



Covering Business
in Flint & Genesee

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Q&A: Karena Hamlet on the new Flint & Genesee Small Business Support Hub

May 14, 2024 (<https://and.flintandgenesee.org/qa-karena-hamlet-on-the-new-flint-genesee-small-business-support-hub/>) | [Izzi Joseph \(https://and.flintandgenesee.org/author/izzi-joseph/\)](https://and.flintandgenesee.org/author/izzi-joseph/)



Since launching three years ago, the Flint & Genesee Economic Alliance’s Small Business Help Desk has helped hundreds of clients navigate the region’s small business scene.

Now – thanks to a nearly \$2.4 million grant from the Michigan Economic Development Corporation – the team is broadening its reach and impact as the administrator of the new Flint & Genesee Small Business Support Hub.

To learn more about the hub and what it entails, the AND editorial team recently sat down with Karena Hamlet, program director of Business Services at the Flint & Genesee Economic Alliance.



Karena Hamlet, program director of Business Services at the Flint & Genesee Economic Alliance

What is the Flint & Genesee Small Business Support Hub?

It's a program of the Economic Alliance and should be an entrepreneur's or small business owner's first stop when looking to start or grow a business in Flint & Genesee. With our partners, we provide the technical assistance, coaching, training, events, resources, and connections you need to take your business to the next level. Even better, we're able to provide these services at no cost to the client.

Who are your partners?

For the hub, our three key partners are Michigan Small Business Development Center, Metro Community Development, and Doxa Development, who have strong backgrounds in business plans, loan programs, and personal finance. Together, we provide a very holistic offering that considers the whole experience of the entrepreneur or small business owner.

What types of connections can you help clients make?

You name it, and we can probably help. Flint & Genesee is home to a very, very robust entrepreneurial ecosystem in which all service providers have something to add. In our case, we also play the role of connector and bring everyone together. As the facilitator of the eTEAM, a network of nearly 30 community organizations and service providers, we can help local entrepreneurs and small business owners navigate the wide variety of resources available to them and make the connections they need to thrive.

Who is the hub available to?

Any entrepreneur or small business based in Genesee County.



Small business support staff at the Flint & Genesee Economic Alliance. From left to right, Terance Green, Stefanie Norman, Tracy Joseph, and Karena Hamlet.

What are you doing to reach new clients?

We've established affiliate hub locations throughout the county. We've had a good experience offering small business support at Berston Field House in Flint, and we'll continue to staff that location on Mondays. And, new this year, we're now also at the City of Swartz Creek Municipal Building and Fenton & Linden Regional Chamber of Commerce on a weekly basis.

If someone is interested in using your services, what should they do?

Complete the form at DevelopFlintandGenesee.org/hub. Once you do that, we'll schedule a meeting to learn more about your needs and determine next steps.

Office Hours:

The Flint & Genesee Small Business Support Hub is headquartered at the Flint & Genesee Economic Alliance, located in the Flint & Genesee Group offices in downtown Flint. It also operates three affiliate locations on Mondays and by appointment:

Berston Field House
3300 Saginaw St., Flint 48505
Monday 9 a.m. to 3 p.m.

City of Swartz Creek Municipal Bldg.
8083 Civic Drive, Swartz Creek 48473
Monday 9 a.m. to 4 p.m.

Fenton & Linden Regional Chamber of Commerce
104 S. Adelaide St., Fenton 48430
Monday 9 a.m. to 4 p.m.

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