

# Seeding, Starting, and Scaling Local Branding Initiatives

A study of economic development strategies that establish manufacturing entrepreneurial ecosystems

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LISC



Urban  
Manufacturing  
Alliance

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# Introduction

## Executive Summary

Manufacturing is an important part of a vibrant community, bringing innovation, creativity, and stability to cities. Economic development leaders often struggle to understand the relevance of manufacturing in urban centers and regional economies because manufacturing is believed to be dirty, dangerous, loud, and mindless work done in large facilities on the outskirts of cities. But over the past decade, small batch manufacturing - often performed within urban areas - has evolved. This evolution is in large part due to changing markets, technologies, and ownership demographics. We now see new models of manufacturing, bringing with them higher paying jobs and career pathways, which help a region's economy become more diverse, resilient, and sustainable before and during major disruptions.

The Urban Manufacturing Alliance (UMA) has found that an impactful way to help urban manufacturing business owners and their current and future workforce is by supporting Local Branding Initiatives (LBIs), also known as "made-in" programs. An LBI is a pioneering approach to economic development which creates an ecosystem of

stakeholders that support business owners in order to:

- ▮ Increase the number of manufacturing businesses
- ▮ Scale up existing manufacturing businesses

The ecosystem created by LBIs responds to the unique needs and qualities of the manufacturers in the region, in order to increase diversity and generational wealth, and to establish a resilient regional economy.

No two cities, manufacturing ecosystems, or LBIs are the same; however, when UMA studies LBIs across the country, we see consistent impacts, including helping manufacturers: access new markets and increase sales creating new jobs; connect training programs with manufacturers creating new workforce pipelines; and increase access to capital for women and business owners of color, all creating new economic pathways. LBIs promote women- and BIPOC-owned companies, emphasize the importance of both place and making, and educate consumers and leaders about the benefits of buying locally-made products. During the COVID-19 pandemic,

LBI's are helping local governments respond to PPE requirements, creating safe standards for reopening, managing grants and loan programs to help small businesses pivot and stay open, and disseminating information to businesses. Underlying all LBIs, both before and during the pandemic, is a belief that equitable economies are vital to the economic sustainability of cities. The outcome of their work is an interconnected regional economy of stakeholders reflective of their locale.

The Urban Manufacturing Alliance is proud of our work with and support of LBIs across the country. UMA was conceived by leaders of SFMade and Made in NYC and their work is foundational to our work today. Since 2016, UMA has hosted community of practice meetings, bringing together leaders of LBIs to share their experiences, identify best practices, and find ways to increase impact. Through these meetings and collaborations UMA has developed toolkits, policy briefs, and research supporting the importance of LBIs, these documents can be found in the **further reading section**. The following report builds on this work and provides additional background into the history and importance of manufacturing and details on the benefits of Local Branding Initiatives and how they can be created and supported.

## About The Urban Manufacturing Alliance

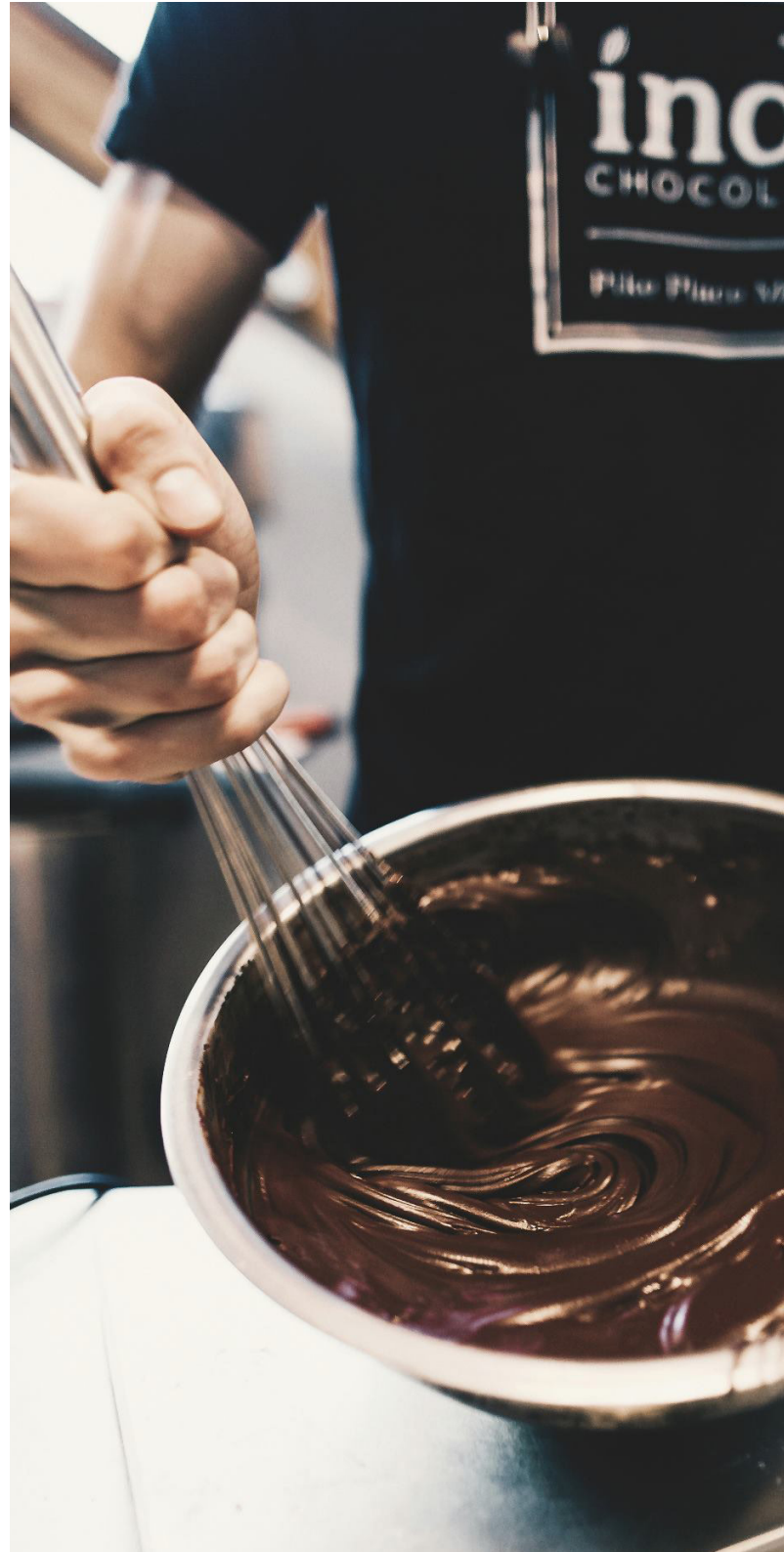
The Urban Manufacturing Alliance (UMA) is a national coalition of manufacturing practitioners working together to grow more equitable and prosperous economies in cities by building robust, environmentally sustainable, and inclusive urban manufacturing sectors. UMA advances place-based strategies that create more equitable communities by building wealth through employment, ownership, and entrepreneurship. UMA connects and convenes 900+ members across 250+ cities, helping them learn from one another, and acts as a collaborative ecosystem builder that supports local manufacturing communities and a national movement.

UMA's network, collaborations, and research position us as leaders in ecosystem development, resource mapping, Local Brand Initiative R&D, and policy recommendations for manufacturing. UMA partners with local practitioners to bring this know-how and passion for regional manufacturing ecosystems to local partners and leaders.

## About LISC (Local Initiatives Support Corporation)

Together with residents and partners, LISC forges resilient and inclusive communities of opportunity across America—great places to live, work, visit, do business and raise families.

LISC Economic Development is committed to connecting people, businesses, and places to grow inclusive local economies and drive equitable access to opportunity. Leveraging our unique blend of national perspective and local partnerships, our model integrates three core strategies: building and supporting pathways to quality jobs and financial security, fostering local environments where diverse businesses thrive through increased capacity and access to capital, and transforming underinvested commercial and industrial districts into generators of inclusive economic opportunity.



Stir indi Chocolate - Seattle Made / indi Chocolate

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# Manufacturing Is Important

## Manufacturing is Fundamental

Our clothing, our food, our medicine, the elements that make up our homes and our transportation, the parts that go into building our infrastructure are all manufactured at one scale or another, in our backyards and across the globe. Manufacturing is not a single, siloed sector; it is a part of all sectors. Humans depend on manufacturing to produce goods that we need for safety, security, and protection. Not only does manufacturing produce vital goods, it is also how we create products that communicate culture and identity. The products we have around us, that we wear on our bodies, the objects around our homes, the gifts we give, all signify something important to us and represent what we value most.

Despite the importance of manufacturing, the majority of people today are disconnected from the practice and unaware of the role it plays in their daily lives. We tend not to think about all the steps and stages, all the people and businesses, all the hands and machines that are required to make products. Instead we solely see the outcome of the work. Only when the systems aren't working smoothly do we stop to consider the scale and importance of manufacturing. Relatedly, those outside of manufacturing

tend to have misunderstandings of what the manufacturing sector looks like. The prevailing perception that manufacturing as dark, dirty, dangerous, and degrading has influenced large numbers of people, policymakers, and investors to overlook the potential of manufacturing to be a catalyst for economic opportunity and wealth generation.

The Urban Manufacturing Alliance defines manufacturing as: *the use of technology and labor to transform raw and or recycled materials into finished goods*. Most people use “manufacturing” and “mass production” interchangeably. Yet, mass production is just one strategy or method of manufacturing. It uses low and unskilled labor and dedicated technology to make lots and lots of identical products. There is actually a wide spectrum of manufacturing strategies ranging from mass production to custom made to small batch production and mass customization. The latter three require more highly skilled individuals using flexible technology. And with new advances in additive manufacturing - such as 3D printing of plastics, ceramics, glass, and concrete - to biodesign and biofabrication - the use of biobased materials to grow and manufacture products - the diversity of manufacturing methods and strategies is only going to grow.

## **The Past 50 Years: Two Parallel Stories**

Historically, manufacturing was concentrated in cities and provided many benefits to whole neighborhoods, including things like: family-sustaining wages, easily accessible and recognizable jobs that didn't require higher education, and economic multipliers beyond individual pay checks that helped to lift up communities.

The 1970s marked a divide. New trade agreements, globalization, shifting consumer demands, and a desire for cheap labor drove manufacturers from our cities and country. This exodus devastated many of the neighborhoods that previously relied on it, particularly those with a majority of residents of color.

Further, business leaders began to believe that the most valuable part of a business was the product innovation - e.g. research and development (R&D) - rather than production itself. As a result, they moved production to countries with lower labor, safety, and environmental standards. This favoritism of R&D over production has influenced the vast majority of major corporations and gained buy-in with many medium and smaller companies as well. Companies began building relationships with manufacturers around the world rather than building or expanding their own facilities, staffing them, and maintaining

them. While this benefitted a few at the top of the businesses, it negatively affected families and communities who made a good living working in the factories. In regions across the U.S., as manufacturing facilities shuttered, whole neighborhoods - and towns and cities in some instances - also shuttered.

But, there is a parallel story of manufacturing. Despite the prevailing emphasis on financial gain over other social, cultural, and environmental benefits, many manufacturing businesses stayed open in the U.S. Over the past 20 years, new making- and manufacturing-based businesses have started and thrived, adopting a belief that there is an immense value to keeping manufacturing in proximity to markets and product developers. The companies that stayed in the U.S. survived most often by contracting in size and offering flexibility in their manufacturing strategies. In turn, this inspired new manufacturing methods and values. This parallel development emphasizes keeping businesses embedded in a community in order to increase wealth among employees and owners. This alternative view hasn't taken over the entire manufacturing base, but there are growing numbers, especially among Black and brown, women and immigrants, and younger entrepreneurs.

Many manufacturing businesses have taken hold in cities due to new technologies



and manufacturing processes and the recombination of creative process and product innovation. These companies have come to rely on cities for access to a talented workforce, a culture of entrepreneurship, and adjacent industries like the creative economy, technology, and medicine. In the U.S. and abroad this new wave of urban, small batch manufacturing is defining the future of manufacturing and making it more creative, innovative, dynamic - and important. Because manufacturing is essential to all industries - food, medicine, transportation, energy, clothing, the list is truly all-inclusive - the coming new industrial revolution in manufacturing is defining how we respond to the climate crisis, food demand, pandemics, and calls for equity.

## Urban Manufacturing



Swapnil Dwivedi - Swapnil Dwivedi

## is Still Not Equal

Manufacturing in the United States is at a major inflection point. Automation, customization, artificial intelligence, and the Internet of Things are transforming work as part of the “fourth industrial revolution.” This historical moment has major relevance for communities of color who have long counted on manufacturing jobs as a source of middle-class income.

For individuals, the challenge is gaining access to the new manufacturing renaissance. You need to know how to access the:

- | Training opportunities to break into the manufacturing sector
- | Diffuse and more closed off networks to break into manufacturing
- | Entrepreneurial pathways to build a new manufacturing business

For current business owners, the challenge is gaining access to resources needed to scale such as:

- | Workforce development programs
- | Affordable real estate
- | Capital in the form of traditional and crowdsourced loans and grants
- | New markets and retail venues
- | Technical, creative, and back office support

This new wave of manufacturing, despite

being located in cities with a high percentage of BIPOC communities, still has barriers to entry and growth. Today, as compared to 30 or 40 years ago, there are more enhanced career ladders, but the jobs that can get you in the door are now harder to access and can take more training than they did previously. There are greater opportunities to build generational wealth through entrepreneurship and ownership. But only if resources like capital and mentorship are available to all business owners who are looking to start and scale. Given the damage the exodus of manufacturing caused to families, we need to help those very same people understand the stability and the opportunity that the sector now offers. But left unchecked, manufacturing jobs and ownership will only be available to those with existing networks, resources, and connections. If this occurs it will ultimately deepen inequality, particularly among racial lines, which is precisely what LBIs are working to counter.



M&S Schmalberg - Made in NYC/Jacob Grumulaitis

## Urban Manufacturing Defined

Urban manufacturing is part of most industries including textiles and pharmaceuticals, furniture and craft brewing, ceramics and CNC machining to biotech and food. It also uses a broad spectrum of technologies, everything from traditional hand tools to digitally controlled manufacturing technologies. It also exists at all sizes of business development, from individuals who use making as a side hustle to large multinational corporations. It also leverages a variety of employment models: from solopreneurs, to contract workers to full time employees, shared staffing models, and worker-owned co-ops. Urban manufacturers exist across various kinds of physical space – from taking residence in a makerspace or operating out of their own home, to renting a multi-tenanted facility or owning their own space. The urban manufacturing business community is diverse and powerful.

Today's urban manufacturers offer benefits to local economies while capitalizing on the demand for locally-made goods that are unique, high quality, and utilize high-value added production. Instead of a few larger manufacturers generating jobs and wealth, many smaller makers and manufacturers have an opportunity to build businesses that have staying power. While their business strategies embrace moderate rates of growth, these companies often have owners deeply embedded in their local communities with plans to grow in place over decades, and generations.

Manufacturers thrive off of the energy of urban areas, citing many benefits to locating in cities, including: talented workforce, culture of entrepreneurship, manufacturing adjacent industries (creative economy, tech, medicine), and access to markets. Many of these manufacturers also offer great benefits - living wage jobs, a pathway to the middle class, and in many cases, enhanced career ladders.



Hardmill Shop Sewing - Seattle Made / Hardmill

## Urban Manufacturing Attributes

Urban manufacturing has evolved, not just in the U.S., but world wide. Many cities became economic hubs because of the innovative manufacturing that took place within the city limits. Over the past 40 years

many factors have influenced and inspired entrepreneurs and business owners to stay in urban areas. While each city has its own unique history and evolution, we see consistent attributes among the types of manufacturing businesses that have remained in urban areas:

- | Owned by skilled individual(s)
- | Combine production, design, business, and training
- | Employ skilled workers (1 to 30)
- | House wide range of talents under one roof
- | Focus on high quality, diverse products
- | Produce their own designs, create custom versions of their designs, and/or produce other people's designs
- | Work in small batches and small runs, often doing custom and one-off work as well
- | Focus on ongoing innovation
- | Collaborate with other businesses to meet demand
- | Sell regionally, nationally, and/or globally
- | Often utilize triple bottom line and impact business models
- | Depend on diverse markets, in terms of customer groups and sales strategies

Urban manufacturing business owners utilize different identifiers when they talk about themselves and their business. Though this list is not inclusive, they might chose to call themselves:

- | Artisan
- | Maker
- | Designer-Maker
- | Small Batch Manufacturer
- | Contract Manufacturer
- | Craftsperson

## What is a Manufacturing Ecosystem?

Within a single manufacturing business you have employees, starting with individuals working on the factory floor - shorthand for someone whose daily work requires manufacturing know-how. Within this group of employees there are individuals who are just starting and others that have decades of experience. Then you have employees responsible for keeping track of production and material levels, other employees doing sales and marketing, trying to keep and increase customers to keep everyone busy on the factory floor. You've got people helping measure the success of the company and maintain the budget. And you have employees dedicated to human resources, making sure everyone is working well together. This collection of individuals within one company make up an ecosystem. Each person has multiple relationships within that company. For some companies - microenterprises - all these tasks might actually be being done by one or a handful of individuals. This one manufacturing company - whether one person or 500 or 1,000+ - has relationships with suppliers, buyers, education and workforce programs, utility companies, shipping companies, elected officials, and on and on. These relationships expand that company's relationships beyond itself, making it part of a manufacturing ecosystem.

It is impossible for a company to operate in a bubble, but it can be difficult for companies to fully understand the scale or importance of their manufacturing ecosystem. They often cite the importance of direct supply chain partners and a workforce development organization that leads to dependable skilled talent. They can identify a local elected official that has advocated for a policy that created zoning rules that were beneficial to their business. Companies voice the importance of shared infrastructure - roads, shipping routes, energy and water systems, and the internet - to the success of their business. Even when acknowledging all of these relationships and connections, other parts of the manufacturing system are often overlooked. Add to this connections to resource providers - such as banks and real estate developers - and one can see how a company finds it difficult to track its place within the larger ecosystem, let alone be responsible for fostering new resources, infrastructure, and relationships.

The manufacturing ecosystem is what a manufacturing company depends on in order to be successful, even if they are not fully aware of all the connections and relationships within the ecosystem. Research into manufacturing ecosystems has helped illustrate that companies missing relationships are likely to struggle as they start and scale. When we look at why companies are missing relationships, we find



The Maker City Summit Crowd - Shawn Poynter

barriers that exist due to lack of knowledge and/or from historical and contemporary systemic racial and gender bias.

## **What is an Entrepreneurial Ecosystem?**

An entrepreneurial ecosystem, when working effectively, is a trusted network of supporters, resources providers, markets, and policymakers that can help business owners gain access to and thrive within the larger manufacturing ecosystem. Business owners need support to help navigate barriers and build relationships and connections within the manufacturing ecosystem. This support system provides access to key business resources - for example: capital, talent, real estate, markets, and procurement opportunities, business management skills, knowledge, and peers. This is vital to all companies but it plays a much bigger role for small and micro-enterprises who can't afford to hire lots of people with lots of know-how.

# What is a Local Branding Initiative?

Local Branding Initiatives (LBIs), also known as “made-in” programs create entrepreneurial ecosystems that respond to the unique needs and qualities of the makers and manufacturers in their region. When regions have robust and accessible manufacturing-focused entrepreneurial support systems, regions have more diverse and resilient regional economies that create generational wealth for all, especially BIPOC, women, and immigrant populations. LBIs occupy the important space between the manufacturing and entrepreneurial ecosystems. LBIs:

- | Are experts in both manufacturing and entrepreneurship, increasing the number of manufacturing businesses and helping manufacturing businesses scale up.
- | Remove historic barriers to both manufacturing and entrepreneurship, prioritizing women and Black, indigenous, and other people of color.
- | Emphasize the importance of both place and making, fostering opportunities that allow companies to grow locally and generating community and economic development benefits.

In regions with an active LBI we see: an increase in the quantity and types of key business resources manufacturing business

owners need to start and grow; a more inclusive and equitable regional economy; supportive customers and community members that want to make sure their regional manufacturing sector thrives; and increased awareness of what makes their region more competitive locally, nationally, and internationally. Because of these impacts, UMA promotes LBIs as an economic development strategy that can be tailored to any city, region, or rural area that has an active making and manufacturing presence.

## How LBIs Create Impact

To strengthen a local manufacturing ecosystem, LBI leaders cultivate relationships with makers and manufacturers, as well as connections with resource providers, subject matter experts, anchor institutions, government agencies, and customers. The interactions between these stakeholder groups is what leads to the expansion and creation of resources, programs, infrastructure, and markets. Because of this, the foundational work of an LBI is to create connections that no one manufacturing company could create on their own so that all business owners have



Maker Meetup at Made Here - Sarah Toor

expanded access to markets, capital, talent, real estate, business management skills, knowledge, and peers.

Most often an LBI starts by creating a go-to hub of key resource providers and support organizations. This step helps makers and manufacturers increase awareness of where immediate resources and opportunities exist. To create new opportunities, LBIs use their insights from their relationships with manufacturers to help service providers – for example CDFIs, technical assistance providers, and local commerce departments – without a history of supporting manufacturing businesses learn how to tailor content and programs to increase participation by diverse manufacturers. If there are gaps existing support organizations are unable to respond to, LBIs design and implement their own programs

and resources to fill them. If the program lift is too much for their organization, they will rely on collaborations to co-author and co-deliver programs, resources, or new infrastructure. Overtime LBIs create a range of programs and resources to match the spectrum of business within the larger ecosystem. For example, after a few years of operation an LBI helps business owners find support whether they are turning their side hustle into a full time career; whether a solopreneur is hiring their first employee; or whether an established company is buying their own building or investing in new manufacturing equipment.

The collection of programs offered by the LBI and larger ecosystem are constantly being improved. LBIs are listening to the business owners at events, programs, and during one-to-one support. This empathetic approach to business development creates whole-human business assistance. This is especially important when working with BIPOC, women, immigrant, and other entrepreneurs who have experienced bias in even the most fundamental systems. These owners need trusted organizations to access resources and correct for those historic imbalances. Programs run by LBIs and their connections, combined with the whole-human approach, can lead to increased access to capital; new talent pipelines; shared, rented, and owned space and land; and training.



LBI actively increase business participation by engaging in community outreach while building programs and increasing awareness of resources. They participate in events hosted by partners, as well as create their own, promoting the work of the manufacturing community, and being active and present in places and spaces where makers and manufacturers meet. LBIs also advocate for the manufacturing community by meeting with policymakers, both elected and non-elected. By engaging and listening to both groups, LBIs build connections, developing new ways to connect stakeholders looking for new products with manufacturers making them to policymakers that set standards and precedents that support the local businesses.

All these activities - providing support to manufacturers, building the entrepreneurial and manufacturing ecosystem, and advocating for local best practices - add up to a new ecosystem that helps create and scale manufacturing businesses. This new ecosystem is built with a regenerative - rather than extractive - mindset. The long term success of these ecosystems is ensured by the iterative processes being implemented. LBIs embrace intentional ongoing learning so as to influence ecosystem change into the future.

### **LBIs are built with guiding principles:**

**INCLUSIVE:** Everyone has equal access to opportunities, resources, programs, & networks

**REGENERATIVE:** Development strategies focus on building new resources rather than depleting them

**ACCESSIBLE:** Offerings are created to accommodate multiple modes of learning, backgrounds, experiences, & abilities

**COLLABORATIVE:** Ongoing engagement, dialogue, conversation, & co-creation will lead to success

## Excerpt from “Moving Towards Equitable Maker Ecosystems”

By Jamaal Green

Organizations need to be intentional in their inclusion and outreach strategies and recognize their limits if they are ultimately concerned with attacking social inequity. In this sense, inclusion is the necessary first step.

Equity work, beyond inclusion, then, should broadly follow the rule of expanding opportunity, choice, and resources to those who historically have the least. This can include, but is certainly not limited to, active recruitment programs for frequently excluded or underrepresented groups, bridging capital gaps that often affect women- and minority-owned firms more than others, or working directly with members to prepare them to be better and more efficient employers.

Often these programs come about because organizational leadership or members noticed a particular lack of diversity. Many interviewees mentioned the inaccurate portrayal of makers and small manufacturers as predominantly “hipster” white men with large beards, and how such a vision limits the potential and scope for manufacturing more broadly. As a response, many organizations have at some point launched explicit outreach programs or initiatives to address this.

Having outreach programs and goals doesn’t guarantee success. In one case,

even an organization performing intentional and extensive outreach over six months found it difficult to reach traditionally excluded groups. Broadly speaking, local brands found that they could not necessarily rely on the social networks of more established maker or small manufacturing communities alone. In this case, at least, longstanding segregation and mutual community distrust made outreach challenging.

Organizations looking to be more inclusive have to do the hard work of planning their outreach strategies and building relationships with institutions that are aligned with or serve the communities they would like to benefit.

Many organizations already advocate on the part of their members with local officials, but it is vital that they become intimately familiar with local power brokers and policy makers. Local policy affects issues ranging from available space and real estate to hiring, and small manufacturers are often not represented in these policy conversations. Additionally, if organizations wish to be larger players in their cities in mitigating inequality and expanding opportunity, then they have to be connected with local non-profits, city planning and economic development offices, and workforce development boards. These institutions not only shape policies that affect members but will also be key partners in programming and, in some cases, potential program funders. See Page 30 to access the full piece.

## LBI Development Process

LBI development broadly includes ecosystem building, collaboration, and promoting diversity, equity, and inclusion. From studying existing LBIs, UMA has identified this work happens across five main phases of development: Learn, Design, Build, Deliver, and Scale.

In the Learn phase, LBI developers focus on organizing the making and manufacturing community and identifying shared challenges and needs. This means meeting with and listening to the manufacturing community, across scales of production, emphasizing engagement with entrepreneurs across socio-economic, racial, and gender identification as well as across sectors - such as textiles, food, metalworking, etc. - to gain understanding about overlapping and unique needs. The outcomes of this phase include: increased connections, deeper insights about the community, and a growing trust between business owners and local practitioners.

The Design phase translates connections and insights into program strategies. The organization leading the development generates an LBI design that includes the set of program and infrastructure recommendations and a playbook for implementing the recommendations, with timeline, key roles and responsibilities,

budget, and revenue projections. The outcomes of the initial phases set the foundation for the Build phase by establishing a formal network of makers, manufacturers, and supporters, organizing initial resources to create capacity to run an LBI.

The Build phase focuses on more complex work. These tasks include training existing organizations to connect to makers, be inclusive, build ecosystems, and to collaborate. The other primary focus is creating the identified new set of programs, resources, and infrastructure elements - for example a virtual hub to connect people, an advisory council to provide guidance, and data collection methods to provide insights on impacts. Also during the Build phase, programming partnerships are developed, resources are mapped, and outreach to urban manufacturing businesses is launched to identify early interest in the programming. These activities result in new relationships, new data, and new assets for the community. The timeline for building programs, resources, and infrastructure varies. An initial set of programs can be launched and moved to the Deliver phase while other resources are still being created. Depending on who is leading the LBI development, there may also be a need to create a home for the new LBI or champion an existing organization to house the LBI. For example, there are LBIs housed by economic development corporations,

universities, community development financial institutions, entrepreneurship centers, and non-profit business networks and there are LBIs that are their own free-standing non-profit or for-profits.

The fourth phase is Deliver, which focuses on running programs while increasing access to resources and infrastructure. This requires marketing programs to members signed up during the Build phase and potential members. Once programs and initiatives are up and running, LBI leaders find ways to track participation and outcomes of participation. This is often done in the form of post-event surveys and one-to-one follow up. More established LBIs utilize data gathering systems that

measure individual company's participating in multiple programs and work with those businesses to determine if they are meeting their growth goals over time.

When LBIs have successfully launched programs and captured early outcomes and impacts, they implement a repeating cycle of tasks that allows for ongoing learning, designing, building, and delivering resources. We call this repeating cycle the Scale phase. The iterative learning and growth is vital for the long term success of the LBI, urban manufacturing businesses, and the ecosystem of stakeholders. With each new cycle, new businesses become members, new context is defined, new programs are launched, and new knowledge is gained that informs all members of the ecosystem.

The phases identified above are based on the development of LBIs that currently exist. These stages are what takes place after there is known interest in creating new support systems. UMA has identified that there is pre-development work that can be done to increase buy-in, build momentum, and gather resources to begin development in places where stakeholders believe an LBI would be beneficial but where they aren't currently connected to the urban manufacturing community or don't currently provide business support directly to manufacturing businesses. These pre-development tasks, which we organize



Knotzland - Sean Carroll

under the heading Connect, include: uncovering who could lead and contribute to the development stages and tasks, understanding who might be interested in funding the development work, researching existing work already done or being done that covers or contributes to development tasks, and finally, and most importantly, gaining early buy in and confirming there are makers and supporting organizations that want to see an active LBI in their region. Together the tasks in the Connect phase work to educate stakeholders, funders, and supporters on the opportunity that LBIs offer.



Carbon Culture - Made in NYC/Jacob Grumulaitis

## Funding & Financial Sustainability

The process outlined in the previous section represents the common development phases and tasks across all LBIs that UMA has studied. What is also common is the need for funding to seed, start-up, sustain, and scale an LBI.

Seed funding is needed pre-development when research and community outreach is fundamental to gaining understanding of the regional ecosystem. When established entities launch an LBI, it's possible for that organization to fund this early work, even if at the time they aren't building an LBI. An example of this is in Baltimore where Andy Cook led a research project on industrial real estate usage in the Department of Planning's Office of Sustainability. His research uncovered the need to support the growth of manufacturing businesses via increasing access to key business resources. The response to this need was initial programming and ecosystem development. Made in Baltimore was established to house this work and is now a program of the City of Baltimore's Economic Development Corporation. In some cases established organizations are interested in expanding their services to support the manufacturing business community. In these cases, funding is often needed to explore the expansion and ecosystem understanding. Bridgeway Capital was an established CDFI long before it launched the Creative Business

Accelerator. Initial funding from a regional philanthropic foundation was provided to Bridgeway to cover the learning necessary to support the makers and manufacturers they were interested in serving. Funding covered costs of research consultants, staff time, and the creation of initial programs and services. If individuals outside an existing organization are working to create an LBI, a lack of funding to do the initial work is the biggest barrier to the creation of an LBI. The pre-development work typically lasts six months to a year.

Start-up funding comes into play after research and community outreach has uncovered the need for new support systems. Funding expands capacity (hiring someone to take on new work or covering the cost of existing staff time to take on new tasks); builds resources (such as shared branding materials and websites); and develops programming. The sources of these funds vary, but most often come from the same types of funders that provide seed funding. The amount fluctuates depending on the region, size of the initiative, and, often, whether or not it is housed in an existing organization or not. The start-up phase averages about two years.

Funding to sustain and scale an LBI starts to take shape after an LBI has successfully run a series of programs and resources, built a network of collaborators, and generated initial outcomes and benefits

for the manufacturing businesses they support. Just as there is a variety in seed and start-up funding we see a variety of funding models for sustaining and scaling. Through interviews with LBI leaders, UMA has identified a primary funding goal is to become a budget line in a city's annual budget in order to establish a predictable base amount of funding. Made in NYC and Made in Baltimore have both accomplished this goal. Funding from cities and states also become more viable options as LBIs reach stability and show impact. For example, Seattle Made receives funding from Washington State to support their sustainability and youth workforce development programs. Several LBIs have or are establishing fee-for-service revenue streams. Bridgeway Capital's Monmade program, which is now a free-standing LLC, offers a service to architects, real estate developers, and interior designers to source and deliver custom fabricated furniture, fixtures, and art for their building projects. Another fee-for-service model is to create co-branded products. Seattle Made partnered with a local brewery and winery to develop a Seattle Made Beer and Wine. The sales of these products generate revenue for both the LBI and their manufacturing partners.

There is a learning process for each LBI to find the right funding combination. The struggle is often having enough funding to cover the time it takes to work out the best

combination, create impact, and establish their service model. Many LBIs who had established funding had to reconsider it because of COVID-19 impacts. This has forced many to diversify their funding models in order to become more resilient.

UMA continues to collaborate with LBIs to share funding strategies and models and help cities that are just getting started find support willing to seed new initiatives.

SOURCES OF SEED & START-UP FUNDING	EXAMPLES
Community Fundraising - Businesses + Supporters	SFMade
Grants from Local Philanthropic Foundations	Bridgeway Capital
Founder Investment	Portland Made
Grants from Federal Government	Made in Baltimore
National Philanthropic Foundations	Mountain BizWorks
Corporate Bank Donations	SFMade

SOURCES OF SUSTAINING & SCALING FUNDING	EXAMPLES
Percentage of Store Sales - Online and In-person	Seattle Made
Membership Fees	Portland Made
Fees from Loans Secured by CDFI Lending Office	Bridgeway Capital
Funding from City Government via Annual City Budget	Made in NYC
Grants from State Governments	The Maker City
Event Ticket Sales	Seattle Made
Event and Program Sponsorship	The Maker City
Percentage of Sales for Custom Fabrication Management Services	Bridgeway Capital

Sources of LBI Funding

## LBI Stakeholder Roles & Opportunities

LBIs are most successful when they engage with a broad set of stakeholders throughout all development stages. UMA has uncovered a long list of stakeholder groups working in ecosystems built by LBIs. At each location the exact stakeholders combination differs. Below are the most common stakeholder groups. For each group we provide what their roles are in the larger manufacturing entrepreneurial ecosystem and what opportunities can be created if they are actively engaged and collaborating.

### **Makers and Manufacturers:**

Manufacturing-based businesses are the main customer of the programs, resources, and infrastructures being built by the Local Branding Initiative. They are the companies that provide jobs, make goods, and generate wealth for their owners, their employees, and the region. Having manufacturers that cut across industries, development stages, markets, and scale of operations, as well as ownership representing diverse backgrounds, creates opportunities for businesses to collaborate and sell to one another, learn from one another, and find inspiration and motivation to keep their business local and grow them in place.

**Markets:** Creating new market opportunities is one of the most important, and most cited, reasons LBIs are important to manufacturers. Markets, aka customers, can arise from direct to consumer and business to business (for example making components for larger assemblies) transactions. Markets can also include anchor institution's procurement offices and government agencies. And markets can be hyperlocal, national, and international. The customers are the ones who provide the necessary cash flow to keep manufacturers in business. Having lots of markets in the ecosystem allows businesses to access diverse markets, leading to more resilient companies and more opportunities to increase scale of production. This results in companies having the ability to invest in their workforce, space, and community.

**Government Agencies:** Local, state, and federal offices, agencies, and elected officials shape policies that can directly and indirectly impact manufacturing. For example, zoning rules and regulations on the local level can either help or hinder manufacturers by either protecting or removing regulations on industrial land usage. Other policies such as how procurement dollars are awarded and



promoting manufacturing as a core economic development strategy in regional development plans can play a major role in keeping manufacturers in a region or pushing them out. When government agencies are engaged with LBIs and active in the ecosystem, we see opportunities to create inclusive and responsive policies and legislation that keep businesses open and growing, and often see financial resources being provided to directly support LBIs.

**Service Providers:** All manufacturing businesses need access to key resources, such as capital, real estate, markets, talent, or others mentioned previously. This means all businesses need to learn how to access these resources and gain know-how to make sure they are getting the most appropriate and beneficial resources. Service providers help manufacturers navigate relationships and resources in order to build and grow their businesses. Some service providers will train manufacturing business owners or their employees to navigate this process. Other service providers can be hired to expand manufacturers' capabilities. Having both types of service providers is vital to the ecosystem. And the more diversity within the service provider network – in terms of price, expertise, stage of development focus, and diversity of ownership – increases the

likelihood that manufacturers will interact with them. Increased interactions lead to more opportunities to access resources, growing the number of resilient and scaling businesses.

#### **Community Organizations:**

Community focused organizations offer opportunities to increase the awareness of manufacturing in a region and its importance. Community organizations can be involved in promoting manufacturing in innumerable ways. For example, if there is a concentration of manufacturing businesses in a neighborhood, a community development corporation can advocate for plans that spotlight the businesses and elevate their importance to the surrounding neighborhood and local government. Faith-based organizations can host job fairs, neighborhood associations can host craft markets, and libraries can have makerspaces introducing more people to making technologies.

**Capital Providers:** Capital plays an important role in scaling all businesses. In manufacturing, capital provides opportunities to invest in new equipment, new talent, new space, larger material purchases, and to buffer cash flow inherent in most wholesale purchasing processes. In order for manufacturers to gain access to capital,

capital providers need to participate in the ecosystem. Similar to the service providers it is important that there be a diverse range of providers: some providing education and others providing direct access. Each city's capital network looks different but they all typically include some combination of CDFIs, banks, lending circles, investors, and government agencies, and more. Also it is important that holistically the capital network is providing capital at all levels – from a few thousand dollars to several million dollars, and in many forms – from grants to loans to investments. Because of a history of unfair capital access, the provider network must be vetted and trained to prevent unbiased practices.

**Real Estate Developers:** All manufacturers need space. In many cases the first production space is within one's home or a shared space, such as a makerspace. When manufacturers are successful they often will grow into and out of a series of spaces. By having real estate developers engaged with the ecosystem, space can be developed that best suits the needs of the manufacturing community. Having only small spaces or large spaces creates both unnecessary competition for limited resources and can cause businesses to overspend for a resource they are not maximizing or force manufacturers to move to find bigger spaces. Limited real

estate choices slow a manufacturer's development process. When real estate developers participate, opportunities grow for both parties: manufacturers gain access to more spaces attuned to their needs at different development stages and real estate developers find more customers for their space.

### **Education and Talent Development**

**Organizations:** Students and teachers in elementary school through higher education, as well as engaged in workforce development programs, can all connect with the larger manufacturing ecosystem. Students can learn a vast array of skills that give them access to careers in manufacturing. This includes but is not limited to careers on the factory floor: industrial and product design, engineering, material sciences, and logistics management, for example, all are needed talents in manufacturing. Teaching institutions, and individual teachers, play a huge role in getting students onto an education and career path that best fits them. Teaching organizations can work with manufacturers to create factory tours and demonstrations exposing students to career opportunities. Manufacturing businesses can open their doors to training programs removing costs needed to buy equipment and rent space. Students can earn and learn through internships, pre-apprenticeships,

and apprenticeships creating mutually beneficial systems for manufacturers and learners. These interactions create opportunities for new talent pipelines and increased investment in curriculum development, and companies can be more confident in their ability to grow because they can recruit new skilled employees.



Key Stakeholders in LBI Development

# Conclusion

UMA envisions an active, diverse, equitable, and interconnected community of makers and manufacturers in every region that has access to the resources and market opportunities needed to thrive. We believe the vehicle for this is a Local Branding Initiative. LBIs across the country are developing new systems that support urban manufacturing - both legacy companies and the growing new wave of businesses. These systems are being created and improved upon through collaborations and

relationships among diverse stakeholders engaged in a manufacturing entrepreneurial ecosystem that is open and accessible to diverse entrepreneurs. And while no two cities,, ecosystems, or LBIs are exactly the same, UMA and our partners see impacts, benefits, and growing opportunities that makes the LBI strategy one that should be replicated. With an active LBI, we see:

Interactions between stakeholder groups that lead to new resources, programs, infrastructure, and market opportunities for manufacturing businesses.

Increased connections opening new access to key resources, such as markets, capital, talent, real estate, business management skills, knowledge, and peers.

Increased engagement of tailored technical and creative assistance programs and the development of new programs.

Programs that support manufacturing businesses at all stages of development, from the side hustle to solopreneurs to businesses with 100+ employees.

Initiatives, service providers, capital providers and real estate resources that BIPOC, women, and immigrant entrepreneurs trust and seek out.

Local and state governments engaged with small business networks creating policies and regulations that benefit manufacturing businesses increasing their ability to start and grow in place.

An increase in the number of manufacturing businesses starting and an increased number of manufacturing businesses that are scaling their production, investments, and employment opportunities.

All stakeholders have many different roles to play in helping achieve these outcomes. There is opportunity for any one ecosystem member to start the conversation and the work to create an LBI. UMA has uncovered there is no one tried and tested way to start bringing together manufacturers and their supporters. This allows for any individual or organization to leverage their skills, abilities, and resources to create a space that is inclusive, regenerative, accessible, and collaborative to talk about the importance of manufacturing and how to see it thrive in their region.

# Further Reading

## Moving Towards Equitable Maker Ecosystems: The Role of Local Branding Organizations

At the Urban Manufacturing Alliance (UMA), we are seeing a recognition among local branding organizations that they can address social inequities through their core programming. In order to highlight this work, we interviewed multiple branding organizations on how they are promoting equitable economic development strategies for local production economies.

Many local branding organizations are working to sustain and grow local economies, and to expand the freedom of making or small scale manufacturing to underrepresented groups. In other words, by working on growing and sustaining small-scale manufacturing, these organizations are making an effort to battle inequality. But in our current age, in which the racial wealth and employment gaps remain as wide as ever.

How are local branding organizations living up to their potential for increasing opportunity for all?

## Discovering Your City's Maker Economy

As the maker economy continues to take shape in cities across the country, it is emerging as a potential powerhouse for building strong local economies through creative maker-microbusinesses and small-scale manufacturing. As this nascent industry of small businesses expands and transforms, city leaders should understand what the maker economy is and how to harness its economic development potential.

Makers and small-scale manufacturers offer so much to cities, from creative goods to employment opportunities to more inclusive access to entrepreneurship. Local leaders can play a big role in unlocking the potential of their city's maker economy by creating a supportive business ecosystem, driving demand for local goods, advocating for policies that support makers, and providing affordable manufacturing and retail space. It is our goal for this action guide to serve as a helping starting point for effective collaboration between local government and maker communities. We also hope that in a few months, or years, you can celebrate the outcomes of these new alliances by enjoying all of

the locally-produced goods crafted by your city's thriving makers.

The Urban Manufacturing Alliance partnered with National League of Cities, Etsy, and Recast City to prepare this comprehensive report on how cities across the United States are supporting local maker economies.

### **Local Progress Policy Brief: Local Branding Initiatives**

Manufacturing is an important part of a vibrant community, bringing innovation, creativity, and stability to cities. Leaders often struggle to understand the relevance of manufacturing in urban centers and regional economies because some believe manufacturing to be dirty, dangerous, loud, and mindless work. However, over the past decade, small batch manufacturing – often performed within urban areas – has evolved in large part due to changing markets, technologies, and ownership demographics. Today, we see an increasing number of manufacturing businesses, bringing with them higher paying, more accessible jobs and career pathways, helping a region's economy become more diverse, resilient, and sustainable. Unfortunately, many of these new manufacturing businesses struggle to find supportive services and access to

key business development resources – such as capital, new markets, real estate, workforce, and technical assistance – because they are disconnected from the industrial ecosystems in their regions.

### **State of Urban Manufacturing: Understanding the Industrial Ecosystem in Six U.S. Cities**

The Urban Manufacturing Alliance believes that manufacturing benefits from being in cities, and cities benefit from manufacturing. And while cities implement a variety of techniques to support manufacturing businesses – from land use tools that encourage industrial real estate development, to workforce development programs deployed in high schools and community colleges, to local branding initiatives that cultivate maker communities – these place-based economic development strategies are often assessed and implemented in isolation from one another within, and between, cities.

The primary goal of the State of Urban Manufacturing is to help inform economic development services at the national and local levels by providing new insights into the impacts, opportunities and challenges of urban manufacturing. Through this work, we sought to understand: (1) how cities

are holistically sustaining and growing urban manufacturing centers; (2) how the maker movement relates to overall trends in the manufacturing sector; and (3) the types of employment opportunities that urban manufacturing provides for local neighborhoods and underserved communities.

confront entrenched inequities, including people of color, women, immigrants and refugees, and people with lower incomes and wealth.

### **Building Equitable Local Ecosystems for Small Business**

In a brief, “Building Equitable Local Ecosystems for Small Business,” LISC’s economic development team offers a guide for how cross-sectoral groups can analyze local small business opportunity gaps and implement data-driven strategies to redress them.

This brief aims to help stakeholders – from business development organizations (BDOs) to small-business lenders to community advocates and government representatives – identify and eliminate disadvantages that have nothing to do with an entrepreneur’s grit and talent and everything to do with unequal access to what makes up a small business ecosystem: the network of capital, services, and supports that every enterprise needs to get on its feet and grow. These ecosystems are critical to fostering opportunity and long-term resiliency for all entrepreneurs who



# LBI Profiles

In 2021, the Urban Manufacturing Alliance interviewed leaders of seven Local Branding Initiatives to gain insights about how LBIs develop, grow, and respond to the changing needs of the manufacturing businesses they support. The Seeding, Starting, and Scaling Local Branding Initiatives report captures the commonalities UMA found through those discussions and reflects the collective impact of these initiatives across the country. The following case studies illustrate the unique details of each organization and

offer in-depth explanations on how and why LBIs operate the way they do. UMA has chosen to highlight a unique element of each practitioner, showcasing best practices that can be tailored to respond to local challenges and context. These highlights can also be identified as a set of foundational practices that new LBIs can adopt to increase the likelihood of success.

## Highlights



**Made in Baltimore** changes the perception of what technical assistance and business support can be by offering a whole-entrepreneur approach, helping people feel comfortable asking for help and sharing their business and life’s work.



**The Maker City** elevates the visibility of makers through The Makers Council, made up of 20 makers and maker supporters, that serves to advocate for maker centric policies and funding initiatives.



**Made in NYC** continuously evolves their program offerings to respond to varying and similar needs that their member businesses experience – whether they are consumer-facing artisanal, handmade start-ups, legacy manufacturers that do business to business sales, or industrial companies who offer contract manufacturing.



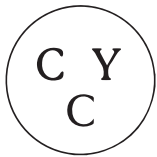
**Bridgeway Capital's Creative Business Accelerator** finds ways to build trust with diverse makers, artists, craftspeople, and designers through intentional listening, ongoing organizational learning, and supporting a broad definition of what it means to be a creative, production-based business.



**Portland Made** fosters diversity in the maker ecosystem by constantly increasing awareness of how BIPOC and women entrepreneurs are impacted, by accepting community feedback, learning best practices, being transparent and accountable, and acknowledging when mistakes and inequalities have been created.



**Seattle Made** is as entrepreneurial as the manufacturing businesses that make up their member network, creating new market opportunities through partnerships and collaborations that generate revenue for participating members and Seattle Made.



**Mountain BizWorks Craft Your Commerce** supports entrepreneurs through all stages from start-up to expansion by providing learning support to build better businesses and capital access to fund growth opportunities.

# MADE IN BALTIMORE

## SNAPSHOT

Made in Baltimore is a program and LLC wholly owned by the Baltimore Development Corporation, a non-profit economic development agency for the City of Baltimore.

Started in 2017

300+ Members

Members of Made in Baltimore are individuals or businesses that manufacture some percentage of a physical product in Baltimore and are in good standing with the Maryland Department of Assessment and Taxation.

### Program Offerings:

- Annual Pop-up Store
- Biannual LookBook
- Business Certification
- The Home-Run Business Accelerator
- Maker and Manufacturer Facility Tours
- Shared Branding and Marketing Resources
- Member Survey
- Online Member Directory
- Tools of the Trade - Technical Assistance Workshop Series

Made in Baltimore's largest source of funding comes from the City of Baltimore. Other sources of funding include grants from Maryland State Government and philanthropic foundations as well as revenue from the Made in Baltimore store. Made in Baltimore was awarded an Economic Development Administration grant which provided the initial funding to launch programs.



[madeinbaltimore.org](http://madeinbaltimore.org)



[madeinbaltimoreprogram](https://www.instagram.com/madeinbaltimoreprogram)



[madeinbaltimoreprogram](https://www.facebook.com/madeinbaltimoreprogram)



[made-in-baltimore](https://www.linkedin.com/company/made-in-baltimore)

## ABOUT

Made in Baltimore (MIB) started from a research project at the Baltimore Office of Sustainability that looked at industrial building vacancies and explored ways to increase occupancy. At the time, research showed no need for new space, but a need to grow businesses to occupy them. This led the City to host a pop-up market showcasing products made by 80 Baltimore manufacturers, thus beginning the MIB community. A lot of MIB's work centers around collecting information from past and new experiences and connections, and translating this into the next resource. Rather than remaining static, Made in Baltimore is constantly expanding its roles and responsibilities, dynamically defining what it means to be "Made in Baltimore," while helping build a progressive, sustainable economic ecosystem.

Now five years into their work, MIB has organized a network of over 200 manufacturers and built relationships with retailers, makerspaces, government offices, creative services, real estate developers, press, and capital providers, among other stakeholder groups. The Baltimore Development Corporation (BDC) provides fiduciary management, as well as some BDC staff for projects and development supervision. Two part time staff - a Program Manager and a Marketing & Retail Manager, along with interns from Johns Hopkins

University - work alongside the Executive Director to develop, run, and deliver nine different programs to support their members and manufacturing in Baltimore. Programs range from an online member



Ase Design Studio - Jon Bregel, Baltimore Small

directory to yearly pop-up markets, and technical assistance workshops to factory tours to build new business-to-business opportunities. Behind the programs is an ongoing business and community engagement process. Each program event and interaction is used as an opportunity to gather data and track participation, but more importantly to listen and collect human experience in real time. These informal yet

vital communications influence the next event, program, and opportunity.

Part of the certification process to be a Made in Baltimore member is a site visit conducted by the Program Manager, in-person or virtually. The intention behind this visit is to meet that person, where they are. This means listening to what they want and why they are doing what they are doing. Ideally companies leave this initial meeting feeling heard. While this is not explicitly an equity tactic, it does set the foundation for an equitable and accessible relationship between the entrepreneur and Made in Baltimore because the practice of listening to the whole person - the whole entrepreneur - is incorporated into all interactions.

Baltimore is a majority-minority city and from the beginning MIB has had a diverse membership and the percentage of BIPOC entrepreneurs has grown since inception. MIB has intentionally partnered with Black-led organizations, as a way of both recognizing the role POC play in the city, but also as a way of expanding networks. They have developed relationships with, as examples, Morgan State University, an HBCU in Baltimore, and the Eubie Blake Cultural Center, a jazz and African American cultural history center, which has helped Made in Baltimore get in front of more Black makers. Beyond relationship building, word of mouth from individual



Taharka Brothers - Jon Bregel, Baltimore Small

business owners and making sure people of color see themselves in program offerings, promotional materials, and social media has had the biggest impact on increasing membership from diverse communities. Also when possible MIB will respond to media opportunities by directing the spotlight to business owners of color helping increase exposure of the Black maker community.

While MIB doesn't offer any programs specifically tailored to BIPOC entrepreneurs, all programming is developed in a way that helps create equal opportunity amongst their membership. MIB intentionally is creating a high standard for what it means to be Made in Baltimore. This means they aren't lowering the bar of expectation for participating in opportunities like pop-up stores, marketing materials, and press. Instead they create programming that helps upskill entrepreneurs who haven't previously had access to professional and business development classes and workshops. MIB also responds to their diverse membership by creating programs that target shared challenges faced by large numbers of BIPOC entrepreneurs. For example, The Home-Run Accelerator is designed to help making-based business owners who are working out of their homes develop business strategies to scale-up and to move their production space out of their home. Research shows that a larger percentage of home-based maker start-ups are BIPOC-

owned businesses due to a history of biased lending and capital access programs.

Because of Made in Baltimore's existing ecosystem, MIB was tasked with managing \$100,000 provided by the Baltimore Mayor's Office to aid urban manufacturers responding to PPE demands and a \$400,000 procurement budget to buy locally-made PPE during the COVID-19 pandemic. MIB processed grant applications, which ranged from requesting grant money to pay for materials, new technology, and employees, as well as to pair demand for PPE with manufacturers. During the COVID-19 pandemic MIB played two additional, vital roles: they disseminated information through their online platforms and newsletters to their members, creating a trusted and dependable resource in a time of great uncertainty, and they organized sessions and workshops to help companies pivot and stay connected to resources.

MIB supports companies of all sizes, including micro-enterprises of one person. Before and during COVID, business owners were seeking support from MIB at their lowest or most vulnerable times: when they were struggling to make ends meet, deciding to quit their job and make the leap to start their own business, or investing their life savings into equipment or a building. An ability to see the whole person in these moments and identify with

the experiences personally as makers and creatives themselves, has influenced MIB's approach to creating and delivering their programming. Made in Baltimore works to create a different perception of what technical assistance and business support could be, working to help people feel more comfortable while asking for help and sharing their business - which can often be someone's life's work and a very big part of their personal identity. This mentality of making sure someone is seen and heard is especially important for the smaller and smallest businesses, they want to know their needs will be considered.

**Source: Interview with Andy Cook, Made in Baltimore Executive Director and Brian Seymore, Made in Baltimore Program Manager**



# THE MAKER CITY

## SNAPSHOT

The Maker City is a collaborative initiative between The City of Knoxville's Mayor's Maker Council and the Knoxville Entrepreneur Center (KEC).

Started in 2016






400+ Makers featured in The Maker City online directory.

The Maker City directory and programs are developed for businesses and individuals who produce handmade goods or offer creative services in the Knoxville region.

### Program Offerings:

- Maker Meetups
- Make. Learn. Grow. Business Development Workshop Series
- The Maker City Summit
- Online Directory
- Holiday Buyers Guide
- Holiday Marketplace via Instagram Auction
- Community Events Calendar
- Maker Marketing and Storytelling

The Knoxville Entrepreneur Center is supported by the Tennessee State Government, The City of Knoxville, and through grants from foundations. For specific events and programs corporate sponsorships make donations to help cover associated costs.

-  [themakercity.org](http://themakercity.org)
-  [themakercity](https://www.instagram.com/themakercity)
-  [themakercity](https://www.facebook.com/themakercity)
-  [the-maker-city](https://www.linkedin.com/company/the-maker-city)
-  [the\\_maker\\_city](https://twitter.com/the_maker_city)



## ABOUT

The Maker City is a collaborative initiative between The City of Knoxville's Mayor's Maker Council and the Knoxville Entrepreneur Center (KEC). In 2016, employees of KEC and members of the Knoxville maker community participated in a summit hosted by Etsy to talk about how cities could be more engaged and intentional about supporting the maker community. The call to action coming out of the summit was to become an Etsy Maker City. To earn this designation, they needed a process by which the maker community could have a voice in city and county decisions and convene the maker community for a conversation about the support they need.

KEC and local makers moved quickly and became the first Etsy Maker City in the U.S. The first initiative was The Maker Summit which brought together small-scale manufacturers, craftspeople, the maker community, their supporters, and representatives from city government. Over time the Summit has evolved and expanded. It still brings people together, but now it offers business development learning opportunities. Maker participants get connected to resources, other makers, and service providers that can help them be more successful in their business.

The second initiative was the creation of the Mayor's Maker Council. The Council of 20 makers and maker supporters discuss needs and concerns, and gives makers a voice within city government, creating



Jade Adams - Shawn Poynter

opportunities to liaise with policymakers. The Mayor of Knoxville appoints participants who serve to elevate the visibility of makers and advocate for maker-centric policies and funding initiatives. Council members meet monthly and spend time in ad hoc committees working on individual events and strategies. They are responsible for defining the goals of the Maker Summit and ongoing programming. The makeup

of the Council is intentionally diverse, representing different scales of businesses, creative backgrounds, and sectors, as well as racial and gender diversity. In 2021, the sixth annual Summit offered a combination of both virtual and in-person meeting and learning opportunities.

Following these initiatives, KEC hired a marketing team to develop a brand that would create an identity for these programs and benefit the city. Knoxville has not always had an identity that it felt like it could embrace. People are excited about adopting making as one of the ways the city could identify itself as they learned the maker heritage in Knoxville and the Appalachian region, as well as the current ways making and manufacturing are manifesting.

The Knoxville Entrepreneur Center collaborates with the Makers Council, working as the convening agent, the fiscal sponsor, and logistical arm. KEC is a regional non-profit that acts as a resource for entrepreneurs at all stages of development and across all industries, not just making and manufacturing. There are currently six full time staff members at the Knoxville Entrepreneur Center, one of which is tasked with working on the Maker City initiative full time. Other staff contribute time and support as needed. The Knoxville Entrepreneur Center is funded by the City of Knoxville. An unspecified and flexible percentage of this funding



Mayors Maker Council - Shawn Poynter

goes to cover expenses associated with Maker City programming and events. KEC also receives financial support from the Tennessee State Government, foundations, and corporate sponsorships to help cover expenses associated with the Summit and programming.

KEC, under the title of The Maker City, hosts monthly events that alternate between networking and learning sessions. The networking events, before COVID, took place at different makerspaces and studios and served as an opportunity for makers to meet and learn from one another. Make Learn Grow events started as lunchtime learning sessions that cover business development topics that are identified by the Makers Council or are part of the Etsy entrepreneurship curriculum. In 2022, hour-long sessions are expanding into weekend long workshops. KEC brings in experts from the community to talk about, for example, email marketing, using Instagram to market your business, product photography, graphic design, and growing your business on Etsy. Since COVID and as of August 2021, programming is offered online. The Maker City promotes diversity by intentionally selecting BIPOC entrepreneurs to lead and participate in these monthly events. The Maker City also has an online maker directory featuring approximately 400 individual maker businesses. Businesses create a profile that includes pictures, a description of their company, and links to

websites and social media. Makers in the directory represent a broad definition of what it means to make. It includes makers in a traditional sense - woodworkers, jewelers, ceramicists for example - and is inclusive of the whole creative spectrum including food entrepreneurs, musicians, graphic designers, videographers, and spoken word artists. The common element is: all makers produce some kind of goods or creative service. The definition has intentionally been very broad. And participation in the directory is very accessible and free to join.

Outside of the The Maker City initiative programming, KEC promotes all their programs to the maker community and they find maker-entrepreneurs are more likely to engage in other programs after they have had success with the maker-specific programs. KEC's work with makers has inspired other projects such as a marketing campaign for the city called Made for Knoxville. The campaign is used for storytelling and raising awareness of entrepreneurs broadly. A large percentage of the stories featured have included makers. KEC also collaborated with the City to develop a proposal to leverage an unused industrial building for economic impact and advocated for the creation of maker-focused uses, such as creating a home for a makerspace, rentable space ideal for small-scale manufacturing, event space, and shared logistics space.

To help businesses impacted by COVID, KEC partnered with CO.LAB, a non-profit dedicated to accelerating startups in the greater Chattanooga region and Proof, a food and beverage focused incubator program, to support a cohort of businesses in the Knoxville area. The cohort received training and support to help them pivot or expand their market and sales strategies to make up for lost in-person customers. Also in response to the economic shutdown, The Maker City collaboration expanded their Learning series to be weekly events to keep companies connected and to help them learn about COVID-related resources. During this time too, The Maker City used Instagram to expand audiences and create new market opportunities. Leveraging their 9,000+ followers, The Maker City set up an Instagram Auction initiative where makers can sell goods and receive 100% of the transaction.

**Source: Interview with Jim Biggs,  
Knoxville Entrepreneur Center Executive  
Director and Maranda Vandergriff  
Knoxville Entrepreneur Center Creative  
Director and Support Staff for The Maker  
City Initiative**



Local Branding Initiatives



THE  
MAKER  
CITY  
The Maker City | 44  
KNOXVILLE

# MADE IN NYC

## SNAPSHOT

Made in NYC is an initiative of the Pratt Center for Community Development, which is part of Pratt Institute.

Started in 2003

1,500+ Members

A Made in NYC member has to be a manufacturer or maker making a tangible product within the five boroughs of New York City.

### Program Offerings:

- Learning
  - Made in NYC Learning Lab
  - Made in NYC Webinars
- Marketing
  - Made in NYC Logo
  - Marketing & Storytelling Campaigns
  - Online Directory
  - Made in NYC Week
  - Shared Marketing Materials
- Community Building
  - Networking Events
  - Online Directory
- Technical Assistance
  - One-to-One Technical Assistance
  - Referrals to Resources and Partners
  - Connections to Selling Opportunities
- Policy & Advocacy
  - Policy and Advocacy for Manufacturing and Equitable Economic Development

Made in NYC's largest source of yearly funding comes from the New York City Council. Additional grant funding comes from the Garment District Alliance. To cover other program expenses, Made in NYC receives small grants and sponsorships from other non-profits, government entities, and for-profit businesses.

-  [madeinnyc.org](http://madeinnyc.org)
-  [madeinnewyorkcity](https://www.instagram.com/madeinnewyorkcity)
-  [madeinnewyorkcity](https://www.facebook.com/madeinnewyorkcity)
-  [madeinnewyorkcity](https://www.linkedin.com/company/madeinnewyorkcity)
-  [madeinnyc](https://twitter.com/madeinnyc)
-  [MadeInNewYorkCity](https://www.youtube.com/MadeInNewYorkCity)

## ABOUT

Made in NYC started as a program of the New York Industrial Retention Network (NYIRN). NYIRN, established in 1997, was an economic development organization focusing on industrial policy and how issues such as workforce development and industrial land impacted NYC's manufacturing sector. In 2010, NYIRN was consolidated under the Pratt Center. Pratt Center's history in community and economic development provides a unique backdrop and context for Made in NYC (MINYC). MINYC leaders use their insights and abilities as urban planners in a different way than most in the urban planning field. MINYC initially focused on creating a shared branding and marketing platform to leverage and increase market access. Over the past five years, MINYC expanded its support for manufacturers and now offers comprehensive learning, networking, and marketing opportunities helping businesses grow their reach and scale.

Made in NYC runs five program tracks to support entrepreneurs: Learning, Marketing, Community Building, Technical Assistance, and Policy and Advocacy. The Learning track offers free workshops and webinars in marketing and branding and free product photography through their Learning Lab. The Marketing track supports individual companies in two ways: first by helping them understand how to use shared

marketing materials, and second by creating opportunities for companies to be featured on the MINYC website, social media, and press. MINYC runs social media campaigns and features throughout the year. For



Casa Kids - Made in NYC/Jacob Grumulaitis

example, to celebrate Black History Month, Women's History Month, AAPI Heritage Month, Hispanic Heritage Month, and Pride Month, MINYC features businesses with these identities across all digital platforms. MINYC helps build the manufacturing community by creating networking events, encouraging businesses to connect with, source from, and collaborate with each other. MINYC offers Technical Assistance

(TA) through weekly office hour sessions where individual business owners can speak directly with the MINYC team about a variety of issues and get immediate suggestions on resources and services, such as how to obtain legal advice or where to go to discuss financial planning. TA is also provided through skill-building webinars. During the pandemic MINYC hosted webinars on issues from creating a sole proprietorship to getting PPP (Paycheck Protection Program) loans. Their newest work is in Policy and Advocacy to support manufacturing in New York City. This work is in collaboration with a coalition of for-profit and non-profit organizations including industrial business zone leaders. MINYC is bringing their marketing and storytelling expertise to the initiative, helping tell the story of individual businesses, as well as the larger narrative about the importance of manufacturing.

Made in NYC is a program of the Pratt Center for Community Development at the Pratt Institute, a private university in New York City. There are two full time staff at MINYC. The Associate Director leads the program and focuses on sponsorship, fundraising, impact reporting, and decision-making, as well as strategy development to achieve the mission and vision of the program. The Program Manager is the main liaison for all member related inquiries, new membership recruitment, as well as marketing and communications, including social media and newsletters.



Ferrara Manufacturing - Made in NYC/Jacob Grumulaitis

These two roles collaborate on program oversight, events, and partnerships. Other staff at the Pratt Center contribute to strategy development, outreach, and communications, as well as fundraising and managing invoices. Faculty at Pratt participate in MINYC programs as teachers and subject matter experts, and student interns contribute to projects and tasks as needed. MINYC also works with consultants who contribute to specific projects and events and offer support for creative and design strategy, marketing, and PR. Made in NYC's largest source of funding since 2016 has been from the New York City Council, and is general support funding not tied to one particular program. MINYC also receives funding from the Garment District Alliance, a local business improvement district, specifically to support Garment District tenants. Made in NYC Week brings in sponsorships from for-profits, nonprofits, and government offices. Funding has also been provided for specific projects and events within each of the tracks including business support during COVID-19 related programming.

To be a Made in NYC member one has to be a maker or manufacturer within the five boroughs in New York City making a physical, tangible product. To apply, companies fill out a short application and build a company profile, and MINYC confirms that the majority of production is taking place in the five boroughs. Their

over 1,500 member companies range from fashion manufacturers to furniture and home decor designers and makers, to beauty and wellness, a growing subsection of MINYC membership. Members are as small as one-person businesses and as big as over 50 employees. There are consumer-facing craft, artisanal, and handmade start-ups, as well as legacy businesses that do business to business sales, and there are industrial manufacturers who offer contract manufacturing. MINYC has evolved their program offering to cater to this spectrum of business and their varying or similar needs.

Made in NYC first focused on BIPOC individuals by supporting the growth of manufacturing where the workforce in New York City has a high percentage of people of color. By creating more opportunities for manufacturers to grow, MINYC fostered new, quality jobs accessible to communities of color. Over the past several years, a growing percentage of new member applications have been BIPOC- and women-owned businesses. As the demographics of the businesses have changed, so has MINYC's own perception and narrative of who is a maker and manufacturer in New York. To increase diversity within their membership MINYC does intentional recruitment. They engage with local markets at fairs and talk to local retailers and community groups that support BIPOC makers and entrepreneurs. Because New York City is so diverse, MINYC has many opportunities



to engage with markets in neighborhoods with predominantly BIPOC or immigrant populations and build relationships with business support programs that serve these populations exclusively. Through these connections, both organizations are able to leverage resources to increase impact. Beyond recruitment, MINYC makes sure that the diversity of New York City is represented and all business owners see themselves in the features, stories, and events being created. MINYC also advocates for BIPOC makers. For example MINYC has suggested best practices to get local fairs and pop-up markets to offer free vending opportunities for new exhibiting participants. MINYC leverages partnerships with e-commerce sites like Uncommon Goods to help BIPOC-owned businesses gain exposure and increase sales. MINYC has set criteria for how they curate the businesses that could gain access to high value sales opportunities. For example, if there can only be 30 businesses selected to sell their products on a site MINYC prioritizes businesses based on owner demographics, resource needs, and their ability to respond dependably to the market opportunity. Deciding to offer pro-bono services is also one strategy to increase opportunities for BIPOC, disenfranchised, and marginalized business owners to access equal TA and learning opportunities.

**Source: Interview with Joanna Reynolds, Made in NYC Associate Director and Taylor Novick-Finder, Made in NYC Program Manager**

# BRIDGEWAY CAPITAL'S CREATIVE BUSINESS ACCELERATOR

## SNAPSHOT

The Creative Business Accelerator (CBA) is a set of programs and initiatives housed at Bridgeway Capital, a community development financial institution.

Bridgeway Capital opened in 1990. The Creative Business Accelerator started in 2018.


In 2021 Bridgeway Capital and Creative Business Accelerator had over 600 businesses registered in their network. And CBA programs supported 70 focused investments (grants, loans, services, and sponsorships) to regional businesses totaling \$1.88MM; involved 53 creative businesses in ORIGINS; featured 117 creative businesses on PG&H; and delivered over 1,200 hours of one-on-one and group guidance to 138 creative businesses.

The CBA supports entrepreneurial artists, designers, makers, and craftspeople across mediums and outputs. PG&H is open to artisans, craftspeople, and makers creating home goods, accessories, décor, and gifts. ORIGINS participants are Black makers, designers, artists, and craftspeople starting and sustaining creative businesses in the Pittsburgh area.

### Program Offerings:

- One-to-One Technical Assistance
- Business Development Webinars
- Capital Access (via CDFI Lending)
- Peer Networking
- Real Estate Access
- Market Opportunities Platforms and Programs:
  - ORIGINS:
    - Learning Cohort
    - Room to Grow Residency
    - Deep Craft Scholarships
    - Business Coaching
  - PG&H:
    - Online Directory
    - Storefronts (online and in-person)
  - Monmade:
    - Sales Facilitation with Architects, Builders, and Developers

Initial funding for the CBA came from foundations in Pittsburgh. Revenue for the CBA is generated from helping creative businesses secure loans from Bridgeway Capital and contracts to deliver custom, locally-made design products for real estate developments through its Monmade program.

 [bridgewaycapital.org/creative-business-accelerator](https://bridgewaycapital.org/creative-business-accelerator)

 [creativebusinessaccelerator](https://www.instagram.com/creativebusinessaccelerator)

 [creativebusinessaccelerator](https://www.facebook.com/creativebusinessaccelerator)

 [bridgeway-capital](https://www.linkedin.com/company/bridgeway-capital)

 [Bridgeway\\_Cap](https://twitter.com/Bridgeway_Cap)

## ABOUT

Bridgeway Capital is a community development financial institution (CDFI), in Pittsburgh, PA operating since 1990 to support underserved BIPOC and veteran entrepreneurs and to attract economic activity to distressed areas by providing technical assistance and lending opportunities for small businesses and investing in real estate development projects. The Creative Business Accelerator (CBA) emerged as a response to the perpetual scarcity of funding for creative businesses. Research on the maker and small batch manufacturing community, combined with personal insights and experiences of Bridgeway staff, showed that when businesses lacked access to six key resources – capital, real estate, peer networks, market opportunities, entrepreneurial education, and workforce – they struggled to scale and rarely sought capital to expand. Bridgeway responded to this challenge and launched a series of programs to help creative companies scale and increase the number of companies seeking capital from Bridgeway. This expanded programming positions Bridgeway at the intersection of the arts and culture and economic development. Their maker-based programs operate in parallel to other Bridgeway Capital technical assistance offerings, including the Entrepreneurship Hub and the Healthy Food Access initiative.

Being housed in a CDFI means the CBA is an important access point for makers and small manufacturers looking for capital. Given that capital is often the most catalytic intervention, this direct connection creates



Jenna Vanden Brink Ceramics - Julia Reynolds

more opportunities to “move the needle” in terms of measurable impacts like increasing jobs, renting or buying larger real estate, and larger scale production runs. Over the course of three years of operation, CBA has developed strategies that provide learning and support to creative businesses. These programs are managed by full time staff, contracted experts, and through collaborations with other organizations with

financial management support provided by Bridgeway Capital employees.

Every creative business comes to CBA with a different recipe for success and different resource needs. CBA staff work with each company to recommend a development pathway. Companies of any size, including solo-entrepreneurs, interested in participating in programming go through the same three-part onboarding process: starting with an introduction to CBA’s process and program offerings followed by the Creative Business Ladder Survey, and ending with a 25 question assessment of operational, financial, and attitudinal parameters. Answers to these questions provide CBA staff with a baseline benchmark. They then generate a set of recommendations for that particular business which includes suggestions on which programs to participate in and where opportunities for improvement exist. Some companies will take immediate action and begin participating in programs and others may wait to implement CBA’s recommendations.

Recommendations can include participating in any or all programs which include a shared marketing platform, business fundamentals webinar series, and two intensive learning programs, as well as grants and residency programs. The programs operate independently, allowing companies to engage when and how they



Otto Finn - Julia Reynolds

can, but also interrelate so as companies grow and move on to another set of recommendations they can easily transition to another type of support. There is no one specific starting point for all companies. For those looking for more intensive support, companies can apply to the First Leap program, a seven-week series focused on helping entrepreneurs create an actionable business plan. The program is offered through a collaboration between the CBA and Chatham's Center for Women's Entrepreneurship. Companies who are not able to commit to the full program can also participate in individual workshops in different aspects of business development and management. Companies ready to dedicate more time and scale their business can apply to the Next Leap program, a ten-week intensive course focused on defining and implementing a growth idea.

Another program companies can apply to participate in is Monmade which "bring[s] artisan design to market and support regionally sourced, responsibly made, and environmentally conscious products for design and development projects." Monmade, which is now a stand alone LLC that is an impact driven social enterprise, provides a service to architects, interior designers, builders, and real estate developers who want to source products made and manufactured in the Pittsburgh region. To do this, Monmade interfaces with buyers, putting together orders of stock products and custom fabrication,

manages contracts and timelines, and delivers finished goods. A resource open to all maker companies is PG&H, a shared brand and marketing platform with the goals of "elevating good design and craftsmanship, fostering an inclusive community, and recognizing Pittsburgh's legacy of making and manufacturing." The shared platform offers an online directory of over 100 businesses, an online store, and a collection of stories that highlight Pittsburgh maker communities for local, national, and international audiences.

Black creatives and entrepreneurs seeking growth opportunities in the creative economy can apply to be in ORIGINS: "a multifaceted program that was developed to address, create leadership, and provide opportunities that help to mitigate and repair systemic challenges and barriers that Black and brown entrepreneurs have experienced, helping individuals and the community overcome those challenges." ORIGINS has five pillars. First, the Cohort, a community of entrepreneurs convened to discuss issues that impact their business. Residency, the second pillar, is a year-long access to flexible space for creative business owners who are looking to scale their operations. Then there is Guidance, technical assistance provided by external consultants who act as mentors and workshop leaders, and Opportunities, which includes creating and gaining access to new markets through meaningful partnerships so businesses can grow sales and become more financially

sustainable. Partnerships have been formed with Handmade Arcade, wedding and bridal shows, and other companies specific to what the cohort is interested in. The fifth pillar is Incubator, a seven week, high-touch learning and development experience. ORIGINS has its own advisory group of Black and brown leaders in and outside of the Pittsburgh region. The group explores the impacts and opportunities of economic development, entrepreneurship, and capital readiness among other issues to help shape ORIGINS programming and growth.

The CBA always had goals of creating space and equity within their program offerings for diverse business owners. The challenge was that there weren't a lot of visible Black makers and creatives. To meet the need, the CBA team identified that they needed to perform dedicated, engaging, and thoughtful outreach to cultivate those relationships. Before launching ORIGINS in February 2020, they convened Black entrepreneurs to discuss topics around marketing and business growth and strategy. Everything from naming and branding, to colors and logos, to program offerings and strategy were done in community and gave birth to ORIGINS. As ORIGINS grows it is done with community involvement and guidelines. Throughout its development, the CBA has emphasized creating a safe space for navigating challenges that Black entrepreneurs face outside the white lens or our systemically racist structure.

In response to COVID, all in-person interactions shifted to online platforms and the content adjusted, as well. For example, ORIGINS wanted to help companies that did not have an active online presence expedite their online development. This meant offering support for creating websites, social media content and strategies, and photographic assets. Participation in virtual programs turned out to be higher than in person programs; CBA believes that it is easier for business owners who have kids or day jobs to participate in virtual learning sessions with less effort or resources than in-person sessions. Like other LBIs, the CBA saw ups and downs in participation, as well as new businesses opening and old businesses closing. They saw companies pivot in response to new PPE demands and in other cases companies found new markets for their existing product lines. Overall, the maker and manufacturing ecosystem had a higher level of resilience than other sectors.

Makers, artists, craftspeople, and designers don't always consider themselves small businesses. This means engaging them in small business support programs, including COVID related ones, is difficult. This has forced the CBA, and Bridgeway Capital, to grow and evolve how they talk about and offer their support. The CBA has worked hard to become a trusted intermediary that walks alongside companies along their development pathway. This trust building

process is necessary for all makers, but especially those from BIPOC communities. One way they built trust and community was by challenging the definition of being a maker. It was important to go beyond the traditional definition and expand it to include businesses in the body and hair care, food, and beverage sectors where there are traditionally higher concentrations of BIPOC entrepreneurs. Another way they have built trust is through a willingness to listen, to have the tough conversations, to be self educated, and to not put all the onus on Black and brown people to provide insights. This trust and awareness permeates the whole organization top to bottom from the Board and senior staff level, to consultants and staff working with companies day-to-day – so regardless of who a business owner may work with they are getting seen and supported equally.

**Source: Interviews with Adam Kenney, Managing Director of Programs at Bridgeway Capital and Nisha Blackwell, ORIGINS Program Coordinator and Business Coach**

# PORTLAND MADE

## SNAPSHOT

Portland Made is a for-profit organization.

Started in 2012






Portland Made has 120+ paying and honorary members.

Portland Made members make up a collective of local entrepreneurs who make exceptional products for the greater good.

### Program Offerings:

- Maker Meetup Learning Events with Peers and Subject Matter Experts
- Tours of Maker's Spaces
- Marketing Members
- Window Shop Pop-Ups
- Online Directory
- Events to Connect Makers and Supporters
- Technical and Creative Development Workshops
- Storytelling
- One-on-One Consulting
- Community Email Listserve
- Photography

Portland Made members pay a monthly or yearly fee to access all programs and services offered. Non-members are charged fees for participating in learning events and workshops. Portland Made also creates sponsorship opportunities for events and services.

-  [portlandmade.com](http://portlandmade.com)
-  [portland\\_made](https://www.instagram.com/portland_made)
-  [PortlandMade](https://www.facebook.com/PortlandMade)
-  [portland-made-co-](https://www.linkedin.com/company/portland-made-co-)
-  [portland\\_made](https://twitter.com/portland_made)



## ABOUT

Portland Made (PM) was founded in 2012 by Kelly Roy, who owned a makerspace and industrial property rented to makers and manufacturers. These spaces became important places for makers to gather and connect. Via formal and informal discussions it became apparent that maker business owners, especially the single person companies, would often only focus on what they made and not on how their businesses operated. Roy founded Portland Made as a nonprofit but after many iterations, and because of the complexities of creating and running a non-profit, it shifted to a for-profit LLC. PM is currently operated by one full time staff member, who is also the owner. Their primary responsibilities are listening to individual business owners to understand challenges and needs, and telling the story of the Portland Made community. Other responsibilities and deliverables such as contributing to programming, photography, and writing are managed by contracted experts. Interns also participate at different times throughout the year contributing to day-to-day marketing tasks, member outreach, and checking in on the health of businesses, making sure they are getting the support they need. With a small staff, PM leverages creativity to support makers in innovative new ways that do not involve large investments. To expand programming opportunities, Portland Made focuses on partnerships and collaborations with local

organizations to offer tailored programming to maker and manufacturing businesses. This collaborative model allows Portland Made to focus on event planning and promotion of Portland-based businesses.



Window Shopping - Chris Dibble

Portland Made acts as a hub for promoting members and as a go-to organization where non-making based entities can connect to making and manufacturing in Portland. For example, PM has relationships with many local news outlets and when they want to feature local makers, PM makes recommendations and introductions. Often local universities want to host markets and PM helps recruit businesses to participate.

In large part, PM has built this reputation and responsibility by focusing heavily on telling the story of making in Portland to many different stakeholders. Portland Made does this by managing an online database of member businesses, creating a shared brand platform, and running very active social media accounts - Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram - promoting makers everyday.

Prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, each month Portland Made hosted a maker meetup. These two-hour events combined networking and educational opportunities, and topics included anything from learning about profit-and-loss statements to importing to scaling to marketing. To respond to safety precautions during the pandemic, these events became virtual and were split into two event types: tours and learning. Tours of maker's spaces using Instagram Live replaced in-person networking and provided an intimate discussion and glimpse into the spaces where Portland makers and manufacturers work. On average 45 people attended which was far greater than what most small production spaces could have allowed to participate for in-person tours. The learning events shifted online and discussed the same topics or focused on COVID issues, such as grant and loan opportunities, safety protocols, and creating online stores. Portland Made noticed that the online learning engaged a different demographic than the in-person events, drawing even



Maker Meetup at Made Here PDX 170 - Sarah Toor

more female-identifying business owners, a wider range of ages, and more racial diversity. PM believes that these new audiences were able to participate because virtual events require a smaller time and financial commitment (for example, finding childcare is less of an issue). After about a year, Portland Made changed their strategy because participants were identifying “Zoom fatigue” and were cutting back on their time spent in online group discussions. In response, PM debuted virtual coffee dates, connecting two people to talk about making, challenges and opportunities they are experiencing in their businesses, and, in general, connecting at a time when people were feeling anxious and cut off from their communities. To participate in these events and to gain access to all Portland Made programs, companies become members, paying a monthly or yearly membership fee.

Historically Portland Made hosted at least one market a year, which were big gatherings to celebrate the community and opportunities for makers to sell their products. In 2020, community partners and makers reached out to find safe alternatives to these markets. Portland Made collaborated with another local organization and co-founded a project called Window Shop. The project provided makers with vacant storefronts and support to create window displays all around the city of Portland. Consumers could see products on display and by scanning a QR code on the

window could purchase them directly from makers. The project and tools used added no cost or burden to the makers. This is in line with Portland Made’s goal to support makers in ways with the fewest barriers possible, such as removing or reducing sign up requirements, fees for participation, or the amount of time and labor to participate. Another way this is achieved is by taking on the work of promoting Instagram Live events, but giving the maker the ability to run the Live discussion and tour.

To help spotlight BIPOC makers and manufacturers, PM intentionally provides a diverse set of business owners to fully reflect the community when media outlets are looking for story subjects. Portland Made leverages its storytelling platforms and throughout the year promotes diverse maker groups during celebratory times such as Asian Heritage Month and Black History Month. Through a partnership with Prosper Portland, the economic and urban development agency for the City of Portland, a set of the windows in the Window Shop project were dedicated to feature BIPOC makers. To increase diversity of voices within the organization Portland Made worked with IRCO (Immigrant and Refugee Community Organization) to hire an intern of Asian American heritage to participate in storytelling and marketing. Portland Made has dedicated itself to anti-racist practices and has evaluated and revised their content to be explicit about their values



and their support of diversity. PM leadership participates in anti-racist workshops and classes and is part of a learning group with other local business owners. This learning has inspired a shift in practices; for example, using their budget impactfully by paying presenters to participate; offering scholarships to BIPOC business owners to cover membership fees; and sourcing purchases from businesses owned by BIPOC and women entrepreneurs for printed materials or food and beverages for events. Portland Made's approach to serving the diverse maker community is to constantly improve by accepting community feedback, learning best practices, being transparent and accountable, and acknowledging when they make mistakes and contribute to inequalities. The "try, fail, try, and succeed" approach has created an environment of support and engagement that is fostering a growing, diverse ecosystem.

When COVID first began to shut down the economy in Spring 2020, Portland Made saw a dip in paying members. Over time, PM experienced an increase in membership as people were leaving their desk jobs and taking up new crafts, or as makers were turning their side business into their full time job. At the same time, some of the more established businesses struggled to stay afloat. One way Portland Made responded was by reaching out to members who were cutting their membership and rather than pushing them to rejoin, they asked: "How

are you? What are you needing right now?" For those who needed it, PM offered to remove membership fees until business were able to be more stable. Portland Made also managed a members-only Google listserv and used it to share resources and offer a safe space to share feelings and experiences. Because business owners were busy dealing with many other issues, Portland Made took on the responsibility of becoming an expert in different grant and loan opportunities, such as PPP, creating documents that spelled out requirements for applying, and vetting resources to make sure they were legitimate and appropriate for the community. These responses illustrate how Portland Made became the stable and predictable hub that was very important to, and much needed by, the maker community. Portland Made worked hard to make sure the community, and their supporters, knew that they were still there, still working to promote Portland, and still making a place to connect and share business and personal anxieties and fears.

**Source: Interview with Meghan Sinnott  
Executive Director and Owner of Portland  
Made**

# SEATTLE MADE

## SNAPSHOT

Seattle Made is a program of the Seattle Good Business Network (SGBN), a non-profit that connects and inspires people to buy, produce, and invest locally.

Seattle Good Business Network opened in 2010. Seattle Made started in 2015.

650+ Members

Seattle Made members manufacture or produce one or more physical products in the city of Seattle, offer one or more standard product lines, have the equivalent of at least one full-time employee, and have one or more products for sale at a retail store or online (if the member produces a consumer product).

### Program Offerings:

- Online Directory
- Shared Branding Materials
- Promotional and Selling Opportunities
  - Pop-up Shops and Tasting Events
  - Seattle Made Store at SeaTac Airport
  - Seattle Made Branded Wine and Beer
- Creative and Technical Development Educational Events
- Business Assessments
- Peer Learning Meet-ups
- Online Communications Platform for Members
- Sustainable and Circular Business Development Support
- Youth Programs: Connect Manufacturers and Seattle Youth

Seattle Good Business Network is funded through sponsorships for events and programs. SGBN receives grants from the City of Seattle, State of Washington, and the Workforce Development Council of Seattle-King County to support their sustainability and youth workforce development programs. Seattle Made week brings in funding through sponsorship and ticket sales. And the Seattle Made Store, Boxes, and Wine and Beer generate revenue through sales.

 [seattlemade.org](http://seattlemade.org)

 [\\_seattlemade](https://www.instagram.com/seattlemade)

 [Seattle-Made](https://www.facebook.com/Seattle-Made)

 [\\_seattlemade](https://twitter.com/_seattlemade)

## ABOUT

The Seattle Good Business Network (SGBN) is a nonprofit organization, founded in 2010, building a vibrant, sustainable, and inclusive local economy. Seattle Made (SM) was launched as a program of SGBN in 2014 to meet the needs of Seattle-based making and manufacturing businesses. SGBN heard from manufacturers that it was increasingly difficult to make things in the city, citing barriers such as the cost of operating, real estate market pressures, and limited access to commercial real estate and production spaces. To respond to these concerns, SGBN formed a steering committee of city leaders, manufacturers of different sizes, representatives from local makerspaces, and workforce organizations. The committee developed the Seattle Made initiative and brand by pulling together over 80 business owners to attend workshops to define a shared vision and programs that would benefit the manufacturing community.

SGBN signed up over 150 members at the launch of Seattle Made and five years later there are now over 650, 70% of which are Black-, Indigenous-, people of color-, and/or women-owned and 40% of members are food or beverage manufacturers. Seattle Made's membership has become more diverse over time. The growth has been organic and influenced by early members who were women of color who shared their experiences with others who would

eventually become members. Seattle Made in January 2022 launched a program prioritizing BIPOC entrepreneurs and artists titled Seattle Restored. The program offers pop-up and art gallery window displays in 35



Val Tattoo - Seattle Made / Valerie Madison  
Jewelry

vacant storefronts in Downtown Seattle. This initiative creates new market opportunities for BIPOC business owners and a new pipeline of makers who may become Seattle Made members.

Prior to COVID, Seattle Made focused heavily on events for members, including opportunities for networking, learning, and meeting potential buyers. For example,

to help connect food and beverage manufacturers to wholesale buyers, SM created an annual event that brings together 30+ buyers to taste samples, meet manufacturers, and purchase products. SM also created Seattle Made Week, 10 days of tours, panel discussions, and public-facing events. Seattle Made Week is now COVID-safe; SM is creating short video vignettes featuring how members make their products. Taste of Seattle, a SM Week event, pre-COVID featured about 40 food and beverage manufacturers and offered an opportunity for anyone to try new products and learn about what is made in Seattle. Educational events, which are still offered through virtual meetings, focus on a variety of topics such as best practices for selling wholesale, marketing, and sales. Participation in events is free to members and membership is free, after an initial \$35 application fee.

Beyond events and workshops, members gain access to shared branding materials, a member directory, and market opportunities. Members also can participate in a dedicated virtual community space to help makers and manufacturers connect, share insights, and find opportunities to collaborate and or offer services to one another. Within this space there are ongoing conversations, for example, around accessing space and sourcing contract small batch manufacturing. The community runs the platform, and the Seattle Made Program Manager participates by offering



Lara Zahaba - Seattle Made / Stoup Brewing

recommendations and making connections, as well as keeping tabs on the community as a whole learning about shared challenges and barriers. The Program Manager also makes sure that the space is safe so members feel like they can communicate openly and not feel like they are being marketed to or distracted from their work.

Outside of direct support through programs, Seattle Made is also actively helping increase manufacturing in the region. For example, starting in 2017, SM has been part of a working group identifying the challenges and opportunities within the sewn trades workforce, especially those working in small batch manufacturing. This work resulted in Washington State's first registered apprenticeship in industrial sewing machine operation. The apprenticeship and initial cohort was about to get started right before COVID hit. The facility hosting those apprentices retooled themselves and moved forward training apprentices while producing personal protective equipment.

Seattle Made is as entrepreneurial as their member businesses, creating partnerships and collaborations to generate new market opportunities. Seattle Made established a store in Seattle's SeaTac airport. The store is a direct sales channel for 30+ members and is managed by a third party; Seattle Made provides the vendors, the branding, and guides the submission process. Seattle Made Boxes are another

market strategy led by SM. Boxes include products from a variety of members. Along with products, customers get links to online content and events to learn more about how the products are made. Boxes have been developed for different buying seasons and coordinate with special events. SM intentionally selects products that compliment one another and represent diversity of business ownership, making sure to include BIPOC- and women-owned businesses in the curation process. Seattle Made Wine and Beer is a collaboration between SM, a winery, and a brewery where all get a portion of sales and leverage different markets and audiences that each organization on their own would not likely have access to. Finally, SM runs pop-up markets, some of which are standalone events, while others are run by other organizations and SM participates. To gain insights about the success of these market opportunities, as well as learn about the health and success of member businesses, SM runs regular surveys collecting data about the number of employees, how much production space is in use, and annual revenue, among other things.

Besides Seattle Made, SGBN offers programming that supports non-manufacturing businesses with concentrations in local food systems and circular economy initiatives. It is possible for businesses to participate in just Seattle Made programs, but there are manufacturers





that also benefit from SGBN's local food and circular economies work. Being part of the larger SGBN ecosystem has created many internal network opportunities for Seattle Made members, including business to business sales and collaborations. SGBN has also built a robust youth internship and youth workforce development program: “[SGBN] works to expand and support quality and emergent, career and experiential learning pathways (internships, mentorships, and career-exposure opportunities) for under-resourced youth (low-income, BIPOC, refugee, immigrant, at-risk, homeless, and others).” SGBN provides stipends to mentors to take on engagements with youth to increase diverse business participation. This program has also contributed to a more diverse Seattle Made member network. For years, Seattle Good Business Network has helped companies adopt sustainable practices and is developing circular design workshops and technical assistance to help businesses who either want to develop or redesign a product with circularity in mind. While this is not exclusive to Seattle Made members, it is helping a portion of them. For example, small scale makers can now source “waste” materials from larger scale manufacturers, creating new material streams and upcycling opportunities.

**Source: Interview with Erin Adams, Executive director of Seattle Good Business Network and Andrea Porter, Seattle Made Program Manager**

# MOUNTAIN BIZWORKS' CRAFT YOUR COMMERCE

## SNAPSHOT

<p>Craft Your Commerce is an entrepreneurial growth initiative of Mountain BizWorks, a community development financial institution.</p>	<p><b>Program Offerings:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Craft Industry Coaching and Peer-to-Peer Learning</li><li>• Makers Mixer Networking Events</li><li>• Creative and Technical Development Workshop Series</li><li>• Capital Access (via CDFI Lending)</li></ul>
<p>Mountain BizWorks opened in 1989. Craft Your Commerce started in 2018.</p>	<p>Craft Your Commerce is funded by the Windgate Foundation.</p>
<p>In 2021 Craft Your Commerce and Mountain BizWorks provided over 290 hours of business coaching to 29 creative entrepreneurs, provided over \$611,000 in loan and grant monies to nine companies in the creative sector, and had over 800 individuals and companies participate in learning classes.</p>	
<p>Craft Your Commerce elevates and advances creative and craft-centered companies.</p>	

 [mountainbizworks.org/craft-your-commerce](https://mountainbizworks.org/craft-your-commerce)  
 [craftyourcommerce](https://www.instagram.com/craftyourcommerce)

## ABOUT

In Asheville, NC, what started out as a lending circle of entrepreneurs supporting other regional entrepreneurs grew to become Mountain BizWorks, a community development financial institution (CDFI), which has lent \$99.5 million to small businesses in its 30+ year history. Like all CDFIs, Mountain BizWorks is chartered by the U.S. Treasury to support underserved entrepreneurs, particularly those of color, in rural and urban areas through small business lending. The Craft Your Commerce (CYC) project was started by a partnership between Mountain BizWorks and Center for Craft, a national nonprofit dedicated to advancing the field of craft. In 2016 Center for Craft conducted a study on the economic needs of entrepreneurs in the craft industry in Western North Carolina (WNC). Their research revealed different areas where makers needed support, including professional development, mentorship, peer-to-peer learning, and access to markets. Based on that study, Mountain BizWorks in collaboration with the Center for Craft launched the Craft Your Commerce pilot project offering a series of workshops and intensive business development courses.

Craft Your Commerce is grounded in a long history of supporting the craft heritage of Western North Carolina. Starting in 1998, Handmade in America, a nonprofit community and economic

development organization, used craft to grow economies of small towns in WNC that have populations of 2,000 or less, and suffered with the loss of manufacturing in the '70s and '80s. Handmade started by



Emarts Emarts - Emarts Emarts

recognizing over 400 studio craft artists living and working in the mountains of Western North Carolina and created heritage and craft trails, a collection of trips into WNC to visit and buy from studio artists, and a corresponding book. Handmade in America closed in 2015 leaving gaps in craft entrepreneurship support and economic development support for towns with craft artists, particularly the small- and medium-

sized craft manufacturing businesses that existed in the area. These gaps were the motivating factors behind the research project completed by the Center for Craft and Mountain BizWorks.

CYC now consists of three tracks of programming: a workshop series and intensive courses, peer-to-peer business coaching, and maker mixers. Each year, two workshop series are mapped out over the course of several months and are based on the ongoing needs of the creative community. Peer-to-peer coaching is a cohort learning model that works in conjunction with the workshops series to support creative businesses that want extra accountability and implementation support. Maker mixers connect businesses directly to each other so they can share work, challenges, and opportunities. All programming has continued throughout the pandemic with adjustments to virtual learning and meeting environments which has increased participation to people from 20 states. CYC developed COVID-specific workshops that included bringing in legal experts to talk about unemployment, sharing resources about loan opportunities, and bringing in representatives from national organizations like Americans for the Arts and Craft Emergency Relief Fund to have conversations about the options for artist and creative business relief. CYC also hosted a webinar on growth mindset, bringing in experts to lead participants

**Craft your commerce.**  
**Crafting the Business Environment:**  
**How to Work with Designers, Architects, and Developers**  
 Featuring Bright Angle, Samsel Architects, and Shelter Collective.  
**August 28, 2 – 4 pm**  
 This panel discussion will shed light on the process of working with buyers by bringing together a group of designers, architects, and craft artists to discuss how to connect with, and go about working with each other.  
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 mountain bizworks | Center for Craft

Craft Your Commerce Half Day Hustle - Julieta Fumberg Creative

through exercises to learn strategies to manage stress. A new round of funding in 2021 from the Windgate Foundation will support three more years of all programs and support new economic development focused work to help grow craft manufacturing in the region. This work will build industry by connecting small craft manufacturers to the building industry, including architects, interior designers, and developers.

Mountain BizWorks has a staff of over 25 employees and a network of contractors who provide business coaching and training to entrepreneurs in all sectors. The Craft Your Commerce program is dedicated solely to craft- and making-based businesses. CYC has a dedicated full time staff member who works independently of the other programs but leverages programs and financial tools offered by Mountain BizWorks. CYC also depends on Mountain BizWorks staff to manage grants and payments and for marketing and promotional support.

Mountain BizWorks and Craft Your Commerce have the shared goal of supporting entrepreneurs through all stages, from start-up to growth and expansion. CYC provides Mountain BizWorks a pipeline to craft sector businesses while providing those businesses learning opportunities, guidance, and access to funding. Helping craft businesses become more successful

and scale creates new demand for capital which Mountain BizWorks can then provide. During COVID, Mountain BizWorks managed a variety of different grants and lending opportunities, some of which were specifically relevant to creative-based businesses in WNC. One came from Buncombe County Tourism and Development Authority where \$588,000 in grant funding was earmarked for creative or craft businesses in Buncombe County. Mountain BizWorks provided another \$1.17 million in loans to creative businesses across 26 counties.

All of Mountain BizWorks' lending and learning programs focus on supporting diverse and underserved entrepreneurs. In 2021, the Multicultural Catalyst Fund was launched and "is designed to increase equity within the landscape of startups and early growth funding for entrepreneurs of color with the hopes of encouraging entrepreneurs of color to enter into industries that have higher rates of growth and success." The fund was developed to break down barriers entrepreneurs of color systematically and historically face when trying to grow businesses. There are two elements to The Catalyst Fund: patient, flexible capital and supportive services. The application to the Fund waives restrictions other banks typically require such as removing collateral requirements, credit score, and credit history. In fact, the Catalyst Fund builds in support for credit building,

credit repair, and offers no payments on principal for the first year and no payments at all for the first six months. This structure gives entrepreneurs longer runways to start earning revenue. The Catalyst Fund also features other details specific to the needs of many entrepreneurs of color, such as a personal emergency loan element in case a founder runs into health issues. The second element is the Catalyst Cohort, a peer-to-peer learning model for BIPOC-led businesses. The Cohort connects owners to each other, builds accountability, and offers business development support. To increase accessibility Mountain BizWorks runs Latinx-focused entrepreneurship programs for Spanish speaking clients. Mountain BizWorks also provides scholarships to women-, BIPOC-, and immigrant-owned creative product businesses to attend sales training offered by vetted partners. While these programs are not limited to maker- and craft-based businesses, it is recommended that production-based businesses apply. CYC is expanding its support for BIPOC craft entrepreneurs in 2022 by launching a workshop series to support the Black community, the Latinx community, and the Eastern Band of the Cherokee Nation, all three of which have historically been underrepresented in the craft industry and have had limited access to capital.

**Source: Interview with Gwynne Rukenbrod, Craft Your Commerce Program Director and Kareen Boncales, Director of Entrepreneurship at Mountain BizWorks**



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