

REGION 8

MEDC IN YOUR REGION

Across Michigan's diverse regions, businesses of all sizes are thriving thanks to direct support from the Michigan Economic Development Corporation (MEDC). Small business owners, entrepreneurs, and innovators are leveraging MEDC programs and assistance, including Michigan's State Trade Expansion Program (MI-STEP), Collateral Support, the Small Business Support Hub (SBSH) network, and more, alongside other MEDC-supported partners such as the Michigan Small Business Development Center (SBDC) to grow, create jobs, and strengthen their local economies. These investments are driving meaningful outcomes: helping rural and urban communities alike support their homegrown businesses, pursue international trade, enhance public spaces, and fuel long-term economic resilience across Michigan.



Battle Creek Food Reimagined

As part of **Michigan's Small Business Support Hub and SmartZone network**, Battle Creek Food Reimagined (BCFR) strengthens the local food economy by supporting entrepreneurs and improving food access.

"All of the people and companies at Sprout, SBDC and BCFR are connected and have created an ecosystem that is intended to help these local food businesses thrive. Battle Creek is lucky to have all of this for small businesses. I don't think many other places have so many cool opportunities. I never in my life thought I would be where I'm at today. I moved here from Ohio and didn't know a soul. I have organically created something here. I'm about to move into a location in downtown Battle Creek," said Felicia Jaramillo, a small business owner who worked with BCFR.



The Milton/Heritage Tower

The **MEDC's Community Revitalization Program** support enabled redevelopment of the Milton, a historic property in Battle Creek, enhancing downtown vibrancy and economic activity.

"It is hard to imagine a more impactful redevelopment project than The Milton in downtown Battle Creek," said Ted Dearing, assistant city manager for the City of Battle Creek. "The renovation brought to life a 19-story art deco masterpiece that sat vacant for years despite its prominence in the Battle Creek skyline. For many in Battle Creek, the building is not only historically significant but the source of countless memories of its grand presence as a centerpiece in downtown. At the city, we are very grateful for the efforts of several local partners across multiple sectors who collaborated to get the project done, including the MEDC. Without their support, the project would not have happened."



Getman Corporation

With international trade and **MI-STEP support**, Getman Corporation, a global supplier of mobile equipment with a storied history of providing support and innovation to the underground mining industry, expanded global operations, boosting exports and sustaining local manufacturing jobs.

“Underground mines are located all over the world in a number of different environments, from under cities to the most remote reaches of the planet,” said Chris Warner, product manager at Getman. “The MI-STEP grants have enabled sending our personnel to those remote locations such as Indonesia and Mongolia to make sure our customers there have the best support available.”



Jason Ballew of Three Rivers

Three Rivers leveraged **Public Spaces Community Places** and **Michigan Main Street** support to enhance public spaces, improving community engagement and downtown appeal.

“I can’t emphasize enough how much State support means to our community. Without the support of these programs, we wouldn’t have had the opportunity for these incredible initiatives. Being a Michigan Main Street community, we have a built-in framework to support both economic and community development, with tools and resources at the ready. Not only has it allowed us to invest in and support our local economy, but it also supports our long-term strategic planning and community vibrancy,” said Jason Ballew, board member of Three Rivers DDA.



Aiye Akhigbe of Sticky Spoons Jam

Aiye Akhigbe used **Michigan Small Business Development Center support** – with **funding made possible through MEDC** – to grow her jam business in Southwest Michigan, adding to the rich agricultural ecosystem in the region.

“Find fellow entrepreneurs out there to have conversations with. I believe in collaboration over competition. But best yet, find those resources that are provided through places like MEDC, SBDC, MSU Product Center, SCORE, WBC. These resources are available for a reason, and the best thing is they’re all free. Ask for help, use the resources, find people who champion you, and find people who cheer you on,” said Aiye Akhigbe.

