

SMALL BUSINESS ECOSYSTEM ASSESSMENT

PHASE I - (COMPLETED JUNE 2019)

The City of Columbus partnered with Next Street and Development Strategies to assess the small business ecosystem in Columbus in order to identify gaps and opportunities for supporting a thriving and inclusive ecosystem

OUR PROCESS

Convened a 21-member Advisory Committee – including business owners, entrepreneur support organizations, capital providers, and other key players – through monthly meetings

Reviewed 35+ reports to understand existing knowledge around small business in Columbus

Engaged 35 business owners and entrepreneur support organizations through five focus groups, and 20+ support organizations through 1-on-1 interviews

Analyzed quantitative data on small business trends across Columbus and within focus neighborhoods, and estimated supply and demand for capital

Identified best practices from four entrepreneurial hubs and benchmarked Columbus against five peer markets

Prioritized 22 ecosystem gaps around non-capital, capital, industry, and neighborhood support

KEY LEARNINGS

- > Of **124,205** total businesses in Columbus, **95% are small businesses** (< 20 employees including non-employers)
- > **People of Color and females are underrepresented** in business ownership, with 4% of businesses Black-owned, 3% Hispanic/Latinx-owned, and 19% female-owned
- > **Columbus' economy is highly diversified**, with no single industry comprising over 14% of businesses – high potential industry clusters include:

1. Construction	5. Personal svcs.
2. Food & beverage retail	6. Distribution & e-commerce
3. Health care svcs.	7. IT & digital
4. Local business svcs.	
- > **~\$362M in lending** was supplied to Columbus small businesses in 2016

TOP ECOSYSTEM GAPS

- ① **Limited awareness of available resources and lack of coordination across support providers**
- ② **Need for support to help businesses scale in "post-launch" stage**
- ③ **Disproportionate challenges in accessing capital for People of Color and women**
- ④ **Business support and capital providers struggle to reach underserved neighborhoods**



PATH FORWARD

We will build from this assessment to develop a comprehensive Multi-Year Small Business Agenda that harnesses the collective strengths of the City of Columbus

For additional data readouts on the Assessment, please call the City of Columbus - Office of Small Business and Entrepreneur Development at 614-645-8616.

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PHASE II (TIMELINE: JULY – DECEMBER 2019)

Informed by data and input from Phase I, the City of Columbus will contract will Next Street to perform three distinct tracts of service in Phase II of an entrepreneurship-based economic development project.

SCOPE OF WORK

Track 1:
Continue direct engagement with the Small Business Ecosystem Advisory Committee

Track 2:
Create Framework and Develop an Initial Plan Via Visioning Sessions and Facilitated Workshops

Track 3:
Prepare Small Business Agenda and Action Plan

- Draft and align a vision and mission for a City-Sponsored Small Business Agenda;
- Establish a framework for evaluating and prioritizing options and opportunities;
- Prioritize recommendations for implementation based on ecosystem gaps identified in Phase I;
- Draft initial version of “Small Business Agenda” including an “Implementation Roadmap” and
- Identify potential partners for implementation
- Conduct visioning sessions and facilitated workshops with the Advisory Committee to development Framework for Small Business Agenda and Action Plan
- Finalize Small Business Agenda and Annual Action Plan;
- Propose Implementation Strategy and Plan

DELIVERABLES

Entrepreneurship Policy and Program Framework based on data and findings from the Phase I Assessment that will result in the development of a *public-facing* comprehensive Small Business Agenda and Multi-Year Action Plan that harnesses the collective strengths of the City of Columbus, its partners, and stakeholders to be implemented via an Executable Implementation Plan with initiative-specific timelines, approaches, and metrics.

PATH FORWARD

2020 Implementation
Implementation (Phase III) will be based on a Theory of Change and Desired Impacts identified in the Small Business Agenda