



new economy initiative

2019 ANNUAL REPORT

Inclusive & Connected

*What it takes to build and grow a network
of support that welcomes and benefits all
southeast Michigan entrepreneurs.*



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2019 ANNUAL REPORT

Inclusive & Connected

Business support leaders and NEI grantees exchanged ideas and insights at the 2019 NEI Network Convening (p. 54) at the The Henry Ford.

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OUR MISSION

The mission of the *New Economy Initiative (NEI)* is to grow an inclusive culture of entrepreneurship in southeast Michigan that benefits all residents and strengthens the regional economy.

NEI WORKS TO ACHIEVE ITS MISSION BY ACTING AS A...



STRATEGIC GRANT MAKER supporting nonprofits that constitute a wide network of support for entrepreneurs of all kinds in southeast Michigan



CONVENER of philanthropic, government, nonprofit, and for-profit partners working to develop and sustain a network of support for entrepreneurs in southeast Michigan



STORYTELLER sharing how diverse entrepreneurs are creating a better future for their communities



*The New Economy Initiative
is a special project of*

Community Foundation
FOR SOUTHEAST MICHIGAN



OUR FUNDERS

The New Economy Initiative is made possible by the generous support of its funders. Since 2007, the following 13 foundations have contributed a total of \$159 million to the effort:

C.S. Mott Foundation

McGregor Fund

Community Foundation
for Southeast Michigan

Ralph C. Wilson, Jr.
Foundation

Ford Foundation

Skillman Foundation

Hudson-Webber
Foundation

Surdna Foundation

John S. & James L.
Knight Foundation

W.K. Kellogg Foundation

William Davidson
Foundation

Kresge Foundation

Max M. & Marjorie S.
Fisher Foundation

Director's Letter

When I drafted this letter in March, it was before our lives changed because of this pandemic. Today, the NEI team, like you, are working hard to address this health and economic crisis and minimize the impact it will have on our lives and the livelihoods of our community members.

In March, this letter highlighted NEI's accomplishments as we continued to make grants, drive strategies and create opportunities for small businesses to thrive. Today those accomplishments still matter, but the situation has changed dramatically.

I am still hopeful that the small businesses in metro Detroit will come through this crisis. However, I think it will be a different landscape for them and for the network of support that has assisted thousands of them over the past 12 years.

Though the state and federal government are providing capital through grants and loans to support small businesses under 500 employees, the scale of the problem is being shown to exceed government's capacity and ability to address the needs of the most vulnerable business. Detroit's small business archetype is not the profiled recipient of a federal loan. Therefore, NEI has been working with

our grantees and funders to activate alternative capital access interventions for metro Detroit small businesses, especially those led by underrepresented founders or by founders with lower than average median household incomes.

We have activated and funded programs that provide immediate funding to offset cash flow issues, rent or loan payments, and to leverage the network of support for small businesses that only exists because of philanthropy's generosity through NEI. These programs address the specific needs of the most vulnerable small businesses impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic. These programs are intended to complement public sector interventions, targeting businesses with annual revenues of less than \$250,000 and those led by the underrepresented founders, including people of color (65% of companies served by NEI grantees) and women (66% of companies served by NEI grantees).

“We have activated and funded programs that provide immediate funding to offset cash flow issues, rent or loan payments, and to leverage the network of support for small businesses that only exists because of philanthropy's generosity through NEI.”

There have been tears and much appreciation as we have positioned NEI funded lenders to relieve up to six months of loan payments. Over 600 of the smallest of small businesses with lower income owners have received capital through TechTown's Stabilization Fund, and we've seen Washtenaw county and the cities of Pontiac and Dearborn take TechTown's model to reach another 400 small businesses. We have also seen in the last month, 100,000 visitors to our In Good Co. Detroit storytelling platform for inspiration and over 4,000 entrepreneurs find their way to NEI's Startup Space platform to understand what information and resources are available for them during this time.

Like you, I know what we are doing is not enough for the scale of problems that this pandemic is creating and the many issues of inequity it has illuminated. But in a case like this, every little thing makes a huge difference. We are honored to have an opportunity to

make some difference in partnership with our funders and business support organizations that are committed to helping small businesses in our community survive and thrive.

As you read this report focused on our work from 2019, consider the unique role NEI has and is playing to ensure there is a connected and networked system of support for entrepreneurs, especially those who have been traditionally disconnected from capital and resources. These entrepreneurs have a great impact on our communities and economy, and we should continue to work to ensure there is a visible, effective and equitable network of support for each of them.

Sincerely,



Pamela Lewis

Director, New Economy Initiative



RESULTS

2019 at a Glance

In 2019, NEI invested in **45 programs** supporting southeast Michigan entrepreneurs through 45 grants (see pgs.58-63) totaling **\$4,435,909**.

With NEI's support, these programs achieved the following outcomes last year:

COMPANIES ASSISTED

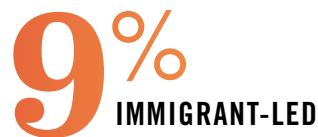
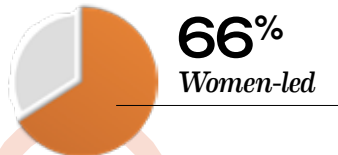
1,984

COMPANIES LAUNCHED

284

DEMOGRAPHICS

Of the client companies served by NEI grantees...



Collective Impact

 Together, these companies

EMPLOYED

5,801

people

LEVERAGED

\$219.9M

in capital in 2019

IN ADDITION TO SERVING COMPANIES AND FOUNDERS, NEI's grantees have exposed thousands of southeast Michigan residents to opportunities to learn about entrepreneurship.

IN 2019:

64,863

 PEOPLE

WERE EXPOSED TO ENTREPRENEURIAL SERVICES THROUGH MORE THAN

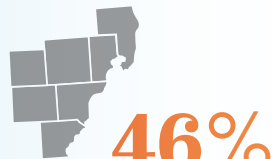
2,284

events, workshops & programs hosted by NEI grantees

Where these companies are located:



in the city of **Detroit**



elsewhere in **SE Michigan**

2%

INTERNATIONAL



RESULTS

2007 to Date

Since 2007, NEI has awarded **567 grants** and **\$120,391,548** to organizations that have achieved the following outcomes

COMPANIES ASSISTED

14,083

COMPANIES LAUNCHED

3,009

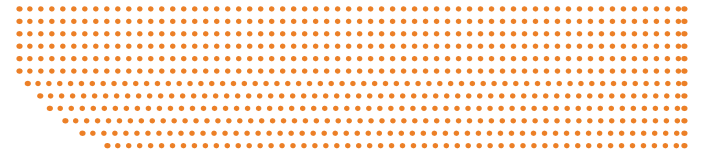
These companies employed

35,596 people

& leveraged more than

\$1.57 BILLION
IN CAPITAL

In sum, NEI grantee-funded client organizations have collectively resulted in



360,593

PEOPLE EXPOSED TO ENTREPRENEURIAL SERVICES THROUGH *events, workshops, & programs* hosted by NEI grantees.



6,513

IDEAS SURFACED THROUGH NEI-SUPPORTED BUSINESS CHALLENGES.

Community of Opportunity

Entrepreneurial support asset scan

Strengthening and growing micro- and small businesses is critical to the health of a region's economy. No matter how seasoned, entrepreneurs face continuous challenges—challenges that could become barriers without support resources.

In 2019, NEI released “Community of Opportunity,” a report synthesizing original research commissioned with support from the William Davidson Foundation about the network of resources available to entrepreneurs in southeast Michigan. Through surveys, secondary research, feedback sessions, and network analysis, we now know more than ever about the services that are available to entrepreneurs in the region.

Throughout southeast Michigan, more than 225 resources serve entrepreneurs, forming a network of support. These resources serve a diverse range of entrepreneurs working in all types of businesses, from those with little more than business concepts to those operating established businesses. This regional network of business support presents opportunities for foundations, corporations, government, and individuals promoting entrepreneurship to coordinate at scale.

Networks increase the flow of information and enable coordination and collaboration. Business support networks help the entrepreneurs they serve to understand the viability of their ideas and identify clear paths to converting those ideas to businesses. When Business Support Organizations (BSOs) are aware of peer organizations operating in their region and are well acquainted with their services and specializations, entrepreneurs can launch and grow businesses more efficiently.

SOME INSIGHTS FROM THE REPORT:

- Investment in *equitable* and *accessible* business support organizations, primarily by foundations, has encouraged *inclusive network behavior* across the region.
- General *entrepreneurial assets tend to cluster in urban areas* in southeast Michigan. On average, entrepreneurs travel 14 miles to reach a business support organization.
- Even so, business support organizations *attract entrepreneurs from as far away as 100 miles from Detroit* to tap into a vast array of resources.
- With a few exceptions, *most entrepreneurship support resources are general rather than industry-specific* or specialized.
- As many as **89%** of business support organizations delivering resources to entrepreneurs are *reliant on foundation grants* or public funds.

Community of Opportunity

JUNE 2019

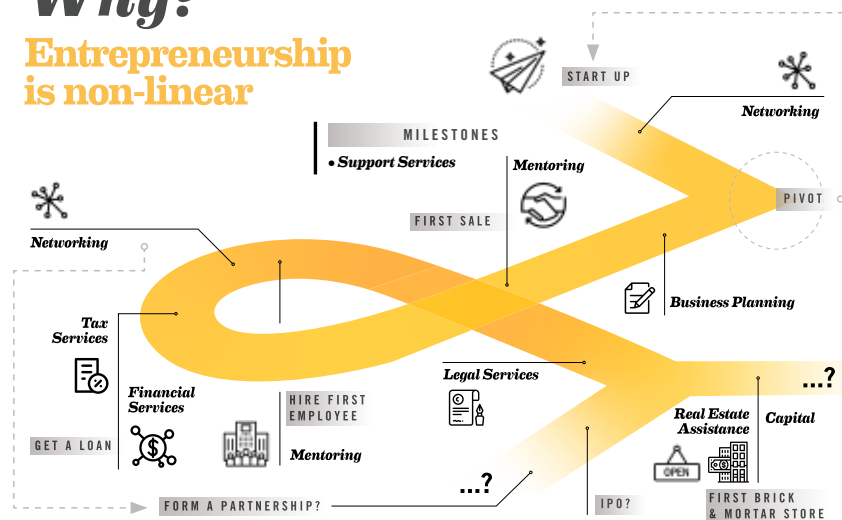
A Scan of Entrepreneurship Support Assets in Southeast Michigan



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Why?

Entrepreneurship is non-linear



A community of opportunity retains and attracts residents by valuing people and their ideas.



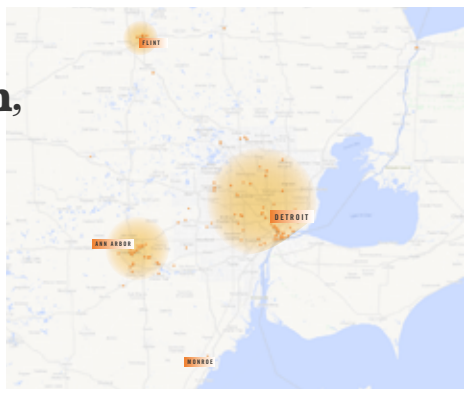
@NEIdetroit



NEI staff presented the findings of “Community of Opportunity” at Detroit Startup Week, July 2019.

Throughout SE Michigan,

More than 225 resources serve entrepreneurs, forming a network of support.

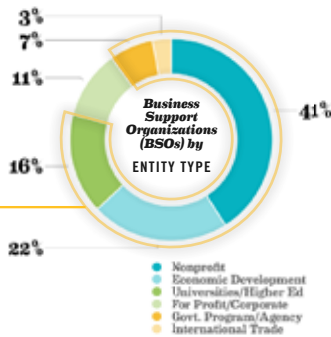


@NEIdetroit



Regional business support comes from many entity types

89% of BSOs delivering resources to entrepreneurs are reliant on foundation grants or public funds



@NEIdetroit



To read the full “Community of Opportunity” report VISIT | neweconomyinitiative.org/community-of-opportunity

Inclusive & Connected Entrepreneur Profiles



Jennyfer Crawford
ALL THINGS DETROIT



Gina Adams
WAREOLOGIE



Nieves Longordo
DISENOS IRON WORKS



Brandon Seng & Mark Coe
MICHIGAN FARM TO FREEZER

All Things Detroit

JENNYFER CRAWFORD IS ON A MISSION TO CREATE A NATIONAL HOLIDAY THAT CELEBRATES “ALL THINGS DETROIT.”

Sure, there’s already plenty to celebrate about the Motor City—the automotive industry, the modern assembly line, the legacy of Motown. But beyond the expected stories of yesteryear, there are countless others of Detroiters hustling to start businesses and build their own legacies.

“For me, I felt like it was my job to be the storyteller for all these businesses, to help the underdog,” says Crawford, founder and CEO of Ask Jennyfer Services & Curation and All Things Detroit Marketplace. “It’s always the same businesses that get written up; for me it’s about giving businesses a chance to get their story told that wouldn’t otherwise.”

Crawford’s All Things Detroit celebrates these enterprises through marketplace events that provide hundreds of small Detroit-based businesses a platform to introduce their products to thousands of potential customers. It’s also an app that includes a directory of hundreds of businesses across Metro Detroit.



All Things Detroit is an offshoot of her Ask Jennyfer consulting service, founded in 2012, that provides startups with one-on-one coaching services aimed at developing strategies around branding, event planning, and social media marketing—areas that are crucial for small businesses but are often out of reach for startups on fixed budgets.

“There are lot of people out there who have a passion but don’t have the resources,” Crawford says.

One of the many challenges that entrepreneurs don’t like to talk about is the sense of isolation that can set in when thrusting oneself into a new venture. According to a Harvard Business Review article, about half of CEOs report feelings of isolation on the job. On top of worries about raising money, the pressure of having to make big decisions alone, and the physical loneliness associated with long hours of working in a solitary environment can all have a profound effect.

And those feelings of isolation can be especially pronounced among women of color, who although make up the largest share of people who start their own businesses, are the least likely to be able to bring their ventures to scale.



“I think that sometimes we’re fearful that we won’t be taken seriously and don’t know where to start,” says Crawford.

Crawford began hosting networking sessions for fellow business owners in her apartment. Eventually she noticed that her small gatherings were creating just the sense of community that was needed for the people who participated.

The small gatherings quickly took off and soon she expanded to hosting her events at Nikki’s Pizza in Greektown. What started as a side hustle turned into a clear business idea and, with very little in savings, she quit her day job in construction management.

Since those early days, Crawford has gone on to head the MarketPlace at the annual TEDxDetroit event, curated market events for the NAACP, and launched a podcast and a web series. In 2016, she was named one of Crain’s Detroit Business’s “40 Under 40” honorees. Her curated events take place at locations like Eastern Market and the Night Market at Beacon Park, and she’s brought her work to other regions of the country like New York and Chicago. In October 2019, she had a music video shot featuring local artists as a creative way for getting the message out about supporting small businesses.

“My philosophy is that opportunities are created and I’m creating those opportunities for others,” she says.

As Crawford enters the next stage in her growing enterprise, she’s also participated in the inGAGE Master Class, a program of the women-focused nonprofit **inForum** that provides emerging second-stage entrepreneurs with a peer-to-peer founders forum to help assess their company’s operations, management, finances and personnel to examine strengths and challenges.

Which brings us back to National All Things Detroit Day. For more information on the event and ways to get involved, visit iloveallthingsdetroit.com.

Wareologie

**LIVING WITH A DISABILITY CAN
MAKE THE MOST MUNDANE TASKS
SEEM IMPOSSIBLE.**

**TRY BUTTONING UP A DRESS SHIRT
WHEN YOU'VE LOST CONTROL
OR USE OF YOUR HANDS.**

That's just one dilemma that Gina Adams's stepfather faced when he was diagnosed with Parkinson's disease. His illness left him unable to continue his career as an engineer. He also had to give up playing guitar, which he enjoyed in his free-time. And as for his wardrobe of button-up shirts he once wore to the office, the tremors in his hands made the simple act of getting dressed into a frustrating ordeal.

So when Adams decided to work on an MBA at Wayne State University after her kids got older, she used those family memories as inspiration for a venture that she says has the potential to help countless people who are living with mobility issues.

And it all started with a single button.

"It's a small milestone, it might not seem like a big deal, but when you're living with a disability it could be a game-changer,"



says Adams, founder and CEO of Wareologie, a company that designs products that she calls "disability-friendly."

The company's first product, Buttons 2 Button, are magnetic adaptors that convert shirt buttons into magnetic closures. One part of the adapter goes over a shirt button with the other part on the buttonhole. (The name Buttons 2 Button is a riff on Detroit band The White Stripes' hit song "Hardest Button to Button.") Instead of fussing with button holes and hard-to-grasp buttons, the adapters click together with ease.

Adams envisions designing an entire line of clothing for people living with disabilities, but before she attempts that, she decided to intensely research what's most in demand.

She conducted market research with more than 300 people and partnered with a team of industrial design students at Wayne State to develop product prototypes.

Together, they came up with 25 ideas to deal to all kinds of problems, like finding a way to prevent wheelchair backsplash from staining clothing and practical solutions for shoveling snow.

In the end Adams, who previously had a career in the apparel industry, found that the button could be a relatively simple product to focus on before branching out to more complicated pieces of clothing.



That doesn't mean coming to the final product was easy.

"We found that people wanted something that was machine washable and something that was transferrable," Adams says.

"We have had over 28 different iterations until we came up with what we have now."

Throughout her journey, Adams has assembled a network of supporters to help her along. The connections she established in graduate school certainly helped.

But she also found a source of support in the **Centrepolis Accelerator**, a manufacturing incubator at Lawrence Technological University that focuses on startups that are developing physical products. Most other incubators in Michigan are focused on entrepreneurs in technology, retail, or the service industry. The 6,300-square-foot space serves a wide variety of entrepreneurs like Adams who are making innovative products, providing them with high-tech prototyping and virtual reality equipment space.

Having access to an accelerator that understands the unique needs of a product-based business has made the difference for Adams.

Her community also includes James Murtha, her business partner, who has a spinal cord injury and uses a wheelchair. He provides constant feedback about his own experiences living with a disability. Together, the pair have conceptualized apparel like jeans and children's clothing, as well as a possible concierge service that will allow customers to have their clothing fitted to their specific needs, reasoning that — like the button adapters — consumers would likely find it more cost effective to make adjustments to their existing wardrobes than having to start a whole new one.

They're also working toward making their products comply with insurance requirements so they can be purchased using a flexible spending account.

For now, Wareologie takes orders for the Buttons 2 Button adapters online on the company website.



Diseños Ornamental Iron



MEET THE WOMAN BUILDING AN IRONWORKS EMPIRE IN DETROIT.

Not long ago, the historic Wurlitzer building in downtown Detroit, once home to the famed music store of the same name, stood derelict and crumbling, on the verge of becoming yet another one of Detroit's architectural casualties destined for the wrecking ball.

But a multi-year renovation transformed it from a building shedding bricks into a swanky boutique hotel.

Bringing the 14-story Renaissance Revival high rise back to life required an investment of \$23 million and meticulous attention to detail.

Nieves Longordo knows this firsthand. When her firm, Diseños Ornamental Iron, was tapped to recreate the railing for a staircase in the lobby, she and her team had little more than an old photograph from which to draw inspiration.

But restore it, Diseños did. That stairway and the Diseños railing now lead to a popular second-floor restaurant.

"Those are my favorite types of jobs, where we go into an old building and try to restore it or at least keep some of the original components," says Longordo.

The project and others like it (Diseños also had a hand at restoring details of the historic Metropolitan Building around the corner) represent a new chapter for both the city of Detroit and Diseños, a company founded more than 40 years ago by Longordo's stepfather, Tony Martinez. He started the company with his brothers in the 1970s and slowly built a reputation and an almost instantly recognizable body of work. Soon customers just came to Diseños, and not just from Detroit. Owners of expansive suburban estates with winding staircases or fortress-like entryways sought out Diseños for its quality. As the customer base grew, Martinez moved the shop to a location on Bagley, then to its current 20,000-square-foot space a few miles west on Goldsmith.

Along the way, Martinez met Longordo's mother, a travel agent in Southwest Detroit, who emigrated from the northern Mexican state of Durango when Longordo was just a year old.

When Longordo grew up, she began working for her stepfather, initially to fill in for an office manager who was on leave. Longordo says she had no real intention of sticking around at first. But she grew attached to the business and wanted to see it continue long after Martinez retired.

"I saw so much potential, especially with the lifetime that Tony has dedicated to it. I felt like I had to continue the legacy."



But she came on at a tricky time for the business. The foreclosure crisis swept the country, and Detroit was hit especially hard. Suddenly, demand dried up for iron fences that easily run several thousand dollars. Longordo and Martinez had to get creative to maintain any sort of revenue stream. They took jobs updating the stainless-steel railings at the airport, cleaning stairways—whatever inexpensive job their customers needed done in place of paying for entire projects. At one point, the company had to lay workers off.

Despite the bad economy, Longordo saw potential, and in 2010 the baton was passed on to her to lead Diseños.

“I felt like it was doable to kind of turn the ship around,”

says Longordo. “It’s hard to explain, but I think when you’re a part of the company and you hear from the employees, ‘Oh, we were at this job and the contractor said you guys are the best in the market,’ just seeing that sense of pride in themselves as employees.”

By 2013, Martinez was retired and Longordo was completely on her own. She began learning how to navigate a male-dominated industry, forgoing high heels and pantsuits for polo shirts and work boots. She joined the Great Lakes Women’s Business Council and participated in the Goldman Sachs 10,000 Small Businesses program, which teaches owners skills in negotiating, marketing, management, and developing

strategic growth plans; and has been looking for ways to train employees in this very specific field. She now engages mentors at **SCORE Detroit**, who coach her on the operations side of the business. In 2019, she was featured in **In Good Co. Detroit**, NEI’s campaign celebrating the city’s entrepreneurs, which encouraged her to share the story of her business and think about pursuing other revenue streams, including hosting pop-up shops featuring Diseños’s wide array of cast-iron objects.

Today, Diseños employs 14 people and Longordo says she is working to bring on more government entities as clients. And the company has started to work with new kinds of clients. Following Detroit’s historic bankruptcy, swaths of downtown properties were being purchased and being redeveloped to make way for a new wave of office workers. Then came the new cafes, restaurants, and retail, followed by a boom in hotel development. Boutique and national chains alike have sprouted up in a handful of historic buildings downtown, and with that, the need for experts in all manner of customer restoration is growing.

It’s just the kind of work that Diseños has been working toward for decades.

“A lot of people want to invest in the city and they want to see it continue to grow and expand and not just in focusing on downtown, but they want to see that craftsmanship in the rest of the Detroit area,” she says.

Michigan Farm to Freezer



HOW THIS EASTERN MARKET FIRM IS FREEZING PRODUCE TO OFFER YEAR- ROUND FRESH FRUITS AND VEGGIES.

Frozen is becoming the way to go for a taste of farm-fresh, locally-harvested veggies and fruit. With Michigan's short growing season compared to states like California, one of the more logistically efficient opportunities to experience the juiciness of a Michigan blueberry or cherry or the fresh snap of a tiny broccoli tree all year round is to pick it at its peak of freshness and then simply freeze it with minimal processing.

That's the idea behind Michigan Farm to Freezer, an enterprise founded in 2013 in Traverse City, initially as a workforce development training program, that would eventually find a home in Detroit's historic Eastern Market district. In their 14,000-square-foot freezer facility, Michigan-grown veggies and fruits are flash frozen and sealed, so that they can be enjoyed any time of year.

"We deserve to eat that food more than two weeks a year," says Brandon Seng, who co-founded Michigan Farm to Freezer with grow manager, Mark Coe.

Seng handles much of the operations in Detroit. Most of the facility's employees were formerly incarcerated or otherwise new to the workforce. They process all of the food that comes in, which is then distributed to grocers like Plum Market, Nino Salvaggios, Holiday Market, and Papa Joe's.

Coe handles relationships with the 30-40 farmers that the company contracts with across the state. Coe says most of the farms he works with also supply to the produce sections of national supermarket chains and the major frozen food brands like Birds Eye.

Major retailers, however, have specific requirements for the condition of the produce they sell. So no misshapen carrots, only plump, round tomatoes—nothing deemed "ugly" is allowed in the produce section. Whatever these farms can't sell to the big outlets can go to Michigan Farm to Freezer. They don't care if the produce is pretty; it's all going to be chopped up and bagged anyway.

For the consumer, Michigan Farm to Freezer fills a gap in access that many Michiganders face.



Seng says it was a conversation about a blueberry with a 14-year-old student back in 2012 that inspired him to develop the concept while he and his wife were running a farm-to-school food services program at a Catholic school in Manistee.

“I had a 14-year come into my lunch line who told me, ‘I’ve never tasted a blueberry in my life.’”

If kids’ only opportunity to enjoy locally grown blueberries, cherries, peaches, or other crops was at the school cafeteria, Seng and his wife reasoned that the best way to expose them would be to freeze small batches of produce during the growing season that youth would have missed out on during summer break.

Toward the end of 2013, Seng took that small-scale concept and pitched a larger idea to **Goodwill Industries** of Northern Michigan. The venture started off as a workforce training program in a small production site. The concept caught on quickly. In the inaugural year, the venture sold 12,000 pounds of produce for a total of \$8,912. By 2015, they’d moved

more than 100,000 pounds of produce, with sales reaching \$139,000— all concentrated in Northwest Michigan.

If Michigan Farm to Freezer was going to continue growing, it needed to leave the region to reach new markets. Being a subsidiary of Goodwill Industries limited its ability to expand, as each Goodwill territory in the state would require separate operating agreements. Farm to Freezer’s facility was the only one of its kind in the region. Seng and Coe felt isolated from peers operating similar enterprises.

In 2015, an opportunity to expand and connect with other value-added food businesses presented itself when representatives from **Eastern Market Corporation** began visiting the Northern Michigan business’s site. The following year, Seng and Coe separated the business from the local Goodwill territory. Simultaneously, Eastern Market published its 2025 Strategic Plan, which in addition to maintaining the district’s historic authenticity, outlined a vision for expanding its food processing infrastructure.

That included adding a frozen food production site to the area.

Eastern Market Corporation had been awarded a grant from the Department of Health and Human Services under the Community Economic Development Healthy Food Financing Initiatives for strategies that would better connect the local food system. About \$400,000 from that fund went toward the rehab of the long-vacant Cattleman’s Meat building at 1820 Mack Ave. The site was renovated to include a 14,000-square foot freezer facility.

The new site emphasizes hiring formerly incarcerated workers. With its close proximity to numerous other food distributors and producers, Seng and Coe were no longer isolated in their industry.

In 2019, Michigan Farm to Freezer brought in about \$1 million and 500,000 pounds of produce in sales. And as for its clients, in addition to selling in swanky gourmet supermarkets in the suburbs, a booth at Eastern Market, and a number of restaurants, about half of its sales come from school districts across the state, helping to provide more kids with access to fresh food all year round. In 2020, the company was featured in In Good Co. Detroit, NEI’s campaign celebrating the Detroit entrepreneurs.

STARTUP STORY NIGHT

NEI teamed up with Model D and Shannon Cason for the third annual Startup Story Night event, held March 21, 2019, at the Marble Bar in Detroit. The event featured six local entrepreneurs, sharing personal entrepreneur comeback stories to a diverse audience, with the goal of humanizing entrepreneurship and inspiring others to follow their passion. Leading up to the event, NEI put out a call to its network asking entrepreneurs of all types to share entrepreneurship comeback stories for a chance to perform them on stage.

More than 70 people submitted stories, and four businesses were selected by NEI staff and a few local storytelling experts to perform live on-stage. The entrepreneurs that shared their small business comeback stories were Charese Howard (Amazing Kinkz), Mark Kiel (Genomenon), Clement Brown, Jr. (Three Thirteen) Victoria Washington, Daniel Washington, and Autumn Kyles (Detroit Dough). Shannon Cason, host, MainStage storyteller and GrandSlam champion with The Moth and host of the Homemade Stories podcast, coached the performers and emceed the main event, which was attended by more than 200 guests.





To learn more and watch all of last year's
small business start up stories

VISIT → StartupStoryNight.org



STARTUP STORY NIGHT



MAR
21
2019

"Don't Call it a Comeback"

MARBLE BAR

1501 Holden St.
Detroit, M

Doors
@7 p.m.
Show
@8 p.m.

Sounds by
ONEFREQ

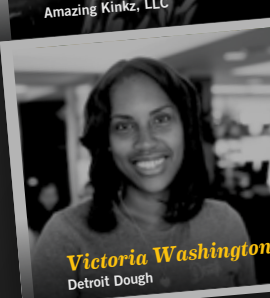
Tastes by
SALT + KO
+ Cash bar



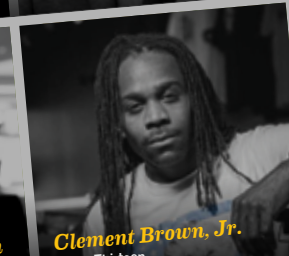
Charese L. Howard
Amazing Kinkz, LLC



Mark Kiel
Genomenon



Victoria Washington
Detroit Dough



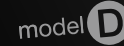
Clement Brown, Jr.
Three Thirteen

w/ host **Shannon Cason**

Tickets & info at StartupStoryNight.org



Brought to you by:





In November 2019, with support from the John S. and James L. Knight Foundation, NEI launched In Good Co., Detroit — a storytelling campaign designed to celebrate Detroit entrepreneurs and inspire residents to see themselves in narratives of Detroit’s revival.

Each month, the year-long campaign highlights a Detroit business owner from diverse industries and backgrounds. In addition to stories, In Good Co. features a directory of hundreds of business support resources that are available at InGoodCoDetroit.com. Through the site, entrepreneurs can locate service providers dedicated to helping small businesses grow in southeast Michigan. While the resources have been available in the past, the stories provide a more personal avenue for readers and viewers to connect with subjects.

As NEI works to strengthen the regional economy, connecting community members to people and resources to achieve their goals remains one of its strengths. Along the way, sharing their stories of collaboration has served as a vital component to attracting new audiences.



You're Not Alone

Now, more than ever, we can appreciate how small the world truly is. The way we live and work has changed quickly. But we must press on like we always have. We will continue to share Detroit stories of inspiration and resilience, along with resources to help us through this unprecedented time. Our hope is that the stories we tell and the connections we make will help us fight through this time and remind us that we're all in good company.

GET INSPIRED Stories

Through inspirational videos, podcasts, and features, learn how Detroit entrepreneurs have built and grown their businesses, from start-up to stay-up.



GET CONNECTED Resources

Quickly connect and search an ever-growing database of resources and practical tools to help you get started on your own journey—or find solutions to the problems you're facing right now.



FIND YOUR VILLAGE Events

Meet the people who are starting and growing businesses in your community. You'll find that if entrepreneurship is something you wish to pursue, you are not alone.





Over the course of 2020, NEI will continue to release monthly stories about entrepreneurs who have built and grown their businesses from concept to reality, helping to showcase the growing entrepreneurial energy in Detroit.

To watch, read, and listen to the entrepreneurs featured in the In Good Co. Detroit campaign

VISIT → InGoodCoDetroit.com

Gias Talukder | Bengal Auto Sales



Nailah Ellis-Brown | Ellis Island Tea



2019 Projects & Programs:



NEIdeas Alumni Growth Series 48

Neighborhood Business Initiative 50

Detroit Innovation 52

NEI Network Convening 54



For six years, 35 organizations focused on business support have met quarterly as the **Neighborhood Business Initiative Worktable**, led and managed by Michigan Community Resources. The table members work together to address priorities based upon their day to day work with business owners and entrepreneurs.

In 2019 access to commercial real estate was an important focus. The working group on commercial space organized the first Commercial Property Owner Workshop in October with Detroit Economic Growth Corporation, Michigan Economic Development Corporation and Invest Detroit for commercial property owners, and small business owners. From that workshop and further research, a “Commercial Space Readiness” guide is being produced as a guide for entrepreneurs seeking to rent, purchase, or develop property. It is expected the guide will be published in 2020.



Capital access and readiness is an ongoing need, and the **Capital Readiness Checklist** continues to be an important assessment tool for new and growing businesses. Building upon that work, a Detroit Small Business Lending Summit was held on May 15 that attracted more than 100 entrepreneurs with over 35 nonprofit, CDFI and commercial lenders.

The issue of digital access and marketing rises to the surface for most business owners today. A session at the summer Worktable included digital marketing professionals and small business owners to discuss tools and challenges. This will help to inform programming and trainings in the coming years.

DOWNLOAD THE CAPITAL READINESS CHECKLIST AT:
→ tiny.cc/NEI-Capital-Readiness



Detroit Innovation

STORIES OF RESIDENT-LED SOLUTIONS FOR DETROIT

In July 2018, NEI launched the **Detroit Innovation Fellowship (DIF)**, a talent-development program that promotes and invests in social entrepreneurs leading projects to strengthen neighborhoods in Detroit, Hamtramck, and Highland Park. The program continued in 2019, with twelve new fellows representing nine projects selected to participate in the second cohort. Each fellow received a stipend (\$10,000 per project), as well as additional funding for professional development.

Fellows met quarterly in 2019 to learn from experts and discuss the challenges and opportunities their projects face. For the second year, NEI engaged the Urban Consulate to manage and facilitate these meetings, which are designed with input from the fellows.

To date, fellows have used their funds to collaborate on design and construction projects, create inclusive community spaces, mitigate blight in neighborhoods, and host events to uplift and inspire one another.

LEARN MORE ABOUT THIS YEAR'S FELLOWS & THE WORK THEY'RE DOING IN THEIR COMMUNITIES AT:

→ DetroitInnovation.org



1, 5. Luis Ali & Tanya Saldivar-Ali
Co-Founders, 18th Street Design Build Hub

Providing local construction training and collaborative design space.

6. Mose Primus
Founder, Yorkshire Woods Community Organization

Organization creating inclusive and beautiful spaces in the Yorkshire Woods neighborhood.

9. Juan Shannon
Founder, Parker Village

A sustainable neighborhood development in Highland Park featuring a café, aquaponics garden, and cultural event center.

2, 4. Ali Dirul & Karanja Famodou
Co-Founders, Ryter Cooperative Industries

Organization specializing in renewable energy solutions for local businesses.

7. Carrie Morris
Founder, Carrie Morris Arts Production

A grassroots performing arts and professional development space in Campau/Davison area.

10. Juan Carlos Dueweke-Perez
Founder, Featherstone Moments

A trilingual and immigrant-owned marketing agency that seeks equity for minority- and immigrant-owned businesses.

3, 12. Joe & Barb Matney
Co-Founders, In Memory Of Community Garden

Creating safe and beautiful community spaces in the Warrendale neighborhood.

8. Tammy Black
Founder, Manistique Community Treehouse

An inclusive, ADA-compliant space for therapy, counseling and education in Jefferson Chalmers neighborhood.

11. Gary Ringer
Founder, Eco-Environmental Solutions

A company eradicating abandoned, blighted, and fire-damaged properties from the Cody Rouge neighborhood.



NEI Network Convening

Thursday, October 24, 2019
@The Henry Ford, Lovett Hall

Inspired by our work on the Asset Scan and our focus on expanding the network of support for small businesses, we turned our Grantee Convening into a Network Convening in 2019. Invitations went out to our grantees and other key business support organizations from across the region. In response, on Oct. 24, 130 attendees - representing over 85 programs serving entrepreneurship - gathered at Lovett Hall on The Henry Ford campus to be informed, inspired, and better connected as they work to strengthen the ecosystem.

Keynote speaker Andy Stoll, from the Kauffmann Foundation, spoke on the significance of and challenges faced by those engaged in the transformative work of entrepreneurial ecosystem building. Andy and his colleagues at Kauffmann have been tremendous partners to NEI over the years, and our attendees were inspired and motivated by his presentation.

We also wanted our Convening to provide a platform for local experts to have the floor to share ideas and pose challenges to the group. Attendees were invited to pitch ideas for these 5-10-minute Spark Talks in advance of the meeting and five presenters were chosen to share their ideas at the gathering. These inspiring talks focused on a wide range



TO WATCH A PREVIEW OF THE EVENT AND LISTEN TO TALKS FROM THE DAY, VISIT: vimeo.com/showcase/6571772

of entrepreneurial support topics, from radical inclusion, to building inclusion through trusted connectors, to designing inclusive spaces and more. The day's program also included a presentation on innovation from staff from The Henry Ford, a scavenger hunt around the museum and informal time for networking and strategizing. Additionally, the resource navigation tool Startup Space had its metro Detroit public launch, and the trailer for our storytelling campaign, In Good Co. Detroit, premiered to close out the Convening.

NEI **NEI** *Governance*

The New Economy Initiative is a special project housed within the Community Foundation for Southeast Michigan (CFSEM). Since its inception in 2007, 13 national and local foundations have committed a total of \$159 million in support of NEI. The CFSEM board of trustees officially approves NEI grants, which are recommended by the NEI grant review committee, a sub-group of the NEI Steering Committee.

The NEI Steering Committee, chaired by Steven Hamp, is responsible for the strategic direction of NEI. The committee consists of local entrepreneurs, representatives of NEI funder organizations, and civic and corporate leaders immersed in regional economic development in southeast Michigan.

NEI STEERING COMMITTEE MEMBERS:

Steven Hamp, *Chair*

Pamela Lewis, *Director, New Economy Initiative*

Lizabeth Ardisana, *CEO, ASG Renaissance*

Lavea Brachman, *Vice President of Programs,
Ralph C. Wilson, Jr. Foundation*

Ralph J. Gerson, *Board Member, William Davidson Foundation*

Paul Glomski, *CEO and Co-founder, Detroit Labs*

Lydia Gutierrez, *President, Hacienda Foods*

Benjamin S. Kennedy, *Director, American Cities Practice,
Kresge Foundation*

Katy Locker, *Program Director, Knight Foundation*

Faye Nelson, *Michigan Director, W.K. Kellogg Foundation*

Mariam C. Noland, *President,
Community Foundation for Southeast Michigan*

Chris Rizik, *CEO, Renaissance Venture Capital Fund*

Kevin Ryan, *Program Officer, Ford Foundation*

Veronika Scott, *Founder, The Empowerment Plan*

Nathaniel Wallace, *Program Director, Knight Foundation*



Grants



Accounting Aid Society

\$127,000.00

Support over 14-month for the Accounting Aid Academy to provide accounting and tax assistance services to small business owners in Detroit, Hamtramck, and Highland Park.

Arab Community Center for Economic and Social Services (ACCESS)

\$160,000.00

Support for the Entrepreneurial Growth Program to provide training and technical assistance for immigrant and non-English speaking populations to develop and grow businesses.

Automation Alley Fund

\$75,000.00

Support for a minority business enterprise growth program that enables minority-owned businesses to transition to Industry 4.0 technologies.

Build Institute

\$180,000.00

Support for entrepreneur and small business education programs.

Bunker Labs NFP, Inc

\$180,000.00

Support over two years for a business accelerator program for military veterans.

Center for Community Based Enterprise, Inc

\$50,000.00

Support for worker-ownership and readiness education for neighborhood-based entrepreneurs and businesses.

Central Detroit Christian Community Development Corp

\$75,000.00

Support for business development and stabilization services for businesses in Detroit's Central Woodward/North-End neighborhood.

College for Creative Studies

\$200,000.00

Support over two years for the Design Core Detroit to strengthen Detroit's creative businesses and generate awareness of Detroit's creative economy as a tool for regional economic growth.

Community Foundation for Southeast Michigan

\$150,000.00

Support for the Pontiac Special Project of the Community Foundation for Southeast Michigan.

Creative Many Michigan Inc

\$23,805.00

Support to sponsor four Detroit Innovation Fellows to attend Michigan House at SXSW and participate in the panel on neighborhood innovation.

Detroit Development Fund

\$120,000.00

Support to operate the BizLoan Fund that will provide capital and technical assistance to underestimated businesses in Detroit, Hamtramck and Highland Park.

Detroit Future City

\$75,000.00

Support for the writing and production of a report on Detroiters' perceptions of entrepreneurship and economic opportunity.

Detroit Innovation Grants

\$90,000.00

See pgs. 42-43 for the list of the nine social enterprises that were awarded Detroit Innovation Fellowship grants in 2019.

Eastern Market Corporation

\$250,000.00

Support over two years for a business accelerator to help grow and sustain local food-based businesses.

Eastern Michigan University Foundation

\$95,000.00

Support for Michigan Small Business Development Center (MI-SBDC) to offer support services to Detroit area neighborhood businesses.

FoodLab Detroit

\$122,500.00

Support for an accelerator program for food entrepreneurs in Detroit neighborhoods.

Forward Cities

\$20,000.00

Support for sharing with and learning from 33 cities about best practices for effective, inclusive, entrepreneurial ecosystems.

Global Detroit

\$150,000.00

Support to connect international talent to the Detroit region's innovation community and to enable business growth for immigrant entrepreneurs

Grandmont Rosedale Development Corporation

\$87,500.00

Support for 14-months for a comprehensive business development and commercial activation strategy on the Grand River Corridor in the Grandmont Rosedale community.

Inforum Center for Leadership

\$150,000.00

Support over 15-months for the Inforum Center for Leadership to provide comprehensive training programs, capital development and mentorship for emerging high-growth women entrepreneurs.

Invest Detroit Foundation

\$120,000.00

Support for Venture Catalysts to provide accessible programming and mentorship for diverse high-growth startups in Southeast Michigan.

Jefferson East Inc

\$60,000.00

Support for the development of mixed-use properties in the Jefferson-Chalmers neighborhood.

Lawrence Technological University

\$350,000.00

Support over two years for an accelerator program to enable growth for small manufacturers and emerging hardware startups.

Matrix Human Services

\$117,000.00

Support over 14-months for the Osborn Neighborhood Alliance to assist new and existing neighborhood businesses to establish and grow by connecting them to support resources and business mentoring and coaching.

Miami Foundation Inc

\$79,250.00

Support to contract with the Urban Consulate-Detroit to coordinate and convene the New Economy Initiative's Detroit Innovation Fellowship (DIF) program.

Michigan Community Resources

\$128,000.00

Support to manage the NEI Neighborhood Business Initiative Worktable.

Michigan Israel Business Accelerator Foundation

\$50,000.00

Support to enable regional growth for emerging high-growth technology businesses of Michigan and Israel.

The Michigan Women's Foundation

\$150,000.00

Support to provide education, capital, technical assistance and mentoring to economically disadvantaged women entrepreneurs in the Detroit region.

Midtown Detroit Inc.

\$250,000.00

Support to expand the Small Business Program to businesses in neighborhoods adjacent to Midtown.

Philanthropy for Active Civic Engagement

\$36,500.00

Support to produce a research paper on civic engagement strategies for high-growth entrepreneurs.

Rebrand Cities Project

\$60,000.00

Support to provide website and marketing assistance to NEIdeas grantees.

Southwest Detroit Business Association Inc

\$60,000.00

Support for a real estate advocacy program that will increase brick-and-mortar businesses in southwest Detroit.

Southwest Economic Solutions

\$145,000.00

Support for ProsperUS Detroit, a place-based economic development initiative that supports neighborhood entrepreneurs and small businesses.

Venture for America

\$50,000.00

Support to provide training for an entrepreneurship-focused fellowship program in Detroit.

Wayne State University Research & Technology Park (TechTown)

\$485,000.00

Support over 15-months for a Detroit-based business incubator and accelerator, a neighborhood business support program, and a regional MedHealth Innovation Cluster.

NEI Staff



Mary Fulmer
Program Officer



Donald Jones
Associate Director



Maria LaLonde
Senior Program Officer



Matthew Lewis
Senior Communications
Officer



Pam Lewis
Director



Angelina Starceski
Communications Associate



Partners & Consultants

313 CREATIVE

Provided strategic counsel to the NEI team.

ALI LAPETINA PHOTOGRAPHY

Captured images of the Detroit Innovation Fellows and In Good Co. Detroit entrepreneurs; provided photography for NEI's Annual Report.

AMANDA LEWAN

Assisted with social media strategy and account management for NEI and Pamela Lewis.

BUILD CREATE STUDIOS

Provided technical support to NEI's digital communications efforts, including its website and e-newsletters.

EARLYWORKS, LLC.

Synthesized ecosystem scan research and supported the development and execution of the Community of Opportunity report; provided strategic council for messaging and communications.

ECKBLAD GROUP

Provided training and support to align the technical assistance programs of NEI partner organizations.

FINAL5

Directed and edited films of Detroit Innovation Fellows.

GROWTH CAPITAL NETWORK

Captured grantee metrics and annual client data, supported staff in further development of the NEI Grant Progress Network database and data analysis.

ISSUE MEDIA GROUP

Populated the Detroit Innovation website with stories of local social entrepreneurs; conducted community listening sessions across Detroit, Hamtramck, and Highland Park; supported the production of Startup Story Night.

LOVIO GEORGE

Provided strategic council, design, public relations, and media support to NEI leadership and staff.

NEI engaged the following partners & consultants in 2019 to strengthen and inform its work:

MICHIGAN COMMUNITY RESOURCES

Managed the NEI Neighborhood Business Initiative worktable and its subcommittees.

NICK HAGEN PHOTOGRAPHY

Developed and captured images of NEI events; provided photographic content for NEI's Annual Report.

PROJECTS+PEOPLE

Led the community outreach efforts of the NEIdeas Alumni Growth Series and In Good Co., Detroit.

SERENA DANIELS

Hosted and created podcasts of entrepreneurs for In Good Co., Detroit.

SHANNON CASON

Interviewed entrepreneurs and wrote articles of entrepreneurs for In Good Co., Detroit.

SKIDMORE STUDIOS

Provided strategic planning support for In Good Co. Detroit.

SOURCELINK

Provided research support to NEI's scan of southeast Michigan entrepreneurship assets.

SPRING MANAGEMENT SYSTEMS

Supported the NEI Grant Progress Network database and expanded its reporting functionality.

STEPHEN MCGEE

Directed, edited, and produced films of entrepreneurs for In Good Co., Detroit.

URBAN CONSULATE

Coordinated and convened the Detroit Innovation Fellowship program.

WHO'S THAT?

Provided graphic design and consultant services for NEI communications efforts and programs.

Contributors

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*Are you interested in
entrepreneurship in
Southeast Michigan?*

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Community Foundation
FOR SOUTHEAST MICHIGAN

*The New Economy Initiative is a special
project of the Community Foundation
for Southeast Michigan*



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