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Michigan

Fostering Success for Black-Owned Businesses



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Black-owned businesses across Michigan have an enormous impact on the state's economy. The MEDC is committed to providing the support and resources they need to grow and thrive. Below, we're highlighting growth opportunities, initiatives and success stories for Black-owned businesses in Michigan.

This article was updated in January 2024





Increasing Access to Capital

In May 2022, Governor Whitmer joined the MEDC to announce that Michigan was approved for up to \$236,990,950 in [State Small Business Credit Initiative \(SSBCI\) funding](#) from the U.S. Department of Treasury.

Michigan was among the first five states to be approved for funding through this round of SSBCI 2.0 awards, which are intended to increase access to capital and promote entrepreneurship. Lenders interested in supporting borrowers through the collateral support and loan participation program may contact [MEDC Capital Access](#) immediately related to those programs.





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In January 2022, the Michigan Strategic Fund board **approved the SSBCI Michigan Business Growth Fund 2.0 programs** and guidelines to access a minimum of \$215.7 million in federal funding allocated to Michigan in 2021 through an American Recovery Plan allocation. SSBCI 2.0 is designed to increase the availability of capital to small businesses through loans and equity investments that would otherwise not be available in the market through conventional terms. The program requires partnership with private sector lenders, equity investors, and technical assistance providers.

Michigan's SSBCI 2.0 programs include new requirements for support to small businesses owned by socially and economically disadvantaged individuals (SEDI) and to very small businesses, defined as businesses having 10 employees or less, to continue to ensure equity in access to capital for businesses across the state. In addition to continuing to support manufacturing and adding an emphasis on SEDI and small business lending, the programs will now offer support for early-stage funding and technical assistance programming.





Ensuring equitable economic opportunity for all Michiganders continues to be imperative for the MEDC. MEDC's [Pure Michigan Business Connect](#) (PMBC) program brings access and exposure to the state's network of suppliers through matchmaking initiatives and other events. In addition, MEDC makes it a priority to facilitate connections with traditionally underserved businesses to ensure more equitable access to procurement opportunities statewide.

Throughout the year, MEDC's PMBC program is committed to supplier diversity efforts, prioritizing opportunities for minority-owned businesses to access procurement opportunities. MEDC's partnerships with the [Michigan Minority Supplier Development Council](#) (MMSDC) and the [National Business League](#) are critical in providing businesses collaborative resources.

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The MEDC also enhances Michigan's economic well-being through its partnership with the [Michigan Small Business Development Center](#) (SBDC), which provides consulting, training and research for new ventures, existing small businesses and advanced technology companies.

Headquartered at Grand Valley State University and operating 10 regional offices, the SBDC represents a long-term collaboration between the Small Business Administration and the State of Michigan. The SBDC provides



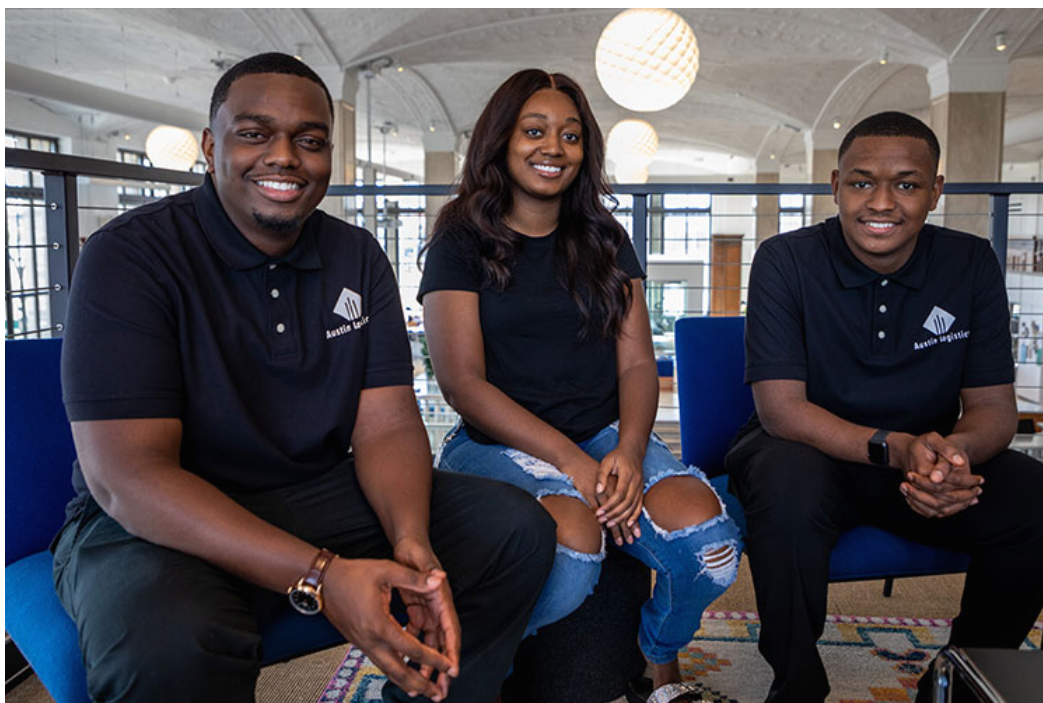


to deliver additional **export assistance** to Michigan's small businesses.

Also through the SBDC, **Uplift Michigan** is among the programs designed to ensure equitable access for all diverse entrepreneurs across Michigan, including Black business owners.

Secrets to Success with MEDC Support

The MEDC is recognizing Black-owned businesses that have found success through taking part in MEDC's programs and initiatives, from PMBC and SmartZones to the SBDC. These businesses are making the world safer, greener and more delicious.





about government contracting from a podcast, which broke down the industry into easy-to-understand concepts, Hill was inspired to start a business. As owner and CEO of Austin Logistics, Hill works with his younger brother, Christopher, who serves as chief of operations for the company.

In partnership with PMBC, the Southfield Area Chamber of Commerce held the Southfield Sourcing Summit in October 2021; the local supplier event provided Southfield Area businesses with an opportunity to meet with purchasing organizations to discuss procurement needs. Through attending the Southfield Sourcing Summit, Austin Logistics secured three contracts with the City of Southfield.

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Those first contracts eventually led to the contracts Austin Logistics secured with the Department of the U.S. Army and the City of Detroit. From this fateful introduction, the company has only continued to grow. Today, Austin Logistics now has 30 contracts, working with agencies in Michigan, Illinois, Louisiana and Washington, D.C. Comcast, the State of Louisiana and the National Park Service are among their clients.



^ products are infused with tasty, sweet flavors, like peanut butter, butterscotch, toffee, pecans and candy pieces.

At first, business flourished at Daddy’s Dough, but like countless small businesses in Michigan, the global pandemic caused massive challenges in growth and development. MarcQus knew the pandemic would disrupt his monthly income and operations.

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Receiving information and guidance from professionals on the MEDC’s **PMBC team**, MarcQus applied for — and received — \$10,000 from the Grand Rapids Chamber of Commerce and \$10,000 from Kent County.





Dunamis Clean Energy Partners

Founded in 2012 by CEO Natalie King, Dunamis Clean Energy Partners is a full-service leader in the commercial and industrial cleaning, lighting and electric vehicle charging industries. Dunamis specializes in creating energy cost savings for their customers in manufacturing, government and healthcare industries.

With headquarters in Detroit, Dunamis has participated in numerous matchmaking opportunities with PMBC over the last several years and, through these events, has been successful at establishing a substantive network of prospective corporate customers and business advocates.





The Poke Bowl

The Poke Bowl owners hail Jeron Dotson and Justin Bush from Flint, Michigan, and, when on a trip to Venice Beach, California, they visited a “hole in a wall spot” that served poke. It was there that both Jeron and Justin discovered the concept of a poke bowl restaurant and left the West Coast to bring the flavorful dish back to their hometown in the Midwest.

From there, with the help of Michigan resources like the Small Business Development Center (SBDC) and winning various local pitch competitions, they were able to secure a location to build this business and begin The Poke Bowl journey.

By engaging early-on with the SBDC, The Poke Bowl was able to access a range of consultant and support services, from pitch development and financing resources, to building acquisition support and partner referrals.





Alerje

Javier Evelyn is one of 220 million people worldwide who suffer from severe food allergies. As a result, Javier has seen firsthand how inconvenient Epinephrine Auto-Injectors — more widely known as EpiPens — are for patients.

Looking for business development support, Javier turned to [TechTown Detroit](#) —an MEDC SmartZone. Javier met with the team to further develop the idea through mentorship, introductions with key investors and experts and help with pitch programs. Once the initial business plan was created, Javier used the resources provided at TechTown to apply for a \$7,000 [Business Accelerator Fund](#) (BAF) grant, which helped him secure the startup's first IP.

With help from resources provided by MEDC, Alerje has created a comprehensive and convenient food allergy management platform to help improve the quality of life of patients dealing with severe and life-threatening food allergies.





Quartz Water Source

Quartz Water Source began in 2019 with a mission of expanding global access to clean water. While on a business trip in Israel in 2017, Jonathan Quarles—a Flint native, angel investor and entrepreneur—was introduced to Israel’s history of water thought leadership and innovation. Jonathan immediately saw the potential for this technology in his hometown, as it could provide a recurring, scalable source of clean water.

When he returned home, Jonathan dove headfirst into understanding the true needs of Flint residents. As a result of what he learned, Jonathan launched Quartz Water Source. Soon after, he turned to the MEDC for resources and support.

Jonathan set up headquarters at the **Flint Ferris Wheel** where he was given the space and resources he needed to develop the company and its strategy.

Throughout the early days of Quartz Water Source, Flint Ferris Wheel and **100K Ideas** helped with market studies, research, a go-to-business roadmap and marketing materials. University of Michigan students, who worked with 100K ideas, helped support Quartz Water Source’s initial marketing efforts and are now helping with product expansion ideas. In November 2019, the Quartz Water Source team took first place in Ferris Wheel’s 10K pitch competition, receiving \$10,000.





increase by 24% compared to January 2020, while the nation experienced a 6.9% increase over the same period. Michigan also had **the fastest small business job growth** in 23 years according to the Michigan Bureau of Labor Market Information, adding 170,000 in the first three quarters of 2021 – 59% more than in 2019.

Despite the many barriers that historically marginalized entrepreneurs face, small businesses in underserved communities continue to contribute a significant portion to Michigan’s economy and often act as the economic lifeblood to the local community.

Building a path to success for minority and underrepresented small businesses will remain an imperative aspect of small business programming at the MEDC in order to create a stronger, more equitable Michigan.

Learn more about MEDC’s **support and resources for small businesses** across the state of Michigan.

Contact Us

To contact a business development specialist, **click here** or call 1.888.522.0103.

Source link

