Family Services will provide microenterprise development services to businesses owned by refugees, immigrants and vulnerable community members.
- Launch 734, from Monroe County Business Alliance, will provide a small business incubator and focus on Ag Tech and blue economy businesses.
- The Michigan SBDC's Uplift Michigan™ Business Development Program is a cohort-based design for the unique needs of underserved small business owners.
- The Michigan SBDC Greater Washtenaw Region team will provide individual coaching for established organizations seeking to grow or stabilize their businesses.
- The Entrepreneur Center at Washtenaw Community College will offer an eight-week course on exploring entrepreneurship and a two-year incubator program.

Support Hub Contact:

Kristine Nash-Wong
Ann Arbor SPARK
kristine@annarborusa.org
734-904-4137

SmartZone Gateway Representative Contact:

Hayden Braun
Ann Arbor SPARK
hayden@annarborusa.org
(734) 761-9317

Target Businesses:

All small businesses

Coverage Area:

Livingston, Monroe, Washtenaw counties

SmartZone Services:

As a designated Michigan SmartZone, Ann Arbor SPARK has access to MEDC Entrepreneurship Ecosystem-Supported Programs. These programs are listed in this Guide on pages [23-24](#).

Start Garden

Summary:

Start Garden is an innovative nonprofit that creates opportunities for Michigan entrepreneurs working toward their first \$1,000,000 in revenue by providing resources, community space, networks and leadership:

Resources: They award up to \$500,000 annually in direct grants to entrepreneurs through programs like 5x5 Night (monthly), The 100 (annually), and others.

Community: Its 16,000-sq.-ft. business incubator exists for entrepreneurs to build, work, learn and connect.

Networks: Who you know matters. They share their expansive network with entrepreneurs who need to connect in West Michigan.

Leadership: Their diverse, shared leadership team ensures that no matter who you are, opportunities at Start Garden arrive on a level playing field.

Support Hub Contact:

Paul Moore, Director
Start Garden
paul@startgarden.com
616-633-9838

Laurie Supinski, Director
Start Garden
Laurie@startgarden.com
231-250-2845

Erica Hooser, Grant Manager
Start Garden
erica@startgarden.com

Target Businesses:

Businesses up to \$1,000,000 in revenue

Coverage Area:

Kent County

SmartZone Services:

As a designated Michigan SmartZone, Start Garden has access to MEDC Entrepreneurship Ecosystem-Supported Programs. These programs are listed in this Guide on pages [23-24](#).

Target Alpena Development Corporation

Summary:

Target Alpena Development Corporation is the economic development agency serving a five-county region along Lake Huron in northeast Michigan. Target Alpena served over 1,000 small businesses that requested grant support under the three MEDC pandemic grant programs.

We have small business service offerings to strengthen companies and business owners in the region, connecting them to the larger business support network, including the DDAs, local chambers, SBDC, Michigan Works! and other partners, along with the MEDC resources.

Our region is home to unique industries, including the Michigan Unmanned Aerial Systems Consortium ([MUASC](#)) which features 11,000 square miles of airspace dedicated to research and development, certification, qualification and systems testing for commercial UAS. It includes a military operations area (MOA) that belongs to the Air National Guard, with over 30% of airspace extending over Lake Huron.

Support Hub Contact:

Joe Carr
Target Alpena
jcarr@alpenachamber.com
989-766-8135

Target Businesses:

All small businesses

Coverage Area:

Alcona, Alpena, Cheboygan, Iosco, Presque Isle counties

Summary:

Tejara and the American Arab Chamber of Commerce (AACC) are firmly committed to empowering individuals disproportionately impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic in Michigan with a comprehensive vision for the Tejara Small Business Accelerator (Tejara SBA) program—a transformative initiative aimed at strengthening Michigan’s entrepreneurial ecosystem and providing crucial support to individuals facing the profound economic impacts of the pandemic in Wayne, Oakland, Macomb and Washtenaw counties.

This program aims to provide essential resources, education and opportunities for entrepreneurs and small business owners, empowering them to navigate the challenges of a post-pandemic world.

Support Hub Contact:

Bilal Hammoud
Tejara
bilalhammoud@americanarab.com
313-523-6935

Target Businesses:

All small businesses

Coverage Area:

Wayne, Oakland, Macomb, Washtenaw counties

Velocity SmartZone

Summary:

Velocity, the center of gravity for entrepreneurship and innovation in Macomb County, is excited to expand its services beyond its current portfolio to do outreach and offer substantial support and resources to small businesses and micro-enterprises operated by veterans, women and representatives of historically disadvantaged populations.

To strengthen its one-stop shop, the grant will allow Velocity to increase its staff by up to three persons, upgrade computers and tablets, improve workspaces, increase marketing and outreach for its programming and update its website.

For delivering programs, the grant will allow Velocity to increase its small business training, including the marketing of its small business cohort; provide for the licensing of its expanded programs and curriculum; and the deployment of additional support services, including services to support and maintain the center’s operation and mission, including accounting, legal, website development, business strategy and leadership goals.

Support Hub Contact:

Meghan Hubbs
Velocity
meghan@mivelocity.com
586-353-8469

SmartZone Gateway Representative Contact:

Paula Macpherson
Velocity
Paula@MIVelocity.com
586-604-9940

Target Businesses:

All small businesses

Coverage Area:

Macomb County

SmartZone Services:

As a designated Michigan SmartZone, Velocity has access to MEDC Entrepreneurship Ecosystem-Supported Programs. These programs are listed in this Guide on pages [23-24](#).

TechTown Detroit

Summary:

TechTown is Detroit's entrepreneurship hub and helps startups and existing local businesses develop, launch and grow, while equitably strengthening and diversifying Detroit's economy. The city's designated SmartZone, TechTown was founded in 2000 by Wayne State University, Henry Ford Health, and General Motors to catalyze equitable economic development through entrepreneurship.

TechTown Detroit's Support Hub, in collaboration with ProsperUs, Build Institute, Eastern Market Partnership (EMP) and the SBDC, will strengthen and expand the reach of Detroit's entrepreneurial ecosystem to be more inclusive of, accessible to, and effective for residents and businesses in Wayne County.

The activities included in this program support small businesses disproportionately impacted by COVID-19 and build upon the hub partners' strong word-of-mouth pipelines, referral relationships and reputations for excellence through targeted outreach and engagement to ensure that all entrepreneurs can launch, sustain and grow their businesses.

Support Hub Contact:

Alex Borngesser
Tech Town Detroit
aborngesser@wayne.edu

Christianne Malone
Tech Town Detroit
christianne@techtowndetroit.org
313-671-3080

SmartZone Gateway Representative Contact:

Christianne Malone
Tech Town Detroit
313-671-3080
christianne@techtowndetroit.org

Target Businesses:

All small businesses

Coverage Area:

Wayne County

SmartZone Services:

As a designated Michigan SmartZone, Tech Town has access to MEDC Entrepreneurship Ecosystem-Supported Programs. These programs are listed in this Guide on pages [23-24](#).

West Michigan Hispanic Chamber of Commerce

Summary:

West Michigan Hispanic Chamber of Commerce (WMHCC) will solidify its infrastructure to support small businesses and measure the impact of its services and collaborate with five partners to implement common programming and services throughout the West Michigan region that support Black and Brown businesses.

Using a "train the trainer model," WMHCC (lead administrator) will work in conjunction with: Latin American's United for Progress (LAUP) in Holland; El Concilio in Kalamazoo; Grand Rapids Area Black Businesses (GRABB); and the Urban League of West Michigan in Kent County to extend the *business ecosistema* (business eco-map), *talleres empresariales* (business workshops), *Start Firme* (Start Strong program), and *business velocidad* (Business acceleration/coaching services) to their networks.

Support Hub Contact:

Kaylee Moreno
West Michigan Hispanic
Chamber of Commerce
Kaylee@westmihcc.org
616-452-3960

Target Businesses:

All small businesses with an emphasis on Black- and Hispanic-owned businesses

Coverage Area:

Kent, Ottawa, Kalamazoo counties

SmartZones Overview

Michigan currently has 20 active SmartZones located throughout the state. These SmartZones provide distinct geographical locations where technology-based companies, entrepreneurs and researchers can locate in close proximity to community assets that assist in their endeavors. The SmartZones include technology business accelerators that provide various services such as business development mentoring, feasibility studies, business planning, entrepreneurial training, market analysis, technology assessments, technology mining and more. Below are SmartZones without a direct SBSH award. For the rest of the SmartZones, look for the green dot on pages 19-22.

Automation Alley

Summary:

Automation Alley is a nonprofit technology business association and Digital Transformation Insight Center focused on driving the growth and success of businesses in Michigan and beyond through innovation and automation. With a global outlook and a regional focus, they foster a vibrant community of innovators, entrepreneurs and business leaders through opportunities for collaboration and learning. Programs and services help businesses develop the skills and expertise needed to effectively jumpstart or accelerate digital transformation. Automation Alley brings together industry, academia and government to create a dynamic ecosystem that drives innovation and growth across Michigan.

Target Businesses:

Tech startups and manufacturing companies

Coverage Area:

Troy area for startups, statewide for Industry 4.0 Accelerator

SmartZone Gateway

Representative Contact:

John Bedz
Automation Alley
bedzj@automationalley.com
248-457-3399

City of Grand Rapids Local Development Finance Authority

Summary:

The Bridge and Spartan Innovations are the entry point to Grand Rapids' tech startup community. They exist to help tech startup founders connect with funding. By leveraging partnerships with local startup support organizations, Grand Rapids is a premier destination to start and grow a tech business. Spartan Innovation's network provides access to one-on-one business coaching, incubators and accelerators to help navigate a startup's business strategy and all the resources available to them.

Incubation Services: The Bridge provides a shared workspace for startups in the heart of the city's Medical Mile, but it's more than just a place to work. Michigan State University Research Foundation and Spartan Innovations staff provide mentoring, programming and networking opportunities for tenants.

Target Businesses:

Tech startups

Coverage Area:

Kent County

SmartZone Gateway

Representative Contact:

Janet Wyllie
Spartan Innovations
jwyllie@spartaninnovations.org
616-234-2870

Innovate Marquette Enterprise Corp. ●

Summary:

Innovate Marquette exists as a service provider to the MEDC to transform the community into a thriving entrepreneurial ecosystem, complete with the necessary resources, technology, capital and array of opportunities to attract top-tier innovators who are looking for a place to put down roots with their scalable technology business or startup.

Target Businesses:

Scalable technology companies and start-ups, with a focus on Outdoor Innovation, Sustainable Technology and Creative Technology

Coverage Area:

Marquette area

SmartZone Gateway Representative Contact:

Joe Thiel
Innovate Marquette Enterprise
joe.thiel@imqt.org
906-360-6617

Lenawee Now ●

Summary:

Lenawee Now is a not-for-profit private/public partnership driving economic opportunity in Lenawee County through a variety of programs and services that help businesses startup or expand, develop a talented workforce and access funding and state and federal programs. They work in partnership with state and local economic developers, regional economic development partners in Ann Arbor and Detroit and local educators, businesses and organizations.

Target Businesses:

All Small Businesses

Coverage Area:

Lenawee County

SmartZone Gateway Representative Contact:

Gary Clemetson
Lenawee Now
gary@lenaweenow.org
517-265-5141

Midland Business Alliance

Summary:

Encouraging innovation is key to any thriving business community. High-tech startups and technology-based businesses can take advantage of the Midland Business Alliance's (MBA) powerful partnerships and programs to create, launch and commercialize technologies.

The MBA partners with Central Michigan University Research Corporation (CMURC) to provide accelerator services to qualifying high-tech businesses in the Midland SmartZone.

[The Lake Huron Region Small Business Development Center \(SBDC\)](#) provides consulting, training and research to help small businesses innovate, launch, grow, and transition.

[SizeUp Midland](#) is a critical market-intelligence tool. It allows small businesses and entrepreneurs to make data-driven decisions and fuel business growth.

Target Businesses:

Technology Entrepreneurs/Startups

Coverage Area:

Midland

**SmartZone Gateway
Representative Contact:**
Nicole Wilson
Midland Business Alliance
nwilson@mbami.org
989-839-9901

Oakland University Incubator

Summary:

Oakland University Incubator (OU Inc.) provides entrepreneurial and business startup resources, as well as strategic business solutions for developing business ventures. OU Inc. also excels in accelerating ideas to market and supporting technological innovation. OU Inc. fosters a healthy environment for early-stage, growth-based and high-tech companies, and provides support for existing entities through their facility and business development resources.

Target Businesses:

Alternative energy, advanced/additive manufacturing, advanced automotive, advanced technology innovations, IT & digital technologies, medical devices and mobility technologies

Coverage Area:

Rochester Hills area

**SmartZone Gateway
Representative Contact:**
Steve Kent
OU Inc.
kent@oakland.edu
248-417-2801

SURGE powered by Lakeshore Advantage ●

Summary

SURGE is a business incubator and startup hub that provides product and technology startups with the tools and resources needed to launch and grow successful companies. From concept to commercialization, membership includes access to customized programs, a network of seasoned mentors, and a community of like-minded innovators. New for 2024 - The New Center will house a business incubator which will serve as home base to over 50 startups. The first floor will also house a 50-person learning lab for workshops and seminars to be utilized by startups and the broader community.

Target Businesses:

Advanced manufacturing, life sciences, information technology, agribusiness and aerospace and defense industries

Coverage Area:

Allegan and Ottawa Counties

SmartZone Gateway Representative Contact:

Amanda Chocko
SURGE Center
amanda.chocko@lakeshoreadvantage.com
616-772-5226

WMU Homer Stryker M.D. School of Medicine ●

Summary:

The Western Michigan University Homer Stryker M.D. School of Medicine (WMed) Innovation Center offers training, education, networking and other support to entrepreneurs. Their staff and consultants boast many decades of experience in technology and business. The Innovation Center has an unparalleled success rate among client companies exceeding 90 percent, and a proven track record with 76 patents and more than \$200 million leveraged by client companies.

Target Businesses:

Life Science, technology and engineering

Coverage Area:

Southwest Michigan

SmartZone Gateway Representative Contact:

Sandra Cochrane
WMed Innovation Center
sandra.cochrane@wmed.edu
269-372-8739

MEDC Entrepreneurship Ecosystem-Supported Programs

Small Business Development Center (SBDC) Tech Team

The SBDC provides consulting to innovative tech companies through its “Tech Team” of business consultants who have many years of first-hand experience launching and growing high-tech companies. Their background in tech sectors including life sciences, IT, advanced manufacturing and mobility enables them to provide in-depth support that is essential to the inception and expansion of companies built on cutting-edge technologies.

<https://michigansbdc.org/>

Business Accelerator Fund (BAF)

The [Business Accelerator Fund \(BAF\)](#) is available to participating business accelerators in Michigan’s statewide [SmartZone](#) network. These funds are used toward the delivery of highly specialized services to their clients that are not otherwise available from these business accelerators. Participating business accelerators engage third party specialists to help advance the client’s path to commercialization, company success and economic impact for the state of Michigan.

- BAF funds are awarded to accelerators through a competitive review process.
- A company may receive up to \$50,000 in BAF services, often via multiple engagements.
- BAF is administered by the SBDC. Companies interested in participating are encouraged to contact the nearest SmartZone.

Emerging Technologies Fund (ETF)

The Michigan Emerging Technologies Fund (ETF) is administered by the SBDC and is designed to expand funding opportunities for Michigan technology-based companies in the federal innovation research and development arena by providing match dollars (of up to \$25,000 for Phase I and up to \$125,000 for Phase II) to eligible Small Business Innovation Research (SBIR) or Small Business Technology Transfer (STTR) proposals. Approved ETF applications receive a letter of support to include with their SBIR/STTR proposal. NOTE – you must have the SBDC support letter BEFORE you submit for the federal award, otherwise you will not be eligible to apply. For more information and to apply visit the [SBDC website](#).

Small Business Innovation Research (SBIR) & Small Business Technology Transfer (STTR) Grant Application Assistance

BBCetc provides group training and one-on-one proposal development consulting to Michigan’s technology-based entrepreneurs and early-stage companies. The program’s goal is to increase Michigan’s share of Federal SBIR and STTR funding by enhancing the competitiveness of SBIR/STTR proposals. Support covers applications to all 11 participating federal agencies including NIH, NSF, DoD and DoE and requires a non-refundable participation fee of \$500, which provides up to 15 hours of one-on-one assistance, access to agency tools and templates as appropriate and a reduced rate for on-site training sessions for all individuals from an organization. <http://bbcetc.com/>

Design for Michigan Manufacturing Program

Administered by the LTU Centrepolis Accelerator, Design for Michigan Manufacturing Program (DFMM) provides critical design for manufacturability services to ensure products and technologies are developed to be durable, reliable and at the right price points to ensure sustainable businesses. This is accomplished by utilizing 30+ Manufacturing Experts in Residence (MEiRs), professionals with 20+ years of experience in design, engineering, materials, prototyping, testing, machine design and production processes. DFMM clients are also connected to promising hardware companies to Michigan manufacturers for both supplier and customer relationships.

Equity Funding

Michigan Rise Pre-Seed Fund

[The Michigan Rise Pre-Seed Fund](#) is administered by the Michigan State University Foundation through Michigan Rise which is a fully owned subsidiary of the Foundation. Michigan Rise supports entrepreneurs and technology startups across Michigan through capital support, coaching, assistance with grant funding and more. Funding amounts may be awarded for approved applicants through the fund in the range of \$50,000 to \$250,000.

Michigan Innovate Capital Fund Program

The Michigan Innovate Capital Fund (MICF) Program awarded funding to multiple non-profit organizations that operate fund programs to invest in pre-seed and startup-stage competitive edge technologies that require capital in the earliest stages of the commercialization process.

[Michigan University Innovation Capital Fund and Consortium](#) is a collaborative effort between the University of Michigan's Innovation Partnerships and Michigan State University, Michigan State University Research Foundation, Wayne State University, Western Michigan University and Michigan Technological University. U-M's Innovation Partnerships will manage this new venture fund that is designed to unleash university innovation to drive economic growth by investing in early-stage startups that are based on research from Michigan's public universities.

[The Biosciences Research and Commercialization Center Fund](#) provides startup and gap funding to promising Michigan-based life sciences and medical device ventures entering the commercialization phase of development. Eligible companies must have a substantial presence or business link to the State of Michigan. The BRCC is required by legislation to structure any funding with the potential to achieve a return on its investment. Investments range from \$25,000 to \$250,000 per deal. The BRCC Fund is managed by Biosciences Research & Commercialization Center of Western Michigan University.

[The First Capital Fund \(FCF\)](#) provides an initial investment that is typically up to \$150,000 with follow-on opportunities. The fund is milestone-driven and focused on helping companies achieve additional funding from angel or venture investors within 12 months. FCF is for new technology companies at the earliest stages of commercialization in Michigan seeking pre-seed and seed stage investment. FCF is managed by ID Ventures.

[Michigan Outdoor Innovation Fund](#) has been established to support entrepreneurs across Michigan in the outdoor recreation industry. The Fund will make investments ranging from \$50,000 to \$250,000 in promising Michigan-based startups that are commercializing cutting-edge technologies in outdoor recreation. The Fund is the first of its kind in the Upper Peninsula, the only seed fund in any rural location across Michigan. The Fund is managed by InvestUP.

[SPARK Pre-Seed Fund III](#) supports entrepreneurs and technology startups across Michigan through capital support, coaching, assistance with grant funding and more. Funding amounts may be awarded for approved applicants through the fund in the range of \$50,000 to \$250,000.