



Interim Report

SMALL BUSINESS SUPPORT HUBS PROGRAM

DECEMBER 2025





Public Policy Associates is a public policy research, development, and evaluation firm headquartered in Lansing, Michigan. We serve clients in the public, private, and nonprofit sectors at the national, state, and local levels by conducting research, analysis, and evaluation that supports informed strategic decision-making.

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Introduction

The success of small businesses requires a combination of entrepreneurial determination, passion, adaptability, and strategic awareness. However, without the support of a robust entrepreneurial ecosystem, even the strongest small businesses may struggle. Through the Small Business Support Hubs program, the Michigan Economic Development Corporation (MEDC) has invested in this ecosystem, bringing new and scaled resources to Michigan businesses through a strong and effective partner network.

THE MICHIGAN SMALL BUSINESS SUPPORT HUB PROGRAM

The Small Business Support Hub (SBSH) program builds upon the 20 years of Michigan Economic Development Corporation (MEDC) SmartZone success by creating a statewide network of entrepreneurial hubs equipped to serve the needs of small businesses through direct support and network referral relationships. Since December 2023, the MEDC has funded 27 Support Hubs across the state to help entrepreneurs navigate Michigan’s small business ecosystem and gain awareness of federal, state, and local resources. These efforts include comprehensive programming and direct support to small businesses, whether it is helping develop a business plan to secure funding, growing a customer base and industry connections, or hiring and managing employees.

While the network of support hubs shares a common set of goals to support small business growth in the state, the individual hubs also have unique focus areas, which may include targeting services to specific locations, owner demographics, and/or industries. Table 1 provides an overview of the 27 hubs, including any special focus areas and regions served.

TABLE 1. NAME, REGION SERVED, AND SPECIAL FOCUS OF EACH MICHIGAN SMALL BUSINESS SUPPORT HUB

HUB NAME AND SPECIAL FOCUS	REGION
20Fathoms (Traverse City): Very small businesses; rural entrepreneurs; Native entrepreneurs; technology businesses	10-county in NW lower Michigan
Ann Arbor SPARK: Agricultural Tech and Blue Economy businesses	Livingston, Monroe, and Washtenaw Counties
Battle Creek Food Reimagined: Food industry; agriculture industry	Battle Creek and West Michigan
Can-Do Kalamazoo: BIPOC, Immigrant, Hispanic/Latinx entrepreneurs, LGBTQIA+, technology, food, construction, child care, retail, life sciences, and engineering businesses	Greater Kalamazoo; partners in Portage, South Haven, Battle Creek, Grand Rapids, Muskegon
Central UP SBSH (Lake Superior Community Partnership): Native entrepreneurs	Central UP (7 counties); three Sovereign tribal lands



HUB NAME AND SPECIAL FOCUS	REGION
Centrepolis Accelerator (LTU): Hardtech; Cleantech; Advanced Manufacturing; Industry 4.0; Defense; Native entrepreneurs	Southeast Michigan; West Michigan; Statewide; distressed communities
Chippewa County EDC: Aviation, Aerospace, Foreign Trade Zones/Bi National Investment District, manufacturing, Native entrepreneurs	Eastern UP (5 counties); Sault Tribe/Bay Mills
Detroit Economic Growth Association (DEGA): Black entrepreneurs, women, food industry, and very small businesses	City of Detroit and Highland Park
Eastern Michigan Small Business Network (Port Huron): Technology and non-technology businesses	Genesee, Huron, Lapeer, Sanilac, Shiawassee, St. Clair, and Tuscola Counties
Flint and Genesee Economic Alliance: SEDI; BIPOC entrepreneurs; micro-businesses	Genesee County
Grand Rapids Center for Community Transformation: Women, BIPOC, Spanish-speaking, and food industry entrepreneurs	49507 zip code
Great Lakes Bay Small Business Hub (CMU): Women/BIPOC entrepreneurs	Great Lakes Bay (Isabella, Bay, Midland, and Saginaw Counties)
Lansing Economic Area Partnership (LEAP): Youth, food industry, non-technology, and Hispanic/Latinx entrepreneurs	Clinton, Eaton, and Ingham Counties
Lean Rocket Lab: Very small businesses	Lenawee, Hillsdale, and Jackson Counties
Michigan Founders Fund (MFF): Climate Tech, Health Tech, Agriculture Tech	Greater Detroit (11 counties); Central/West MI (8 counties)
Michigan Tech Enterprise Corporation (MTEC) SmartZone: Technology-driven small businesses; rural entrepreneurs	Keweenaw Peninsula; broader Western UP
Muskegon Innovation Hub (GVSU): Artist entrepreneurs; rural businesses	West Michigan
Operations School Inc.: Black-owned businesses; veteran-owned businesses; second-stage businesses	Oakland County; Greater Farmington area
Otsego County Economic Alliance (OCEA): Minority-owned businesses	6 counties in NE Lower Michigan
ProsperUs Detroit: BIPOC entrepreneurs; immigrant entrepreneurs; microbusinesses	Statewide (sites in Flint, Saginaw, Grand Rapids, Detroit)
Small Business Association of Michigan (SBAM) Foundation: Woman-owned; veteran-owned; disabled-owned; family-owned	Statewide
Start Garden: Food industry entrepreneurs/businesses	West Michigan
Target Alpena: Medium-sized businesses	Northeastern Michigan
TechTown Detroit: BIPOC, immigrant, women, Native entrepreneurs; ideation-stage businesses	Wayne County; Southeast Michigan
Tejara: Arab American Entrepreneurs	Detroit Metro Region
Velocity SmartZone: Women/veteran owned, tech/manufacturing	Macomb County
West Michigan Hispanic Chamber of Commerce: Black and Hispanic entrepreneurs/businesses; rural entrepreneurs	Kent, Muskegon, Ottawa, and Kalamazoo Counties

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, generally identified based on their location. This individualized focus allows hubs to offer a wide variety of programming that reflects regional needs and local priorities. Regardless of business stage, industry, experience, or need, Support Hubs ensure businesses are connected to the right resources, whether available through the Hub or through a partner network connection.

EVALUATING THE SBSH PROGRAM

In October 2024, MEDC engaged Public Policy Associates to conduct an independent evaluation of the SBSH program. The goals of this evaluation are to analyze the program's implementation and outcomes, as well as identify program strengths and weaknesses and recommend improvements. This evaluation is guided by the following four central questions:

1. What are the program's successes and outcomes?
 - a. How do the outcomes vary by region, business stage, size of business, industry, and demographics?
 - b. How did the program support the creation or expansion of regional assets to support small businesses?
 - c. What were the impacts to the business support hubs?
 - d. What are the success stories that highlight the outcomes achieved by small businesses supported by the program?
2. How did the implementation of the SBSH program model impact program outcomes? Was the model effective in meeting program goals?
3. What are the primary profiles of small businesses and entrepreneurs served by the SBSH program?
4. What short-term and long-term changes or improvements will be needed to sustain the program?

PURPOSE OF THIS INTERIM REPORT

The report provides a snapshot of what has been learned through the first half of the evaluation. The analysis focused heavily on implementation and outcome data reported by the hubs between December 2023 and June 2025. As this is an interim report, it is important to note that, rather than conclusive findings, the data presented here are intended to provide a preliminary glimpse into the program's progress and lessons learned. The evaluation team's plans for additional data collection to be conducted over the next year to inform a more comprehensive analysis are described at the end of the report.



Program Performance

To date, the Small Business Support Hubs (SBSHs) have served a total of 7,910 businesses and entrepreneurs. The vast majority (95%) of these entities served were established businesses, as verified by proof of LARA registration. Of those, 16% were new businesses (established within a year before intake by the hub or first engaged with the hub before formally establishing).

When describing characteristics of small businesses, this report uses the following definitions established by the Michigan Economic Development Corporation (MEDC) for this program:

- **Nascent**: An entrepreneur or entrepreneurs actively working to form a new business, but who have not yet registered that entity with LARA to conduct business in Michigan.
- **Established**: Any business that is registered with LARA. This includes:
 - **New**: A business established after interacting with a Hub, or in the 12 months before initial intake with a Hub.
 - **Early Stage**: A business established in the last 1–3 years.
 - **Second Stage**: A business with more than 10 full-time equivalent (FTE) employees and over \$1 million in annual revenue.
 - **Microbusiness**: A business with 10 or fewer FTE employees.

Table 2 below summarizes the characteristics of all those served by the hubs. Note that because it is possible for a business to fall into multiple categories the totals do not sum to 100%.

TABLE 2. SUMMARY OF BUSINESSES ENGAGED BY SMALL BUSINESS SUPPORT HUBS

Total Businesses Served (n = 7,910)	Count	% of Total Businesses
Minority-Owned or Controlled Business	4,277	54%
Women-Owned or Controlled Business	4,349	55%
Veteran-Owned or Controlled Business	279	4%
Disabled-Owned or Controlled Business	363	5%
Nascent Business Concept	401	5%
Established/Registered Business	7,509	95%
Established/Registered Businesses (n = 7,509)	Count	% of Established Businesses
New Start (<1 yr old)	1,233	16%
Microbusiness (<10 FTE)	6,773	90%
Early Stage (1–3 yrs)	3,838	51%
2nd Stage (>10 FTE and >\$1M in revenue)	347	5%



At the start of the program, MEDC identified the following set of key performance metrics to be accomplished by the hubs by the end of the three-year period:

- Reach and support 20,000 unique small businesses,
- Support the creation or retention of over 10,000 jobs,
- Facilitate the creation of 4,000 new businesses,
- Support at least 8,000 minority-owned businesses, and
- Support at least 2,000 veteran-owned businesses.

It should be noted that these metrics were created before the program was launched, and, given the innovative nature and large scale of the Michigan SBSH program, they constituted best estimates. Metrics for the next phase(s) of this program may be adjusted in light of the 18 months of implementation experience and the results of this evaluation.

Table 3 summarizes progress on key metrics through June 2025.

TABLE 3. SUMMARY OF OUTCOMES ACHIEVED BY SMALL BUSINESS SUPPORT HUBS THROUGH JUNE 2025

7,910 Unique Businesses Served	
Nascent Business Concept	401
Established/Registered Business	7,509
New Start (<1 yr old)	1,233
Early Stage (1–3 yrs)	3,838
2nd Stage (>10 FTE and >\$1M in revenue)	347
Microbusiness (<10 FTE)	6,773
Minority-Owned or Controlled Business	4,277
Women-Owned or Controlled Business	4,349
Veteran-Owned or Controlled Business	279
Disabled-Owned or Controlled Business	363
5,034 Current and Projected Jobs Created	
Jobs Created	1,625
Projected Job Creation from New Businesses	3,409
Existing Jobs Supported	28,098
Early Stage (1–3 yrs)	3,838
2nd Stage (>10 FTE and >\$1M in revenue)	347
733 Direct Small Business Support Grants Awarded	
Total Value of Grants Awarded	\$3,882,868



SMALL BUSINESS SUPPORT HUBS HAVE BEEN SUCCESSFUL IN REACHING MINORITY-OWNED AND WOMEN-OWNED BUSINESSES.

A core objective of the program is to reach business-owner populations that have historically faced barriers to accessing resources, including women, racial and ethnic minorities, veterans, and individuals with disabilities. Several of the hubs focus almost entirely on serving specialized demographic groups. For instance, Operations School Inc. reported 290 minority-owned businesses out of 292 total businesses served, and Tejara served 320 minority-owned businesses out of 322 total served. In fact, the data show remarkable success in this area across hubs, particularly when comparing the demographics of businesses served by the hubs to all small businesses statewide. Table 3 below compares the rates of minority-, women-, and veteran-owned or controlled businesses who visited a hub compared to the rates among all small businesses in Michigan.¹

Velocity Focuses on Micro and Women-Owned Businesses

Velocity, a support hub located in Macomb County, also operates as a SmartZone and focuses on repeating its past success in high technology areas but applies this to micro and women-owned businesses. This focus is partly due to the very limited small business support services available in Macomb County. A key programmatic question is how the hub could scale its successful model beyond Macomb County.

TABLE 4. DEMOGRAPHICS OF SMALL BUSINESSES SERVED BY THE HUBS

BUSINESSES OWNER DEMOGRAPHICS	PROPORTION AMONG AMONG SBBSH USERS	PROPORTION AMONG ALL MI SMALL BUSINESSES	DIFFERENCE
Minority-owned or controlled businesses	54%	29%	25%
Women-owned or controlled businesses	55%	44%	11%
Veteran-owned or controlled businesses	4%	5%	-1%
Disabled-owned or controlled businesses	5%	NA	NA

The data provide strong evidence that the hubs are achieving the goal of reaching more minority- and women-owned or controlled businesses. The network is serving minority-owned businesses at a rate 25 percentage points higher than their statewide representation and serving women-owned businesses at a rate 11 percentage points higher. This significant over-performance

¹ Although the program also seeks to expand services to businesses owned or controlled by individuals with disabilities, there were no comparable data available on such businesses statewide.



demonstrates the effectiveness of the hubs' outreach and service models in connecting with these often-underserved entrepreneurial communities.

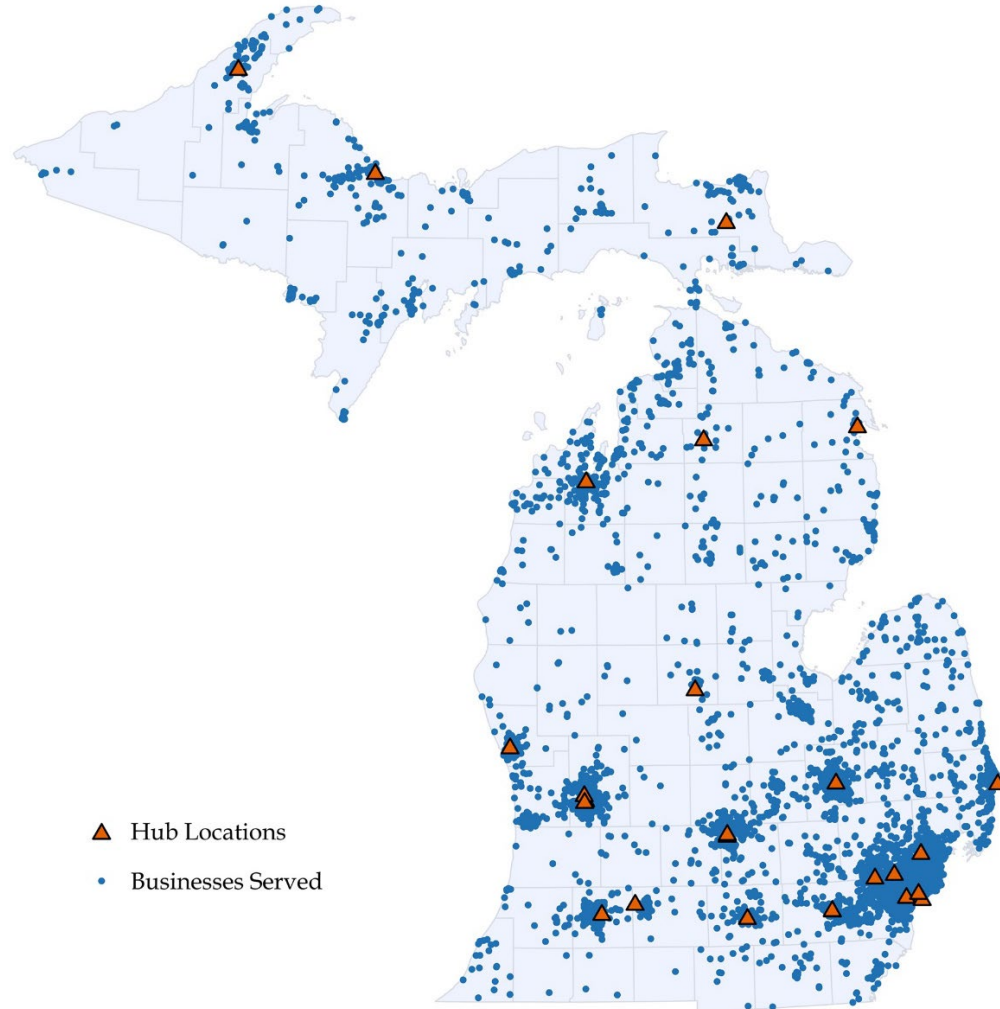
In contrast, the program is currently underperforming in its goal to support veteran-owned businesses. Not only is the program tracking at just 14% of its three-year target, but it is also serving this population at a rate slightly below the state average (-1%). These data indicate that a significant and targeted effort will be required in the next phase of the program to more effectively reach and support Michigan's veteran entrepreneur population.

SMALL BUSINESS SUPPORT HUBS SERVED BUSINESSES LOCATED IN EVERY COUNTY IN MICHIGAN.

The map in Figure 2 shows the location of each small business served by one or more of the hubs between December 2023 and June 30, 2025. The Eastern Michigan Small Business Network and the Small Business Association of Michigan Foundation demonstrated the highest volume of businesses and entrepreneurs served with 686 and 696, respectively. While the areas of highest density are understandably clustered around the locations of the hubs, the map shows that the hubs have had statewide reach, having served businesses in every county in the state.



Figure 1. Locations of Small Business Support Hubs and the Businesses They Served



The maps in Figure 3 and Figure 4 provide additional insight into the geographic reach of hub services throughout the state. The map in Figure 3 shows the total count of businesses served by county. In general, counties with larger numbers of existing small businesses are the counties with the highest number of small businesses served by hubs. For instance, more than 1,400 small businesses, or approximately 20% of all businesses served by hubs, were located in the state's largest county, Wayne County. However, on its own, the number of businesses served in a particular location is not a complete measure of the degree to which hubs are meeting potential demand in that location. Using the overall count of existing small businesses as an indicator of potential demand, the map in Figure 4 shows the rate of businesses served per 1,000 existing businesses in each county. Despite serving over 1,400 Wayne County small businesses, hubs still only served between seven and eight businesses out of every 1,000 small businesses located in the county. Conversely, rates were significantly higher in



several Upper Peninsula counties. In Baraga County, for example, the rate was nearly 90 per 1,000.

Figure 2. Count of Businesses Served, by County

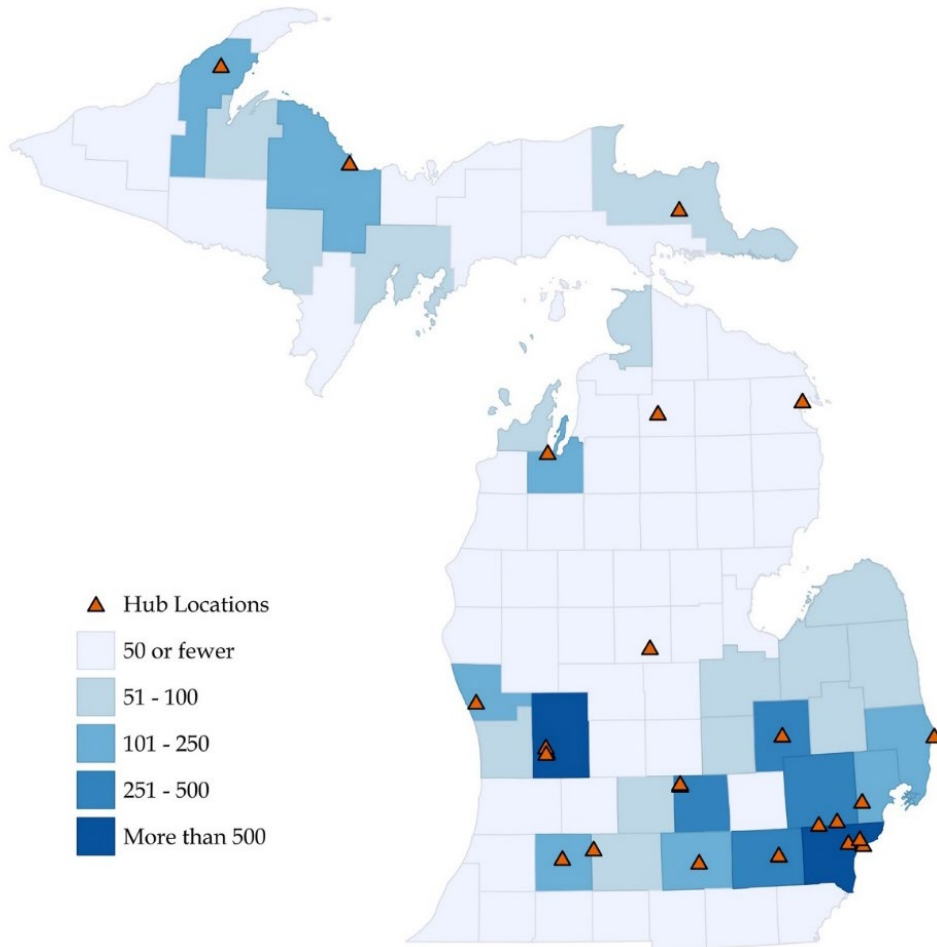
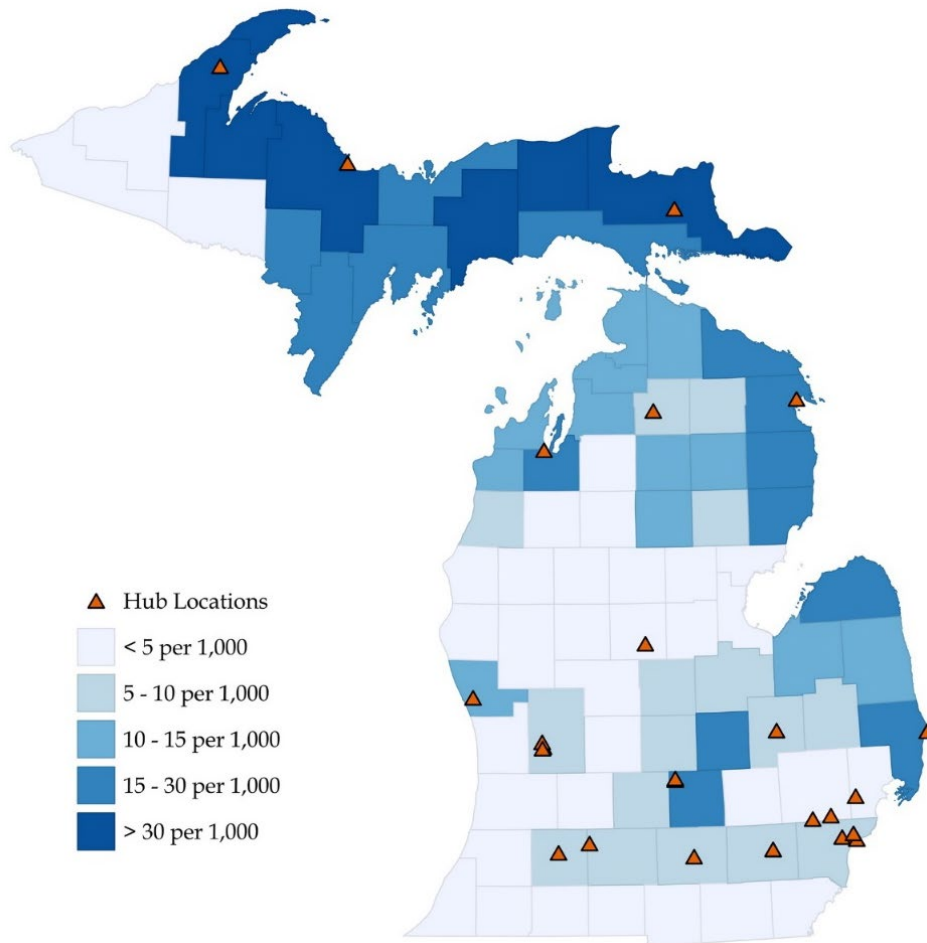




Figure 3. Rate of Businesses Served per 1,000 Small Businesses, by County



AMONG THE INDIVIDUAL HUBS, THERE IS MUCH DIVERSITY IN THE NUMBERS AND TYPES OF SMALL BUSINESSES SERVED.

As noted in the introduction, there is a significant amount of variation among the individual hubs regarding the number and types of businesses they target and the way they deliver services. While some hubs focus on relatively brief “light touch” education and outreach and seek to increase the volume of businesses served, others focus on providing more intensive services delivered to a smaller number of businesses. This diversity is illustrated in Table 4, which provides a summary of businesses served by each of the hubs.

**TABLE 5. TYPE/STAGE AND OWNERSHIP DEMOGRAPHICS OF BUSINESSES SERVED BY EACH MICHIGAN SBS HUB**

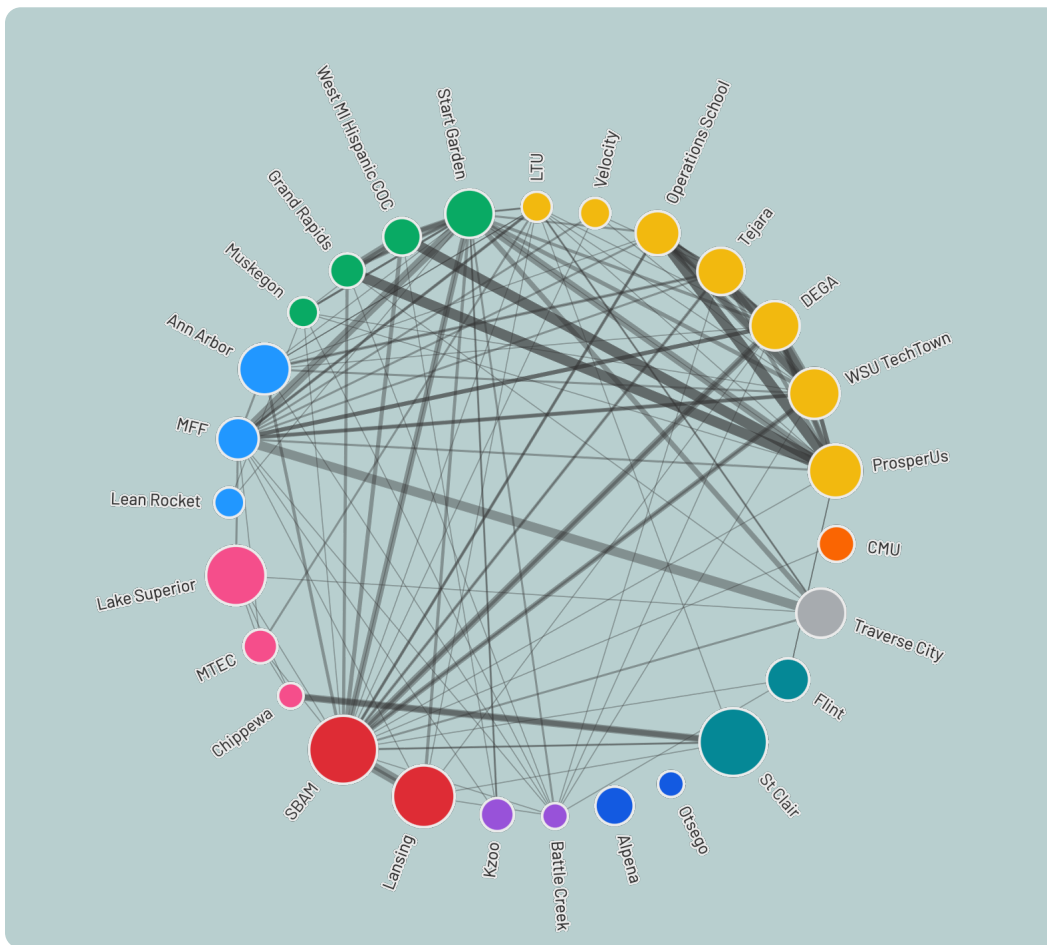
HUB	TOTAL	BUSINESS TYPE/STAGE (%)					OWNERSHIP DEMOGRAPHICS (%)			
		NASCENT	NEW	MICRO	EARLY	2ND	WOMEN	MINORITY	DISABLED	VETERAN
20Fathoms (Traverse City Center for Entrepreneurship)	363	0.3%	23.7%	80.1%	52.5%	7.7%	34.4%	23.4%	3.9%	5.5%
Ann Arbor SPARK Small Business Support Program	386	17.9%	16.6%	99.1%	61.8%	0.0%	67.1%	61.1%	6.7%	3.1%
Battle Creek Food Reimagined	100	4.0%	19.0%	89.6%	51.0%	0.0%	66.0%	54.0%	6.0%	9.0%
Can-Do Kalamazoo	165	1.2%	23.6%	98.8%	58.3%	0.0%	46.1%	57.6%	3.0%	4.2%
Central UP SBSH (Lake Superior Community Partnership)	531	3.6%	22.0%	89.8%	55.3%	6.3%	49.0%	17.3%	4.9%	5.1%
Centrepolis Accelerator at Lawrence Technology University (LTU)	137	0.7%	13.9%	88.2%	54.4%	9.6%	19.7%	36.5%	2.2%	2.2%
Chippewa County Economic Development Corporation	98	0.0%	7.1%	68.4%	41.8%	20.4%	28.6%	31.6%	3.1%	7.1%
Detroit Economic Growth Association (DEGA)	365	18.1%	10.4%	98.7%	46.2%	1.7%	73.2%	97.3%	1.4%	0.8%
Eastern Michigan Small Business Network (St. Clair)	686	8.3%	14.7%	87.1%	50.1%	12.9%	51.5%	13.7%	5.7%	5.4%
Flint and Genesee Economic Alliance	268	11.6%	18.7%	94.9%	62.4%	0.0%	56.0%	73.1%	1.9%	1.1%
Grand Rapids Center for Community Transformation	178	0.6%	7.9%	82.5%	35.6%	5.1%	48.3%	82.6%	0.6%	1.1%
Great Lakes Bay Small Business Hub (CMU)	193	0.0%	20.2%	87.0%	53.9%	1.6%	60.1%	42.5%	0.0%	7.8%
Lansing Economic Area Partnership (LEAP)	572	12.1%	20.3%	85.7%	63.2%	0.6%	64.5%	62.8%	14.5%	4.0%
Lean Rocket Lab	137	0.0%	29.2%	97.8%	67.2%	0.7%	72.3%	35.8%	6.6%	2.9%
Michigan Founders Fund (MFF)	260	0.4%	19.6%	88.0%	59.5%	4.2%	34.2%	39.2%	0.4%	0.0%
Michigan Tech Enterprise Corporation (MTEC) SmartZone	172	0.0%	10.5%	64.5%	34.9%	21.5%	16.9%	3.5%	1.2%	3.5%
Muskegon Innovation Hub (Grand Valley State University, GVSU)	136	0.0%	20.6%	97.8%	55.9%	0.7%	48.5%	47.8%	5.1%	5.1%
Operations School Inc.	292	4.1%	4.8%	97.5%	42.1%	2.5%	74.0%	99.3%	2.4%	0.7%
Otsego County Economic Alliance (OCEA)	101	5.0%	22.8%	83.3%	53.1%	1.0%	58.4%	2.0%	11.9%	10.9%
ProsperUs Detroit	425	7.3%	11.1%	95.7%	46.7%	2.5%	66.4%	87.1%	0.7%	1.6%
Small Business Association of Michigan (SBAM) Foundation	696	0.0%	1.0%	80.9%	21.3%	11.1%	51.4%	48.6%	5.7%	3.4%
Start Garden	352	0.3%	27.8%	99.4%	71.2%	0.0%	57.7%	75.0%	4.8%	2.3%
Target Alpena	221	8.1%	19.5%	93.1%	49.3%	1.0%	47.1%	3.2%	6.3%	7.7%
WSU TechTown	387	0.0%	8.0%	97.9%	43.2%	0.0%	70.5%	83.7%	1.6%	1.8%
Tejara	336	1.5%	18.2%	96.1%	68.3%	0.3%	50.6%	95.2%	6.0%	2.7%
Velocity SmartZone	140	5.0%	15.0%	95.5%	51.1%	1.5%	71.4%	45.0%	6.4%	6.4%
West Michigan Hispanic Chamber of Commerce (COC)	213	0.5%	19.7%	94.8%	61.3%	1.4%	55.9%	94.4%	0.0%	0.0%
	7,910	5.1%	15.6%	90.2%	51.1%	4.6%	55.0%	54.1%	4.6%	3.5%



MANY SMALL BUSINESSES ACCESSED SERVICES FROM MORE THAN ONE HUB, SUGGESTING A FORMING ECOSYSTEM.

Of the 7,910 businesses or nascent concepts served by the hubs, 346 were served by two or more hubs. Figure 5 below is a radial network diagram depicting all 27 hubs as circular nodes with lines between them for shared clients. Nodes are color coded by economic prosperity region and sized to reflect the number of businesses served by that hub, whereas the thickness of lines between nodes reflects the number of shared clients.

Figure 4. Radial Diagram of Businesses Served by More Than One Hub



Over half (177) of all connections represent one of the following ten hub pairs.

- ProsperUs & Grand Rapids (51)
- ProsperUs & West MI Hispanic COC (25)
- ProsperUs & Operations School (23)
- Operations School & DEGA (21)



- Lansing & SBAM (16)
- St. Clair & Chippewa (12)
- Operations School & WSU TechTown (9)
- WSU TechTown & DEGA (8)
- MFF & Traverse City (6)
- Start Garden & West MI Hispanic COC (6)

Notably, ProsperUs appears in each of the three most common pairs, and Operations School occurs in three of the top ten pairs. Other hubs that appear in multiple pairs include the West MI Hispanic COC, DEGA, and WSU TechTown. Each of those hubs is located in an urban area that is near other hubs. However, St. Clair and Chippewa stand out as a pair because they are not co-located and are both in rural areas. Understanding better how the hubs work together and providing programmatic suggestions for creating a cohesive ecosystem will be a critical part of the next phase of this program.

SMALL BUSINESSES HAVE RECEIVED MORE THAN \$3 MILLION IN DIRECT GRANT FUNDING THROUGH THE SMALL BUSINESS SUPPORT HUBS.

In addition to providing a range of support services and facilitating connections with existing resources, hubs also had the option to award direct grants to small businesses. Grants are limited to \$20,000 per business and must be used to support operations or growth needs of the small business.

Collectively, the hubs awarded 733 grants totaling \$3,882,868, with an overall average grant amount of \$5,297. However, the degree to which grantmaking was integrated into overall support services offered varied among the hubs. Several hubs dedicated a significant portion of their budgets to providing direct grants. For instance, the Great Lakes Bay Small Business Hub (CMU) has awarded 22 grants totaling \$426,316, and Start Garden has awarded 100 grants totaling \$395,000. Conversely, a number of hubs have elected to focus on other services and have not awarded any direct grants. Table 5 below summarizes direct grant activity, by hub, through June 2025.

Flint/Genesee Demonstrates Grant Program Success

The Flint and Genesee Economic Alliance achieved a 100% completion rate for its grant program. This success is attributed to the fact that their program is structured in a way that minimizes lost paperwork, suggesting it may not rely solely on a traditional reimbursement grant model.

**TABLE 6. DIRECT GRANTS AWARDED, BY HUB**

HUB	GRANTS \$ AWARDED	# OF GRANTS AWARDED	AVERAGE GRANT AMOUNT
20Fathoms (Traverse City Center for Entrepreneurship)	\$9,000.00	2	\$4,500.00
Ann Arbor SPARK Small Business Support Program	\$140,211.12	42	\$3,338.36
Battle Creek Food Reimagined	\$110,000.00	22	\$5,000.00
Can-Do Kalamazoo	\$44,889.00	8	\$5,611.13
Central UP SBSH (Lake Superior Community Partnership)	\$214,875.00	91	\$2,361.26
Centrepolis Accelerator at LTU	\$80,000.00	4	\$20,000.00
Chippewa County Economic Development Corporation	\$196,806.47	40	\$4,920.16
Detroit Economic Growth Association (DEGA)	\$268,812.00	53	\$5,071.92
Eastern Michigan Small Business Network (St. Clair)	\$135,145.06	36	\$3,754.03
Flint and Genesee Economic Alliance	\$185,000.00	20	\$9,250.00
Grand Rapids Center for Community Transformation	-	-	-
Great Lakes Bay Small Business Hub (CMU)	\$426,316.00	22	\$19,378.00
Lansing Economic Area Partnership (LEAP)	\$198,377.10	34	\$5,834.62
Lean Rocket Lab	\$92,000.00	23	\$4,000.00
Michigan Founders Fund (MFF)	\$150,000.00	10	\$15,000.00
Michigan Tech Enterprise Corporation (MTEC) SmartZone	\$176,205.05	14	\$12,586.08
Muskegon Innovation Hub (GVSU)	\$134,300.00	16	\$8,393.75
Operations School Inc.	\$89,750.00	23	\$3,902.17
Otsego County Economic Alliance (OCEA)	-	-	-
ProsperUs Detroit	-	-	-
Small Business Association of Michigan (SBAM) Foundation	\$193,875.38	39	\$4,971.16
Start Garden	\$395,000.00	100	\$3,950.00
Target Alpena	\$116,131.48	24	\$4,838.81
WSU TechTown	\$197,674.70	32	\$6,177.33
Tejara	\$204,500.00	40	\$5,112.50
Velocity SmartZone	\$124,000.00	38	\$3,263.16
West Michigan Hispanic COC	-	-	-
Grand Total	\$3,882,868.36	733	\$5,297.23



Small businesses that engaged more with the hubs were more likely to receive direct grants.

Approximately 10% of the small businesses served (733 total) received direct grant support from an SBSH. To try and understand the relationship between business characteristics and grant outcomes, a regression analysis was conducted. Businesses that visited a single hub more than once were found to be nearly 18% more likely to also have received a grant. This relationship is statistically significant, but it is unclear whether this indicates that additional visits with a hub increase chances of winning, or the other way around (winning a grant makes a business more likely to return). Other characteristics that were statistically significantly related to winning a grant include visiting more than one hub and business stage. However, the actual differences are fairly small making them not worth reporting on here. These patterns will be explored more through the interviews with hubs and hub customers.

SBAM Foundation Uses Innovative Approach for Direct Grants

The SBAM Foundation utilizes a point system for its direct grant program, meaning business owners earn points by participating in various programs, events, and classes offered by the hub to qualify. SBAM has a course on the "Anatomy of a brand," framing branding not as an ad hoc activity but as an actual practice with established guidelines.

For businesses receiving a direct grant, the size of the grant ranged from \$250 to \$20,000 and the impact of certain characteristics on the size of the grant was analyzed. On average, a business with more than 10 employees that does not qualify as second stage (less than \$1M in revenue) earned approximately \$5,500 more in grant funding than other business types.

Next Steps

While it is too early in the evaluation process to draw clear conclusions about the impacts of the Small Business Support Hubs program overall, the preliminary analysis presented in this interim report can still be useful for informing next steps for continuing to improve the program's implementation and evaluation going forward. In addition, on October 22, 2025, the evaluation team met with representatives from the small business support hubs at the Michigan Economic Development Corporation (MEDC) to share key findings from this report and gather feedback from the hubs. Based on the data presented in this interim report and the feedback provided by the hubs, PPA offers the following recommendations for consideration.



1. **Continue to expand opportunities for the hubs to interact and learn from each other.** From the start of the program’s implementation, MEDC has attempted to provide regular opportunities for representatives from the hubs to meet as a group to get programmatic updates from MEDC and discuss implementation. Examples include quarterly convenings (both in-person and virtual) and virtual “office hours” with MEDC staff. Feedback from the hubs suggests that opportunities to meet with the other hubs are very helpful, especially when they can use that time to learn from one another. Providing added support and structure for hub-to-hub interactions through a community of practice model could be an effective way to promote peer learning and group problem solving among the hubs.
2. **Collect and analyze additional qualitative data from the hubs.** By soliciting hub input through interviews, group conversations, and other forms of qualitative data collection, the evaluation team will be better able to interpret the meaning of the results of the quantitative analysis of quarterly report data, as well as develop a richer understanding of the program’s implementation across the hubs.
3. **Assess and refine program target metrics.** The metrics for success described early in this report were created before the program was launched, and given the innovative nature and large scale of the Michigan small-business support hub program, they constituted best estimates for appropriate measurable outcomes. In light of the 18 months of implementation experience and the results of this evaluation, the metrics should be reviewed to make sure they still represent the priority outcomes. They may also benefit from being refined to reflect more nuanced goals. For example, while the hubs effectively served minority-owned businesses in general, only 18% of the second-stage businesses served were minority-owned, potentially indicating a more targeted area of focus for the next phase of the program.
4. **Continue and refine quarterly hub reporting and analysis.** Using the quarterly reporting template developed by MEDC, the hubs have done a good job of tracking their activities, including details about the small businesses they serve, types of services delivered, and direct grants awarded. These data are vital for understanding the trends and outcomes of the Small Business Support Hub program. MEDC has already collaborated with the hubs to improve the efficiency and accuracy of the reporting process and should continue to do so as experience with the data-collection process grows.



Hub Summary Tables

Michigan's 27 Small Business Support Hubs			
New	1,233	Jobs Created*	1,625
Existing	6,276	Jobs Supported	28,098
Nascent	401	Jobs Projected	20,188
Total	7,910	Current & Projected Jobs Created	5,034
Micro	6,773	Grants \$	\$3,882,868
Early Stage	3,838	Grants #	733
2nd Stage	347	Referral Made	2,255
Minority	4,277	Disabled	363
Women	4,349	Veteran	279

*This number was added to the number of projected jobs from new businesses (n=3,409) to measure against the statewide goal.

20Fathoms (Traverse City Center for Entrepreneurship)			
Region served	10-county northwest lower Michigan region		
Special focus	Very small businesses; rural entrepreneurs; Native entrepreneurs; technology businesses		
New	86	Jobs Created	162
Existing	276	Jobs Supported	3,356
Nascent	1	Jobs Projected	158
Total	363		
Micro	290	Grants \$	\$9,000
Early Stage	190	Grants #	2
2nd Stage	28	Referral Made	363
Minority	85	Disabled	14
Women	125	Veteran	20

Ann Arbor SPARK Small Business Support Program			
Region served	Livingston, Monroe, and Washtenaw Counties		
Special focus	Agricultural Tech and Blue Economy businesses (focus of one partner)		
New	64	Jobs Created	82
Existing	253	Jobs Supported	436
Nascent	69	Jobs Projected	1,753
Total	386		
Micro	314	Grants \$	\$140,211
Early Stage	196	Grants #	42
2nd Stage	0	Referral Made	55
Minority	236	Disabled	26
Women	259	Veteran	12



Battle Creek Food Reimagined			
Region served	Battle Creek and West Michigan		
Special focus	Food industry entrepreneurs; agriculture industry entrepreneurs		
New	19	Jobs Created	26
Existing	77	Jobs Supported	187
Nascent	4	Jobs Projected	190
Total	100		
Micro	86	Grants \$	\$110,000
Early Stage	49	Grants #	22
2nd Stage	0	Referral Made	45
Minority	54	Disabled	6
Women	66	Veteran	9

Can-Do Kalamazoo			
Region served	Greater Kalamazoo area; partners in Portage, South Haven, Battle Creek, Grand Rapids, and Muskegon		
Special focus	BIPOC, Immigrant, Hispanic/Latinx, LGBTQIA entrepreneurs; technology businesses; food industry entrepreneurs; construction entrepreneurs; (through partners) child care center entrepreneurs, retail services, publishing, life sciences, and engineering businesses		
New	39	Jobs Created	6
Existing	124	Jobs Supported	81
Nascent	2	Jobs Projected	141
Total	165		
Micro	161	Grants \$	\$44,889
Early Stage	95	Grants #	8
2nd Stage	0	Referral Made	93
Minority	95	Disabled	5
Women	76	Veteran	7

Central Upper Peninsula Small Business Support Hub (Lake Superior Community Partnership)			
Region served	Central UP; Alger, Delta, Dickinson, Marquette, Menominee, Schoolcraft, and Baraga Counties; Sovereign tribal lands of the Hannahville Indian Community, the Keweenaw Bay Indian Community, and the Sault Tribe of Chippewa Indians		
Special focus	Native entrepreneurs		
New	117	Jobs Created	155
Existing	395	Jobs Supported	2,237
Nascent	19	Jobs Projected	1,349
Total	531		
Micro	460	Grants \$	\$214,875
Early Stage	283	Grants #	91
2nd Stage	32	Referral Made	123
Minority	92	Disabled	26
Women	260	Veteran	27



Centrepolis Accelerator at Lawrence Technology University			
Region served	Southeast Michigan; West Michigan; Upper Lower Peninsula; Upper Peninsula; "particularly distressed communities"		
Special focus	Hardtech; Cleantech (C3); Advanced Manufacturing; Industry 4.0; Defense Technology industry; Native entrepreneurs		
New	19	Jobs Created	30
Existing	117	Jobs Supported	847
Nascent	1	Jobs Projected	824
Total	137		
Micro	120	Grants \$	\$80,000
Early Stage	74	Grants #	4
2nd Stage	13	Referral Made	41
Minority	50	Disabled	3
Women	27	Veteran	3

Chippewa County Economic Development Corporation			
Region served	Eastern UP; Bay Mills Indian Community, Sault Tribe of Chippewa Indians, Chippewa, Luce, and Mackinac County, Sault Ste Marie, Eastern Upper Peninsula ISD		
Special focus	Aviation industry; Aerospace industry; Foreign Trade Zones/Bi National Investment District; manufacturing businesses; Native entrepreneurs		
New	7	Jobs Created	16
Existing	91	Jobs Supported	811
Nascent	0	Jobs Projected	72
Total	98		
Micro	67	Grants \$	\$196,806
Early Stage	41	Grants #	40
2nd Stage	20	Referral Made	10
Minority	31	Disabled	3
Women	28	Veteran	7

Detroit Economic Growth Association (DEGA)			
Region served	City of Detroit and Highland Park		
Special focus	Black entrepreneurs; women entrepreneurs; food industry businesses/entrepreneurs; very small businesses		
New	38	Jobs Created	46
Existing	261	Jobs Supported	516
Nascent	66	Jobs Projected	415
Total	365		
Micro	295	Grants \$	\$268,812
Early Stage	138	Grants #	53
2nd Stage	5	Referral Made	42
Minority	355	Disabled	5
Women	267	Veteran	3



Eastern Michigan Small Business Network (St. Clair)			
Region served	Shiawassee, Lapeer, Tuscola, Huron, Sanilac, St. Clair, and Genesee Counties		
Special focus	Technology businesses; non-technology businesses		
New	101	Jobs Created	179
Existing	528	Jobs Supported	4,113
Nascent	57	Jobs Projected	4,472
Total	686		
Micro	548	Grants \$	\$135,145
Early Stage	315	Grants #	36
2nd Stage	81	Referral Made	540
Minority	94	Disabled	39
Women	353	Veteran	37

Flint and Genesee Economic Alliance			
Region served	Genesee County		
Special focus	SEDI; BIPOC entrepreneurs; micro-businesses		
New	50	Jobs Created	61
Existing	187	Jobs Supported	376
Nascent	31	Jobs Projected	245
Total	268		
Micro	225	Grants \$	\$185,000
Early Stage	148	Grants #	20
2nd Stage	0	Referral Made	64
Minority	196	Disabled	5
Women	150	Veteran	3

Grand Rapids Center for Community Transformation (Grand Rapids Nehemiah Project)			
Region served	49507 zip code		
Special focus	Women entrepreneurs; BIPOC entrepreneurs; Spanish-speaking entrepreneurs; food industry entrepreneurs		
New	14	Jobs Created	81
Existing	163	Jobs Supported	1,026
Nascent	1	Jobs Projected	128
Total	178		
Micro	146	Grants \$	
Early Stage	63	Grants #	
2nd Stage	9	Referral Made	23
Minority	147	Disabled	1
Women	86	Veteran	2



Great Lakes Bay Small Business Hub (CMU)			
Region served	Great Lakes Bay Region; Isabella, Bay, Midland, and Saginaw Counties		
Special focus	Women entrepreneurs; BIPOC entrepreneurs		
New	39	Jobs Created	64
Existing	154	Jobs Supported	770
Nascent	0	Jobs Projected	222
Total	193		
Micro	168	Grants \$	\$426,316
Early Stage	104	Grants #	22
2nd Stage	3	Referral Made	61
Minority	82	Disabled	0
Women	116	Veteran	15

Lansing Economic Area Partnership (LEAP)			
Region served	Clinton, Eaton, and Ingham Counties		
Special focus	Youth entrepreneurs; food industry entrepreneurs; non-technology businesses; Hispanic/Latinx entrepreneurs		
New	116	Jobs Created	115.5
Existing	387	Jobs Supported	747.25
Nascent	69	Jobs Projected	3,759.5
Total	572		
Micro	431	Grants \$	\$198,377
Early Stage	318	Grants #	34
2nd Stage	3	Referral Made	109
Minority	359	Disabled	83
Women	369	Veteran	23

Lean Rocket Lab			
Region served	Lenawee, Hillsdale, and Jackson Counties		
Special focus	Very small businesses		
New	40	Jobs Created	11.5
Existing	97	Jobs Supported	162.5
Nascent	0	Jobs Projected	353
Total	137		
Micro	134	Grants \$	\$92,000
Early Stage	92	Grants #	23
2nd Stage	1	Referral Made	104
Minority	49	Disabled	9
Women	99	Veteran	4



Michigan Founders Fund (MFF)			
Region served	11-county greater Detroit region; 8-county region of central and western Michigan		
Special focus	Climate Tech, Health Tech, Agricultural Tech		
New	51	Jobs Created	119.5
Existing	208	Jobs Supported	1,250.5
Nascent	1	Jobs Projected	1,022.5
Total	260		
Micro	228	Grants \$	\$150,000
Early Stage	154	Grants #	10
2nd Stage	11	Referral Made	10
Minority	102	Disabled	1
Women	89	Veteran	0

Michigan Tech Enterprise Corporation (MTEC) SmartZone			
Region served	Keweenaw Peninsula; broader UP, Western UP; Priority focus on Houghton, Keweenaw, Baraga, Ontonagon, Gogebic, and Iron Counties		
Special focus	Technology-driven small businesses; rural entrepreneurs		
New	18	Jobs Created	39
Existing	154	Jobs Supported	2,755.5
Nascent	0	Jobs Projected	22
Total	172		
Micro	111	Grants \$	\$176,205
Early Stage	60	Grants #	14
2nd Stage	37	Referral Made	34
Minority	6	Disabled	2
Women	29	Veteran	6

Muskegon Innovation Hub (Grand Valley State University)			
Region served	West Michigan		
Special focus	Artist entrepreneurs; rural businesses		
New	28	Jobs Created	29
Existing	108	Jobs Supported	244.5
Nascent	0	Jobs Projected	140
Total	136		
Micro	133	Grants \$	\$134,300
Early Stage	76	Grants #	16
2nd Stage	1	Referral Made	11
Minority	65	Disabled	7
Women	66	Veteran	7



Operations School Inc.			
Region served	Oakland County; Greater Farmington area		
Special focus	Black-owned businesses; veteran-owned businesses; second-stage businesses		
New	14	Jobs Created	8
Existing	266	Jobs Supported	390
Nascent	12	Jobs Projected	358
Total	292		
Micro	273	Grants \$	\$89,750
Early Stage	118	Grants #	23
2nd Stage	7	Referral Made	48
Minority	290	Disabled	7
Women	216	Veteran	2

Otsego County Economic Alliance (OCEA)			
Region served	6 counties in Northeastern Lower Michigan: Otsego, Crawford, Montmorency, Roscommon, Ogemaw, and Oscoda		
Special focus	Minority-owned businesses		
New	23	Jobs Created	60
Existing	73	Jobs Supported	192
Nascent	5	Jobs Projected	266
Total	101		
Micro	80	Grants \$	
Early Stage	51	Grants #	
2nd Stage	1	Referral Made	68
Minority	2	Disabled	12
Women	59	Veteran	11

ProsperUs Detroit			
Region served	Statewide (locations in Flint, Saginaw, Grand Rapids, and Detroit)		
Special focus	BIPOC entrepreneurs; immigrant entrepreneurs; microbusinesses		
New	47	Jobs Created	53
Existing	347	Jobs Supported	1,126
Nascent	31	Jobs Projected	1,119
Total	425		
Micro	377	Grants \$	
Early Stage	184	Grants #	
2nd Stage	10	Referral Made	179
Minority	370	Disabled	3
Women	282	Veteran	7



Small Business Association of Michigan Foundation (SBAM)			
Region served	Statewide		
Special focus	Woman-owned businesses; veteran-owned businesses; disabled-owned businesses; family-owned businesses		
New	7	Jobs Created	19
Existing	689	Jobs Supported	4,090
Nascent	0	Jobs Projected	1,606
Total	696		
Micro	563	Grants \$	\$193,875
Early Stage	148	Grants #	39
2nd Stage	77	Referral Made	3
Minority	338	Disabled	40
Women	358	Veteran	24

Start Garden			
Region served	West Michigan		
Special focus	Food industry entrepreneurs/businesses		
New	98	Jobs Created	41
Existing	253	Jobs Supported	209
Nascent	1	Jobs Projected	466
Total	352		
Micro	349	Grants \$	\$395,000
Early Stage	250	Grants #	100
2nd Stage	0	Referral Made	17
Minority	264	Disabled	17
Women	203	Veteran	8

Target Alpena			
Region served	Northeastern Michigan; Cheboygan, Presque Isle, Alpena, Alcona, and Iosco Counties – Region 3		
Special focus	Medium-sized businesses		
New	43	Jobs Created	69
Existing	160	Jobs Supported	503
Nascent	18	Jobs Projected	178
Total	221		
Micro	189	Grants \$	\$116,131
Early Stage	100	Grants #	24
2nd Stage	2	Referral Made	60
Minority	7	Disabled	14
Women	104	Veteran	17



WSU TechTown			
Region served	Wayne County; Southeast Michigan		
Special focus	BIPOC entrepreneurs; immigrant entrepreneurs; women entrepreneurs; Native entrepreneurs; ideation-stage businesses		
New	31	Jobs Created	31
Existing	356	Jobs Supported	649
Nascent	0	Jobs Projected	234
Total	387		
Micro	379	Grants \$	\$197,675
Early Stage	167	Grants #	32
2nd Stage	0	Referral Made	13
Minority	324	Disabled	6
Women	273	Veteran	7

Tejara			
Region served	Detroit Metro Region		
Special focus	Arab American Entrepreneurs		
New	61	Jobs Created	68
Existing	270	Jobs Supported	433
Nascent	5	Jobs Projected	242
Total	336		
Micro	318	Grants \$	\$204,500
Early Stage	226	Grants #	40
2nd Stage	1	Referral Made	5
Minority	320	Disabled	20
Women	170	Veteran	9

Velocity SmartZone			
Region served	Macomb County		
Special focus	Women-owned businesses; veteran-owned businesses; technology businesses; manufacturing businesses		
New	21	Jobs Created	8
Existing	112	Jobs Supported	156
Nascent	7	Jobs Projected	78
Total	140		
Micro	127	Grants \$	\$124,000
Early Stage	68	Grants #	38
2nd Stage	2	Referral Made	0
Minority	63	Disabled	9
Women	100	Veteran	9



West Michigan Hispanic Chamber of Commerce			
Region served	Kent, Muskegon, Ottawa, and Kalamazoo Counties		
Special focus	Black and Hispanic entrepreneurs/businesses; rural entrepreneurs		
New	42	Jobs Created	51
Existing	170	Jobs Supported	436
Nascent	1	Jobs Projected	378
Total	213		
Micro	201	Grants \$	
Early Stage	130	Grants #	
2nd Stage	3	Referral Made	134
Minority	201	Disabled	0
Women	119	Veteran	0