

**Michigan
SBDC™**

SMALL BUSINESS RESOURCE GUIDE

**CREATED BY THE MICHIGAN SMALL BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT CENTER
WEST MICHIGAN REGION**

**HELPING MICHIGAN BE THE BEST PLACE TO
START AND GROW A BUSINESS**

2024 EDITION - GRAND RAPIDS AREA

Greetings!


The Michigan Small Business Development Center (Michigan SBDC) is pleased to release this 2024 Edition of our digital Business Resource Guide which contains a listing of over 60 Entrepreneurial Support Organizations (ESOs) and Financing Institutions serving Grand Rapids and the surrounding area. In addition to those that operate locally, many of the organizations have a regional or statewide footprint.

For quick referencing, we have included a category page to help you navigate the guide, and each listing includes detailed contact information including a description of the organization, emails, and phone numbers. Keep this information handy in order to connect with the individuals that can best help you.

As always, please feel free to share this guide with as many people as possible. Our mission is to help Michigan small businesses succeed and having a valuable resource guide such as this will enable them to build relationships with the right agency and the right person.

All information in this guide has been verified as of the date of publication and the Michigan SBDC will update this directory at least once per year. Submissions for the guide can be sent to us anytime throughout the year at sbdc@gvsu.edu.

Best regards,



**Ed Garner
West Michigan Regional Director**



**MICHIGAN ECONOMIC
DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION**

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CATEGORY DESCRIPTIONS

While we have categorized businesses into the following sections to provide guidance on the types of services they offer, we acknowledge that each business may have a wider scope of services beyond those listed. We encourage you to delve deeper into each business's profile to gain a comprehensive understanding of their offerings.

BUSINESS EDUCATION RESOURCES

Explore a variety of workshops, seminars, and online resources tailored to equip entrepreneurs and business owners with the knowledge and skills necessary for success.

BUSINESS SUPPORT AND DEVELOPMENT SERVICES

Explore organizations that assist with contracting opportunities, workforce development needs, business designations and rankings, and promotion of local purchasing.

DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION SUPPORT

Access resources and initiatives dedicated to fostering equity and providing support for the growth and success of minority-owned businesses in our community.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Engage with initiatives focused on driving local economic growth, attracting investment, and generating employment opportunities to cultivate a thriving business environment.

ENTREPRENEURIAL SUPPORT SERVICES

Connect with agencies that provide a large range of resources at any stage of business. Services may include help with starting or stopping a business, growing or improving business operations, buying or selling a business, co-working space, accessing capital, or gaining training on a variety of business topics.

FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE AND FUNDING

Navigate the landscape of financing options available to small businesses, including grants, loans, and investment opportunities, to fuel your business's financial growth and stability.

FOOD, AGRICULTURE, AND EXPORTING

Explore resources and opportunities within the food, agriculture, and exporting industries, offering support with market research, strategic planning, and international trade endeavors.

LEGAL AND REGULATORY COMPLIANCE

Stay informed and ensure compliance with legal and regulatory requirements for your business, accessing resources and guidance on permits, licenses, and best practices to safeguard your business operations.

NETWORKING, ADVOCACY, AND BUSINESS SUPPORT

Forge valuable connections and partnerships with professionals, potential clients, and industry peers through networking events and collaborative opportunities including subject matter training.

TECHNOLOGY AND INNOVATION

Embrace cutting-edge technologies and foster innovation within your business with support, tools, and resources to streamline operations, enhance efficiency, and maintain competitiveness in today's dynamic marketplace.

2024 RESOURCE PARTNERS BY CATEGORY

BUSINESS EDUCATION RESOURCES

Grand Rapids Public Library
Kent District Library
Michigan Center for Employee Ownership

BUSINESS SUPPORT & DEVELOPMENT SERVICES

Better Business Bureau
Hello West Michigan
GVSU Family Owned Business Institute
People First Economy
West Michigan Public Purchasing Alliance
West Michigan Works!

DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION SUPPORT

AQUME Foundation
Grand Rapids Area Black Businesses
Kconnect
Michigan Minority Supplier Development Council
Michigan Women Forward
NIA Center
Urban League of West Michigan
West Michigan Asian American Association
West Michigan Hispanic Chamber of Commerce

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Downtown Grand Rapids Inc.
Grand Rapids Center for
Community Transformation
Michigan Economic Development Corporation
Seeds of Promise
The Right Place
SURGE Powered by Lakeshore Advantage

ENTREPRENEURIAL SUPPORT SERVICES

GVSU Center for Entrepreneurship & Innovation
SCORE Grand Rapids
Michigan Small Business Development Center
MSU Research Foundation
SpringGR
Start Garden
VetBizCentral
West Michigan APEX Accelerator
SURGE Powered by Lakeshore Advantage

LEGAL AND REGULATORY COMPLIANCE

The Employers' Association

FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE AND FUNDING

Adventure Credit Union
Arbor Financial Credit Union
Choice One Bank
Consumers Credit Union
Comerica Bank
Commercial Bank
Fifth Third Bank
First Children's Finance
Great Lakes Commercial Finance
Grow
Huntington Bank
Lake Michigan Credit Union
Mercantile Bank
Northern Initiatives
Rende Progress Capital
Opportunity Resource Fund
SBA Michigan District Office
United Bank

FOOD, AGRICULTURE, AND EXPORTING

Downtown Market - Grand Rapids
Lakeshore Flavor
MSU Product Center
Michigan Department of Agriculture
& Rural Development
U.S. Commercial Service
Van Andel Global Trade Center

NETWORKING, ADVOCACY, AND BUSINESS SUPPORT

Family Business Alliance
Grand Rapids Chamber of Commerce
Small Business Association of Michigan
South Kent Chamber of Commerce

TECHNOLOGY AND INNOVATION

Centropolis Accelerator
Michigan Manufacturing Technology Center
Franklin Energy
Solutions for Energy Efficient Logistics

2024 RESOURCE PARTNERS ALPHABETIZED

Adventure Credit Union
Arbor Financial Credit Union
Aqume Foundation
Better Business Bureau
Centrepolis Accelerator
City of Grand Rapids Economic Development
Choice One Bank
Comerica Bank
Commercial Bank
Consumers Credit Union
Downtown Grand Rapids Inc.
Downtown Market
 Education Foundation
Family Business Alliance
Fifth Third Bank
First Children's Finance
Franklin Energy
Grand Rapids Area Black Businesses
Grand Rapids Chamber of Commerce
Grand Rapids Center for
 Community Transformation
Grand Rapids Public Library
Great Lakes Commercial Finance
Grow
GVSU Center for Entrepreneurship
 & Innovation
GVSU Family Owned Business Institute
Hello West Michigan
Huntington Bank
K- Connect
Kent District Library
Lakeshore Flavor
Lake Michigan Credit Union
Mercantile Bank
Michigan Center for Employee Ownership
Michigan Department of Agriculture
 & Rural Development
Michigan Economic Development
 Corporation

Michigan Manufacturing
 Technology Center
Michigan Minority Supplier
 Development Council
Michigan Small Business
 Development Center
Michigan Women Forward
MSU Product Center
MSU Research Foundation
NIA Center
Northern Initiatives
Opportunity Resource Fund
People First Economy
Rende Progress Capital
SBA Michigan District Office
SCORE Grand Rapids
Seeds of Promise
SEEL - Solutions for Energy
 Efficient Logistics
Small Business Association of Michigan
South Kent Chamber of Commerce
SpringGR
Start Garden
SURGE Powered by Lakeshore Advantage
The Employers' Association
The Right Place
United Bank
U.S. Commercial Service
Urban League of West Michigan
Van Andel Global Trade Center
VetBizCentral
West Michigan APEX Accelerator
West Michigan Asian American Association
West Michigan Hispanic
 Chamber of Commerce
West Michigan Public Purchasing Alliance
West Michigan Works!

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Adventure Credit Union is a trusted financial guide for people and businesses in the Greater Grand Rapids and Lansing communities. Being locally owned and operated gives us insight into the financial decisions families and small businesses face every day. Our team is dedicated to helping small and medium-sized businesses grow by meeting all of their banking needs. We offer working capital lines of credit and other flexible financing options. As well as, business accounts, affordable treasury management services, and much more. Come discover the difference that a local banking relationship can make for your business!

www.adventurecu.org



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Partner with Arbor Financial Credit Union for personalized financial solutions designed to help your business thrive. As local SW Michigan experts, we offer everything from business checking accounts to lending solutions, ensuring you receive tailored support every step of the way. With our core values of collaboration, integrity, creativity, and enjoyment, you'll experience the security of cutting-edge technology while being treated like family.

<https://www.arborfcu.org/>



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Founded in 2021, AQUME Foundation is a Black-led foundation established as a systemic level response to the glaring national disparities in wealth and resources between white and BIPOC communities. As a result, we focus on economic justice by providing opportunities for the BIPOC community to learn about and establish intergenerational wealth through philanthropy, estate planning, workshops, and networking while integrating our core values of equity, financial investment, accountability, and community transformation.

www.aqumefoundation.org



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The Better Business Bureau® (BBB) is a nonprofit organization dedicated to building a trustworthy marketplace for businesses and consumers. The organization was founded in 1912 by business leaders concerned about the spread of false advertising. Today the BBB works to set marketplace standards of trust and ethics, and support honest businesses that uphold these standards through BBB Accreditation. With a dedication to free market principles, the BBB works to provide consumers information about businesses so they can make informed purchase decisions, while providing businesses a platform to connect with potential customers.

www.bbb.org



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The Centrepolis Accelerator at Lawrence Technological University (LTU) is a catalyst for the growth of Michigan's advanced manufacturing and hardware innovation sectors. We provide crucial resources, including funding, expert guidance, and key business development services, to empower small businesses and entrepreneurs in these industries. Our unique programs, such as the Michigan Mobility Prototype Grand Program and the Defense Hardtech Accelerator (DHA) Program, offer targeted support to companies developing cutting-edge technologies for mobility, electrification, and defense sectors. With a focus on accelerating product development, testing, and manufacturing readiness, we help small businesses thrive and succeed in today's competitive landscape.
<https://www.centrepolisaccelerator.com/>



CITY OF
GRAND
RAPIDS

Economic
Development
Department

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Our team is dedicated to building a strong, vibrant business community in Grand Rapids, and we're here to help you every step of the way. If you are looking to grow your business, we have the tools and resources you need to succeed. Connect with us today or check our website to see how we can help you achieve your goals.
www.GrowGR.org



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ChoiceOne Bank is known for our community commitment, innovative strategies, and personal approach to customer relationships. Our mission is to provide superior service, quality advice, and show utmost respect to everyone we meet.

We believe in guiding small businesses because we know they are the strength and backbone of our communities. When you partner with us, we will ensure that your business is not only set you up for the present day's operations but also prepared for the challenges of the future. ChoiceOne is a Preferred SBA Lender and recipient of the SBA Michigan District 504 Third Party Lender of the Year Award.

<https://www.choiceone.bank>



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With 175 years of experience, Comerica Bank is committed to supporting the growth and success of small businesses. As the Leading Bank for Business, we prioritize long-term relationships and provide comprehensive financial solutions tailored to your needs. Our dedication to entrepreneurs and small businesses is at the core of everything we do. Get ready to Raise Your Expectations® of what a bank can offer for your business.

<https://www.comerica.com>



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Commercial Bank was founded in 1893, our employees are involved in a variety of community organizations, and as a bank, we are committed to investing in our communities. Commercial Bank offers a variety of loan options including: longer term fixed financing with NO balloons, equipment lines of credit, as well as demand lines of credit. We are also one of Michigan's top MEDC Capital Access lenders which may be a great option for newer/start-up businesses. With Commercial Bank, you can expect fast, accurate and reliable service. We take pride in being a locally owned and operated community bank that fosters strong connections with our customers and communities.
www.commercial-bank.com/



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Headquartered in Kalamazoo, Michigan, Consumers Credit Union is a full-service financial institution and a leader in digital banking technology, mortgages and business lending. Consumers has more than \$2.2 billion in assets. Locally owned since 1951, Consumers serves more than 134,000 individuals and businesses through 27 offices located in Kalamazoo, Battle Creek, Grand Rapids, Coldwater, Lansing and up the Lakeshore, with member access to 30,000+ free CO-OP Network ATMs nationwide.

At Consumers, we are proud to offer a wide range of services and products to support your business needs. Our business checking accounts come with low or no monthly fees, online and mobile banking, debit cards, and check imaging, making it easy for you to manage your finances. We also provide competitive business savings accounts with attractive dividend rates. Whether you need term loans, lines of credit, commercial real estate loans, or equipment financing, our business loan options have got you covered. Federally insured by NCUA

www.consumerscu.org



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Downtown Grand Rapids Inc. provides various services to support the economic development, marketing, planning, public space management, safety and cleanliness of Downtown Grand Rapids. We support Downtown businesses directly with grants and other programs. We collaborate with developers to encourage investment and growth in the area and assist with planning and implementation of development projects. We promote Downtown Grand Rapids through marketing and promotional campaigns, and manage and maintain public spaces such as parks, plazas, and streetscapes. We also produce and support inclusive events year-round to create a welcoming and vibrant Downtown for all.

<https://downtowngr.org/>



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The Downtown Market Education Foundation helps food businesses tackle startup obstacles by providing 24/7 kitchen space and 1-on-1 strategic support. Budding entrepreneurs benefit from our free, on-site guidance in food licensing, marketing information, product development, free Culinary Conversations events and much more. The goal is to help food entrepreneurs navigate through all phases of operation and expand the culinary landscape of West Michigan.

www.downtownmarketgr.com/education-foundation



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Family Business Alliance is a non-profit organization of nearly 180 family business organizations in West Michigan. We provide these organizations the opportunity to create connections, navigate governance, and elevate leadership. We offer events, peer forums, programs and resources, to assist West Michigan family businesses achieve multi-generational success.

www.fbagr.org



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Fifth Third Bank is a full service bank that provides a wide range of tools and resources for personal business needs.

<https://www.53.com/content/fifth-third/en/business-banking.html>



First Children's Finance

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Jessica Affholter

First Children's Finance

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First Children's Finance is a nonprofit organization that provides financial services, technical assistance, and training to early care and education (ECE) businesses and organizations across the United States. Their services are aimed at supporting the growth and success of ECE businesses and organizations by providing financing, financial management support, business planning assistance, technical assistance, and training and workshops.

<https://www.firstchildrensfinance.org/>



FRANKLIN
ENERGY™

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Franklin Energy is a leading energy efficiency and grid optimization company that provides innovative solutions to utilities, businesses, and homeowners. With a focus on sustainability and cost savings, Franklin Energy offers a comprehensive range of services aimed at reducing energy consumption and improving overall efficiency. We design and implement customized energy efficiency programs, providing expert guidance and support to help clients maximize energy savings. Franklin Energy also offers advanced technology solutions, such as smart thermostats and energy management systems, to optimize energy usage and reduce carbon footprints. Through our expertise in energy efficiency and our commitment to a cleaner, more sustainable future, Franklin Energy helps clients achieve their energy goals while making a positive impact on the environment.

<https://www.franklinenergy.com/>



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Grand Rapids Area Black Businesses (GRABB) is an institution that provides a platform that propels Black entrepreneurship forward with the purpose of creating wealth for our community through economic and business development. GRABB works to expand opportunities for Black businesses in the Metro Grand Rapids area by assisting them with acquiring four forms of capital (Human, Social, Intellectual and Financial) and creating awareness for Black businesses. GRABB is empowering the Black business community that is leading to meaningful and beneficial economic growth and sustainability.

<https://grabbllocal.com/>



Samuel Sanestin

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Each year, the Grand Rapids Chamber helps entrepreneurs grow their businesses, professionals lead their organizations, and community leaders expand their reach in support of a vibrant business environment and a thriving local economy that benefits everyone. We're here to provide you with the confidence, connections, credibility, and resources you need—from raising your brand visibility and gaining business advice to talent attraction and retention, from job creation to building a diverse workforce, from relentless advocacy to creating a welcoming, magnetic Grand Rapids community. Together, we're driving a dynamic, top-of-mind region.

www.grandrapids.org



Justin Beene

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The Grand Rapids Center for Community Transformation believes in unhindered access to opportunity, creating a city for everyone—a place of ideas, enterprise, and vitality. To solve today's social problems, we harness the tools and methods of business, uniting neighborhood voices, entrepreneurial spirit, and innovation through partnerships with business, government, education, and community. We create pathways for career development, support business growth, and increase contracts with BIPOC entrepreneurs, fostering a multiplying effect in the community. Our diverse avenues for attracting capital enable us to scale investment, support businesses, and spread impactful ideas to benefit the community.

<https://www.grcct.com/>



GRAND
RAPIDS
PUBLIC
LIBRARY

Steven Assarian

Business and Career Librarian

Grand Rapids Public Library

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At the Grand Rapids Public Library Small Business Resource Center (SBRC) we take your success seriously. Since its establishment in 2009, thousands of patrons have received SBRC assistance and gone on to build successful businesses, find lucrative grant funding, and obtain new jobs. We've built an arsenal of proprietary research tools that give entrepreneurs, grant seekers, and job hunters free access to valuable information, along with the expert help to make that information useful and actionable. The GRPL SBRC is funded thanks to a generous grant from the Grand Rapids Public Library Foundation Titche Family Fund

www.grpl.org/sbrc



Great Lakes
Commercial Finance
SBA 504 & 7(a) Lending

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Great Lakes Commercial
Finance (GLCF) is a non-profit

lender that provides access to capital for small businesses that are purchasing or refinancing commercial real estate and/or machinery and equipment. We are licensed by the U.S. Small Business Administration (SBA) as a Certified Development Company (CDC) to offer the SBA 504 Loan Program throughout the entire state of Michigan. Some of the benefits of using the program include: As little as a 10% down payment vs. 20% if done conventionally – 10, 20, and 25 years terms – Low-interest rates locked in for the term of the loan.

www.glcf.org



Grow
Elevating
Entrepreneurs.

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Grow is a community development financial institution that provides responsible and accessible microloans (\$50,000 and below working capital) and knowledge. Our team is composed of current and past small business owners in a variety of industries. We strive to provide capital and knowledge that is informed through curiosity and authentic relationships. We acknowledge the historical harm of traditional financial systems and combat this by committing to provide capital to small business owners and entrepreneurs who have been economically disadvantaged and systemically excluded.

www.growbusiness.org



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The Richard M. and Helen DeVos Center for Entrepreneurship & Innovation (CEI), is committed to supporting and enriching the entrepreneurial community by providing an essential hub where entrepreneurs can connect to resources, mentorship, networking opportunities, regional and national conferences, workshops, high-tech incubation facilities, and access to capital. CEI hosts two programs for the West MI entrepreneurial community, LendGR and Michigan Veteran Entrepreneur-Lab (MVE-Lab).

<https://www.gvsu.edu/cei/>



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The Family Owned Business Institute's (FOBI) mission is to champion and serve family-owned businesses through scholarship, education and advocacy. FOBI creates opportunities for those studying family businesses through our Scholar in Residence Program, FOBI Research Grant, and Family Business Course.

<https://www.gvsu.edu/fobi/>



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Huntington Bank is dedicated to providing tailored banking and financial solutions for businesses. Led by local relationship managers, we offer customized services to help your business capitalize on growth opportunities, mitigate risks, and enhance efficiency. Our offerings include deposits and liquidity management, receivables and payables solutions, capital markets services, credit and lending options, business insurance, online banking tools, and advisory capabilities through Capstone Partners.

<https://www.huntington.com/>



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Hello West Michigan is a regional talent attraction organization that promotes West Michigan as a great place to live and work. Through programs and resources, we connect new relocatees to employers and the community. We support and enhance companies' talent attraction strategy with an array of member benefits and resources. Programs cover the talent spectrum, from interns to executives. Our website, hellowestmichigan.com, is open to the public and can be referred to newcomers, transplants, and boomerangs at any time.

<https://hellowestmichigan.com/>



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KConnect

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KConnect is a collaborative network in Kent County focused on ensuring every child's path to economic prosperity through quality education and community support. With a dedicated backbone team, we operate through three workgroups:

Core Workgroups: Target equitable outcomes from prenatal to career.

Cross-Cutting Workgroups: Expertise in data, equity, community engagement, and policy.

Foundational Workgroup: Focuses on home and family stability, meeting basic needs for educational success.

<https://k-connect.org/>



Hannah Lewis

Outreach Specialist - Economic and Workforce Development

Kent District Library

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Kent District library has 20 branches and a bookmobile throughout all of Kent county. Businesses in the Kent county service area can obtain an institution card. The card allows access to a plethora of books, business resources, proprietary research tools, hot spots, beyond books, and digital resource offerings. Study and meeting rooms are available in most of KDL's locations.

www.kdl.org



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Lake Michigan Credit Union (LMCU) is committed to prioritizing the needs of its members, offering competitive rates and personalized financial solutions tailored to support small businesses. With a community-driven approach and dedication to supporting local businesses and neighborhoods, LMCU fosters growth and prosperity within our communities, making them better places to live and work for everyone. Empowering businesses to thrive and succeed, LMCU stands out as a member-centric institution in today's dynamic marketplace.

lmcu.org



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Lakeshore Flavor is dedicated to fostering equity in Muskegon County's food industry. We support Black, Brown, Women-Owned, and Low-Income food businesses through education and investment, aiming to create a vibrant and inclusive food system. Our programs empower entrepreneurs with the skills needed for economic growth while ensuring everyone has access to healthy, culturally appropriate food options. Join us in building a food system that benefits the entire community.

<https://www.lakeshoreflavor.org/>



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Mercantile Bank provides financial products and services in a professional and personalized manner. Our innovative products and services make banking easier for businesses and consumers. We provide a high level of service, a knowledgeable staff, and are committed to strengthening the diverse communities we serve. Our services and solutions are designed to empower businesses to achieve their financial goals. From commercial and business banking to treasury and Human Capital Management tools, our local teams offer unparalleled service. With a hands-on approach to community engagement, Mercantile employees are here to help support local economies, youth, families, and individuals.

www.mercbank.com



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The Michigan Center for Employee Ownership (MICEO) is a nonprofit organization that helps business owners explore and develop their ownership exit strategy from their company. MICEO helps educate the business owner on all of their exit options, including a sale to the employees. MICEO provides a high level of information on these options, helps to assess what options might be the best fit for the organizations, and assists in outlining the next step forward in the process. MICEO can provide referrals to qualified professionals to help the business owner develop and execute their selected exit strategy.

www.miceo.org



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Our mission is to deliver expertise and leadership to support economic development in Michigan's food and agriculture industries. We help Michigan businesses navigate the licensing process and offer exporting assistance, regional business development information, grant funding support and research and educational materials. Our team is personally invested in the success of food, ag and forest product businesses and are committed to supporting the unique solutions that will help them thrive.

www.michigan.gov/mdard



MICHIGAN ECONOMIC
DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION

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The Michigan Economic Development Corporation (MEDC) plays a pivotal role in driving economic growth and fostering business development in the state of Michigan. As a public-private partnership, the MEDC offers a comprehensive suite of services and resources to support businesses at various stages. They provide assistance with site selection, access to capital, and business attraction strategies to help companies establish and expand their operations in Michigan. The MEDC also offers programs and grants to support innovation, entrepreneurship, and workforce development. By collaborating with local communities, businesses, and educational institutions, the MEDC aims to create a business-friendly environment that attracts investment, spurs job creation, and promotes overall economic prosperity throughout the state of Michigan.

www.michiganbusiness.org



Terry Hossink

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Offering personalized consulting services to West Michigan manufacturers, we develop more effective business leaders, drive product and process innovation, promote company-wide operational excellence, and foster creative strategies for business growth and greater profitability. The Center-West is a small, dynamic team with a vast network of partners and subcontractors. This far-reaching structure allows our team to respond quickly to the changing needs of West Michigan's manufacturing community. We are equipped to connect you with any of our partner organizations, providing a clear path to the answers and services you need most.

www.thecenterwest.org



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The Michigan Minority Supplier Development Council (MMSDC) is a non-profit organization committed to driving economic growth within minority communities. The MMSDC advances this mission by facilitating over \$36 billion annually in economic output each year. The MMSDC is one of 23 affiliates of the National Minority Supplier Development Council (NMSDC), a nonprofit corporate membership organization that advances business opportunities for its certified Asian, Black, Hispanic, and Native American business enterprises and connects them to its corporate members.

<https://minoritysupplier.org>



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The Michigan Small Business Development Center (Michigan SBDC) enhances Michigan's economic wellbeing by providing no-cost consulting, training, and market research for new ventures, existing small businesses and advanced technology companies. With ten offices across the state, we provide entrepreneurs and business owners with convenient access to our free consulting and training throughout Michigan. We are committed to fostering and sustaining a culture of inclusion through equitable outreach and service to Michigan's diverse business community.

<https://michigansbdc.org/>



MichiganWomenForward

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MWF is a certified community development financial institution (CDFI) whose mission is to expand economic opportunity for women and entrepreneurs of color, by providing access to capital and business resources. MWF celebrates outstanding Michigan Women by honoring their leadership contributions to the community, economy and our State.

MWF's vision is to create an inclusive economy for the State of Michigan where women and people of color can create viable businesses that build long-term sustainable wealth.

<https://miwf.org/>



Product Center
Food • Ag • Bio
MICHIGAN STATE UNIVERSITY

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The Michigan State University Product Center helps Michigan entrepreneurs and businesses to develop and launch new product and service ideas into the food, ag and bioenergy markets. Whether you are a budding entrepreneur or operate a well-established company, the Product Center is your key to the front door of Michigan State University's vast and varied technical expertise, research and outreach services. At the Product Center, we facilitate innovation by customizing services to each client. From business planning to market analysis and research, and from scientific support to technical services, we deliver what entrepreneurs need directly or from our statewide network of university, business and governmental partners. Our team of experts analyzes the level of service each client needs, taking some from concept development to launch and helping others with specialized issues such as packaging, labeling or nutritional analysis.

<https://www.canr.msu.edu/productcenter/>



MICHIGAN STATE
UNIVERSITY
**RESEARCH
FOUNDATION**

Heather Liskiewtz
Michigan State University Research Foundation
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The Michigan State University Research Foundation was established in 1973 as an independent nonprofit committed to the commercialization of cutting-edge technologies invented by MSU faculty, staff, and students. Today, the MSU Research Foundation is focused on enhancing research, encouraging innovation and entrepreneurship, and facilitating economic growth at MSU and in communities across the state. Key programs and services include business accelerators, entrepreneurs-in-residence, coaching and mentoring, early-stage funding, market assessment, and business accelerator fund.

<https://www.msufoundation.org>



Andre' B. Dandridge
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NIA Centre
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NIA Centre is a nationally recognized nonprofit cultural center celebrating Black Excellence, striving for equitable opportunities in finance, business, health, and culture. Rooted in acknowledging historical injustices and shaping a brighter future, we inspire, build, transform, and connect communities of all ages. We support entrepreneurship and wealth building, fostering connections, and providing opportunities for underserved youth and communities of color to thrive.

<https://www.niacentregr.org/>



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Northern Initiatives is a nonprofit Community Development Financial Institution (CDFI) that provides loans and business services to small businesses in Michigan. Their services include small business loans, business services, technical assistance, a Women's Business Center, and community development partnerships. Northern Initiatives aims to promote economic development in Michigan and help small businesses succeed by providing specialized support, coaching, training, and access to financing and other resources.

<https://northerninitiatives.org/>



OPPORTUNITY RESOURCE FUND

A CATALYST FOR MICHIGAN COMMUNITIES

Alexis Hill

Loan Officer

Opportunity Resource Fund

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OppFun is a nonprofit 501(c)(3) community development financial institution serving the entire State of Michigan. We are a catalyst for positive change, be it funding affordable housing, enabling job creation, supporting small businesses, providing affordable mortgages, or funding the development of great commercial spaces. Our mission is to provide loans to create equitable, economic and sustainable opportunities throughout Michigan - one person, one job, one home at a time. Opportunity Fund aims to help small businesses access financing and improve their operations.

<https://oppfund.org/>



**PEOPLE
FIRST**

Victoria Munro (she/her)

Community Engagement Manager

People First Economy

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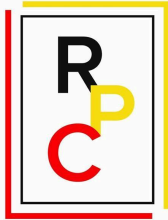
People First Economy is a business support organization that provides equity and resiliency- building resources through three main program areas - Local First, Good For Michigan, and

People First Impact.

We do this by:

- Engaging business leaders to support social + environmental justice through emergent best practices
- Catalyzing individuals to be intentional with consumer habits
- Elevating the voices of small business leaders in the legislative process

<https://www.peoplefirsteconomy.org/>



Elisa Starnes
Associate Partner for Lending Opportunity
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Rende Progress Capital (RPC) is a new Loan Fund and emerging Community Development Financial Institution (CDFI) committed to economic equity by providing capital to Excluded Entrepreneurs of Color. CDFI's are financial institutions dedicated to providing socially responsible and affordable lending to disinvested entrepreneurs. We provide loans determined by racial equity factors, the mission of the borrower's business and their ability to repay loans within an established time frame. We also make equitable investments in businesses led by Excluded Entrepreneurs of Color to reach their full potential and dreams.

<https://www.rendeprogresscapital.com>



U.S. Small Business
Administration

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The U.S. Small Business Administration (SBA) is a government agency dedicated to providing support and resources to small businesses across the United States. With a mission to aid in the establishment, growth, and success of small enterprises, the SBA offers a wide range of services. They provide access to capital through loans and grants, facilitating funding opportunities for small businesses. Additionally, the SBA offers counseling, training, and mentorship programs to help entrepreneurs develop their business skills and navigate challenges effectively. The agency also assists with government contracting opportunities, providing resources for businesses interested in working with federal agencies.

<https://www.sba.gov/>



Rob Hughes
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SCORE's mission is to foster vibrant small business communities through mentoring and education. We aim to give every person the support they need to thrive as a small business owner. SCORE mentoring is a free service, offered to any aspiring entrepreneur or established owners of U.S. based businesses. SCORE mentors can guide you through Planning & Starting Your Business, Managing and Growing Your Business, and also Transitioning and Exiting Your Business. Partnering with you one-to-one, SCORE mentors support your success by providing experienced advice, consulting on best practices, and educating you on small business topics.

<https://www.score.org/grandrapids>



SEEDS
of **PROMISE**

Regenail Thomas
CEO
Seeds of Promise
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Seeds of Promise is a 501c3 non-profit organization. We are a place-based urban community improvement initiative located in the Southeast community of Grand Rapids, Michigan. Seeds of Promise empower those who live in this urban neighborhood to direct their own strategy. We are a “Bottom-Up” rather than “Top Down.” Our future is not about reducing poverty, it is about empowering urban residents to build personal and neighborhood prosperity through producing measurable impacts. It is just good business!

<https://seedsofpromisegr.com/about/>



Scott Alan Davis
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SEEL, LLC is a nationally certified minority business enterprise (MBE) service-disabled, veteran-owned (DVBE) energy management services company that offers workforce development (including training), contact center, rebate processing, and justice, equity, diversity, and inclusion programming support.

SEEL offers turnkey services for utility programs with seasoned staff. We support program goals with a suite of energy management services. As an agile company, SEEL has an unmatched ability to engage diverse customers in all communities with a special emphasis on urban and rural communities. SEEL provides a comprehensive, turn-key approach to drive customer participation and exceed program goals. SEEL leverages its proven experience in implementing cost-effective programs and our past successes in achieving high customer satisfaction levels.

<https://www.seelllc.com/>



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Winston Larson
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The Small Business Association of Michigan serves over 32,000 small businesses across Michigan. Our mission is the Success of Michigan's Small Businesses, which we do by: advocating for small business, bringing business owners together to share knowledge, creating collaboration and partnerships, and delivering group buying power. When small businesses band together through the Small Business Association of Michigan, they achieve more than they could on their own.

<https://www.sbam.org/>



Keith Morgan, MBA
President & CEO
South Kent Chamber
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At the heart of our vibrant community, the South Kent County Area Chamber of Commerce is dedicated to Building Our Businesses to Build Our Communities. We take pride in fostering growth, collaboration, and prosperity for businesses in Wyoming, Kentwood, and the surrounding areas.

As a dynamic chamber, we understand that a thriving business community is the cornerstone of a flourishing society. That's why we're dedicated to delivering a comprehensive suite of services. From providing invaluable networking opportunities to offering leadership and advocacy for our members, enhancing businesses, and acting as a beacon of support and opportunity, our commitment is unwavering. With a focus on leadership and a keen eye on economic growth, we cultivate connections, foster collaboration, and uphold our local businesses and community alike.

www.southkent.org



Paul Pearson
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SpringGR is a business accelerator that provides a range of training, coaching, and support services for entrepreneurs, whether it is getting an idea off the ground or growing the business to scale. SpringGR's trainings includes an Idea Lab, Core Business Training, Kitchen Incubator Program, and a scaling program called The 250 Project. Services provided to graduates of the training courses include business roundtables, volunteer business mentors, a scope of legal services, continued learning opportunities, networking events, and more.

www.springggr.com

START GARDEN

Laurie Supinski

Director

Start Garden

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Start Garden is an innovative company that empowers entrepreneurs and startup ventures to bring their ideas to life. We create opportunities for entrepreneurs working toward their first \$1,000,000 in revenue. We do that through our platforms such as 5x5 Night and the Start Garden 100 which award over \$500,000 directly to entrepreneurs annually. We have a 16,000 square foot incubator space for entrepreneurs to build, work, learn and connect. We share our networks because who you know matters and our diverse, shared leadership team ensures that no matter who you are, opportunities at Start Garden arrive on a level playing field. Our goal is to help aspiring entrepreneurs navigate the challenges of starting a business and turn their visions into successful ventures. With Start Garden, the path to entrepreneurship becomes more accessible, allowing creative minds to flourish and contribute to the growth of the startup ecosystem.

<https://startgarden.com/>

SURGE
POWERED BY LAKESHORE ADVANTAGE

Amanda Chocko

Director of Entrepreneurship

SURGE Powered by Lakeshore Advantage

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SURGE is a business incubator and startup hub that provides product and technology startups with the tools and resources needed to launch and grow successful companies. From concept to commercialization, our membership includes access to customized programs, a network of seasoned mentors, and a community of like-minded innovators. Located in the heart of beautiful downtown Holland, The SURGE Center is a startup hub that offers open coworking, conference rooms and community space. And there are restaurants, pubs, and coffee shops just steps away.

<https://lakeshoreadvantage.com/entrepreneurs/>



Renee Looman
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The Employers' Association is a not-for-profit association that provides practical Human Resource Solutions to the local business community. We help hundreds of companies maximize employee productivity and minimize employer liability while seeking operational excellence through practical human resources and management advice, training, benchmark information, networking, and organization development services.
www.teagr.org



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The Right Place is Greater Grand Rapids' leading economic development organization, offering comprehensive business assistance services to growing companies. We can assist businesses with state and local incentives, site location searches, local supply chain and partner opportunities, business research, manufacturing and operational improvement, as well as access to local talent.
<https://www.rightplace.org/>



Doris Drain
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United Bank
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United Bank is locally owned and operated, serving West Michigan since 1887. As an advocate for local businesses, families and our local economy, United Bank provides real solutions for all your financial needs including home loans, commercial lending, insurance.

www.unitedbank4U.com



**U.S.
COMMERCIAL
SERVICE**

United States of America
Department of Commerce

Kendra Kuo
Director
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The U.S. Commercial Service has a global network of experienced trade professionals located throughout the United States and in U.S. Embassies and Consulates worldwide. Whether you're looking to make your first export sale or expand to additional international markets, we offer the expertise you need to connect with lucrative opportunities and increase your bottom line. As the U.S. government, we can open doors that no one else can. With trade experts in more than 80 countries, we can provide you with on-the-ground knowledge and results.

<https://trade.gov/>



Marvin Martin
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Through the Urban League of West Michigan's Center for Economic Success & Development aspiring and existing entrepreneurs and business owners receive ESO ecosystem navigation, one-on-one coaching, two-fold match-making services and preparing for, and access to capital.

<https://www.grurbanleague.org/>



Sonja Johnson
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The Van AnDEL Global Trade Center (VAGTC) is a prominent institution dedicated to the advancement of international business growth and trade education. Founded by and located at Grand Valley State University, VAGTC offers a wide range of services to businesses aiming to expand their global reach. They provide comprehensive market research, strategic planning, and tailored consulting services to help companies navigate the complexities of international trade. VAGTC also offers technical and cultural training programs and workshops to enhance the knowledge and skills of professionals involved in global business.

<https://www.gvsu.edu/vagtc>



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VetBizCentral is a leading platform dedicated to supporting and empowering veteran-owned businesses. They provide a comprehensive range of services and resources aimed at helping veterans succeed in entrepreneurship and business ownership. VetBizCentral offers assistance with preparing for financing capital, with becoming procurement proficient and providing market and industry research.

<https://vetbiz.com/>



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Our mission is to enhance national defense and economic development in the State of Michigan by assisting Michigan businesses in obtaining and performing on federal, state and local government contracts; The West Michigan APEX Accelerator provides government contracting assistance to all business types in a 13-county service area that includes: Allegan, Barry, Ionia, Kent, Lake, Mason, Mecosta, Montcalm, Muskegon, Newaygo, Oceana, Osceola, and Ottawa.

www.westmiapex.org



Minnie Morey
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The West Michigan Asian American Association (WMAAA) is a Michigan nonprofit dedicated to fostering a vibrant Asian American community in West Michigan. We focus on healthcare, education, and civic engagement. Our bilingual interpreters assist Asian business owners in connecting with community resources. Our programs include scholarships, networking events, cultural presentations, healthcare awareness initiatives, patient navigation, and more.

<https://www.wm-aaa.org/>



Emily Pineda
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West Michigan Hispanic Chamber of Commerce
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The West Michigan Hispanic Chamber of Commerce (WMHCC) is a dynamic organization dedicated to promoting economic development and empowering the Hispanic business community in West Michigan. With a strong focus on advocacy, networking, and education, WMHCC provides a wide range of services and resources to support Hispanic-owned businesses. They offer networking events, workshops, and educational programs to foster professional growth and business success. WMHCC also advocates for policies that promote diversity, equity, and inclusion within the business community. By connecting entrepreneurs, professionals, and organizations, WMHCC plays a vital role in creating a vibrant and inclusive business environment that drives economic prosperity for the Hispanic community and the region as a whole.

<https://westmihcc.org>



Cori Derengowski

Buyer

WMPPA - West Michigan Public
Purchasing Alliance

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WMPPA is an alliance of West Michigan public purchasing professionals who work collectively to advocate diversity and inclusion promoting economic growth and business opportunities.

Website link – unavailable at this time – each member agency has their own website



Olivia Blomstrom

Business Solutions Manager

West Michigan Works!

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West Michigan Works! is part of the statewide Michigan Works! system and the workforce development agency in West Michigan that provides workforce solutions.

We serve the employers and job seekers of Allegan, Barry, Ionia, Kent, Montcalm, Muskegon and Ottawa counties by creating workforce solutions. We partner with employers, educators, economic developers, and community organizations to create a qualified workforce that meets our region's current and future talent needs and fuels our shared economic future.

<https://www.westmiworks.org>