

COVID-19 Response

TechTown continues to deliver free, expert resources to the public through flagship programs like Open Office Hours and Ask An Expert. Open Office Hours are available to both tech startups and neighborhood small businesses. During an Open Office Hour, a TechTown team member helps prioritize business goals and directs entrepreneurs to the appropriate programs, resources and experts in TechTown's Professional Services Network and the Detroit entrepreneurial ecosystem. Through the Ask an Expert program, members of TechTown's Professional Services Network provide free, expert consultations through a range of skills and specialties such as web development, HR, logistics/fulfillment and marketing. These resources have been highly utilized during COVID-19, with a combined 177 appointments held from August through October.

Additionally, TechTown has led the Technical Assistance efforts for the Detroit Means Business initiative, through coordinating 30+ ecosystem partners in curating and developing web-based content and providing daily expert one-on-one consultations to help small business owners navigate recalling employees to the workplace, welcoming back customers and safely operating in the era of COVID-19. From August through October, TechTown has facilitated 26 one-on-one expert consultations, leveraging the scheduling software and systems used to execute the Ask an Expert platform.

Finally, TechTown's Thursday Training Series has held 6 virtual workshops since its launch on August 20th. The comprehensive, twelve-month professional development workshop series helps entrepreneurs build core business acumen and problem solve real-time business challenges in a moderated small group setting. To date, this series has 91 registrants and 25 attendees. This workshop series is targeted at approximately 400 low-to-moderate income TechTown alumni and Detroit, Highland Park, and Hamtramck small business owners -- a group that may not otherwise have access to these recourses -- to help them sustain, grow or transition their business in response to COVID-19 with free subject matter expert-led virtual content, via one-on-one, peer-to-peer, and small group assistance.

Small Business Services

Retail Services

The Retail Services team remains focused on coaching new and existing brick-and-mortar businesses to support TechTown's vision of rebuilding an equitable economy. The monthly pop-up, The Shop, is a live online platform that provides businesses access to a sales and marketing audience. Participants are alumni of both Tech and Small Business Services TechTown programs, as well as Goldman Sachs 10,000 Small Businesses. The need for learning how to sell virtually is a uniform necessity, regardless of stage of business. The 10th cohort Retail Boot Camp hosted 15 businesses seeking to open a location within the next year. All graduates will receive one-one coaching from the team well into the second quarter of 2021 to help them get open and stay open.

313 STRONG

313 STRONG continues supports the sustainability of neighborhood, brick and mortar businesses in Detroit, Highland Park, and Hamtramck by providing customized, focused, business support, with an emphasis on capital, finances, operations, and marketing. During Hispanic/Latinx Heritage Month (Sept.

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15 – Oct 15) we highlighted 20 current and alumni business owners with a photoshoot and blog detailing the expansive impact they have made in Southwest Detroit and throughout the region.

To date, 313 STRONG has signed 39 businesses and has accumulated 78 hours of counseling. In addition to 313 STRONG work, team members have conducted 65 Open Office Hours with potential and current business owners. The new webpage and marketing promotion that was completed in October generated 20 completed interest forms within the first week and we are hopeful that many of these become clients.

Tech Programs

TechTown continues to offer Start Studio, the only idea-stage program for tech startups in the region. The Fall 2020 cohort will wrap up on Wednesday, November 18 with a virtual Showcase event. Participants will have conducted dozens of interviews, developed prototypes, and determined whether their business idea has merit.

The inaugural cohort of the TechTown Incubator program, which began on May 30, will be complete on Thursday, November 12 with its Demo Day event. This highly competitive program is designed to move early-revenue startups to more stable businesses by helping founders to build systems and processes that position them for growth.

The Tech team is preparing to pilot a new, intensive experience to assist companies with early-stage prototypes or MVPs to help them achieve traction through peer-driven learning and accountability. This rolling program will serve companies that have proven their viability through the type of customer discovery techniques featured in Start Studio.

Goldman Sachs 10,000 Small Businesses Program

The Goldman Sachs 10,000 Small Businesses Program has adjusted to the “new temporary normal” during the months of September, October and November. The program resumed at Wayne State University along with the other national sites, the core activity of delivering the program to new cohorts, albeit remotely. We resumed our outreach and recruiting efforts in preparation for our next cohort that is scheduled to start in January. We also continued to execute various alumni support activities. Below is a summary of our key activities that corresponded with this initiative.

- **Cohort 19 (September - December):** We launch cohort # 19 on September 14th, 2020. The program is being delivered remotely to 28 companies from Wayne, Oakland, Washtenaw, Livingston, Kalamazoo counties as well as northern Ohio. Cohort 19 is scheduled to end December 18th, 2020.
- **Outreach & Recruitment:** We continued our outreach and recruitment efforts in preparation for cohort #20. Given the new environment, we pivoted our outreach strategy. Our pivot included engaging with new and existing community partners as well as strengthening our relationships at the county level. We conducted various webinars attracting strong interest from the local business community. The new strategy yielded remarkable success as we received 196 completed part 1 applications; this represents a new record and well surpassed the goal of 120 part 1 applications.

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- **Alumni Support:** The team has also been active organizing alumni support activities. At present, we are preparing for an hallmark virtual national strategic council where our alumni will participate in a live webinar whose guest list include: Warren Buffet, Mary Barra (CEO of General Motors), Michael Bloomberg and David Salomon (CEO of Goldman Sachs)

Detroit Revitalization Fellows, a program of Wayne State University

Launched at Wayne State University in 2011, the Detroit Revitalization Fellows (DRF) program has placed talented, mid-career professionals at local organizations at the forefront of the city and region's civic, community, and economic development. This select group of doers engaged in a rigorous two-year leadership development program while serving full-time at their host organizations. DRF has been generously funded by the Kresge Foundation, Ford Foundation, Hudson-Webber Foundation, Fred A. and Barbara M. Erb Family Foundation, Ralph C. Wilson, Jr. Foundation, Skillman Foundation, DTE Energy Foundation, the Max M. & Marjorie S. Fisher Foundation, the John S. and James L. Knight Foundation, the PwC Charitable Foundation, Rock Ventures, and Wayne State University.

Acknowledging the changes occurring across the city since 2011, in April 2019 the program embarked on a strategic assessment. DRF partnered with The Work Department and Public Sector Consultants to engage nearly 100 diverse stakeholders including current and alumni Fellows, funders, Advisory Council members, current and previous employers, coaches, other sector leaders, and residents via phone interviews, surveys, focus groups, and strategic planning sessions. The goal was to understand and develop a vision for how the fellowship could make a greater impact while continuing to nurture and promote the leaders Detroit needs now. The assessment is complete and the executive summary and five-year strategic plan will be publicly shared when appropriate.

In May, DRF staff along with OED leadership made a significant strategic shift in line with prospective funding priorities to solely support increased alumni programming. In August of 2020, DRF successfully obtained respective funding for the remainder of the 2020 year. While the nation grapples with navigating both a health and social pandemic, DRF will execute programming that supports its network of 80 Alumni fellows during these times via virtual means. DRF will continue to pursue ongoing funding to support 2021 Alumni programming.

Alumni Engagement:

To honor the implications posed by COVID 19, the DRF program began hosting a series of virtual Alumni check-ins in late May. Since then, Alumni fellows from all four cohorts have had the opportunity to connect with each other on a weekly basis. Fellows have been enjoying and taking advantage of the flexibility that surrounds these meaningful check-ins and have found the opportunity to connect to one other and discuss topics of their choosing, share much needed resources and simply embrace their network to be essential in facilitating community building which has been especially valuable during this time of the COVID19 pandemic and social unrest across the nation.

Based on data taken from an Alumni COVID-19 survey conducted in May of 2020 along with feedback from DRF's Alumni council, a more formal four-month Alumni Engagement curriculum was developed to further support the leadership/professional development journeys of the Alumni network.

In September 2020, Alumni Fellows engaged in their first virtual Professional Development workshop entitled “Courage to Connect” facilitated by digital wellness expert, Mark Ostach. The “Courage to Connect” workshop was attended by fellows from all four cohorts and provided the space for fellows to check-in and reconnect with the DRF Alumni community while gaining skills that support managing digital wellness during the age of COVID-19, combating zoom fatigue and effectively managing/communicating with virtual teams. The “Courage to Connect” workshop also provided Alumni fellows various resources and tools to help them re-engage/engage their networks courageously during this time of extreme uncertainty and instability.

In October 2020, Alumni Fellows engaged in their first virtual Leadership Development workshop on “Adaptive Leadership” facilitated by Jeff Lawrence. Once again, fellows from all four cohorts attended this meaningful workshop which provides a practical leadership framework that helps individuals and organizations adapt and thrive in challenging environments. October’s “Adaptive Leadership” training was the first of several workshops that will make up the Alumni “Adaptive Leadership” series which will focus on helping fellows build the skills, insight and will to lead, understand, live and thrive through change and in dynamic, even turbulent times.

As we all continue to navigate the implications posed by both the global and national pandemic, DRF staff will maintain a nimble programming curriculum that optimally meets the Alumni network’s ongoing leadership/professional development needs.

Ongoing collaboration/receptiveness towards the Alumni programming curriculum will be achieved through the partnership and ambassadorship of the Alumni Council which was convened virtually in April, July and most recently in September. The council will meet in November for its final 2020 convening.

Funding: The fellowship submitted a \$150k Alumni grant proposal to the Wilson Foundation and was successfully awarded respective funding, fully supporting the program’s 2020 Alumni programming budget. DRF staff, WSU Foundation Relations, and OED’s development team will submit funding proposals to the Kresge Foundation and the Ford Foundation in November to secure remaining funds for the 2021 - 2022 Alumni programming budget.

Partnerships: In February, DRF convened five local talent/leadership development programs/organizations to explore possible connections across our work. The group convened virtually each month from March throughout July and has served useful in thinking through the shifts talent/leadership programs/organizations need to consider as we all work to navigate the impacts of COVID-19 on our organizations and program participants. The group will reconvene in November 2020.

Raising DRF’s Profile: The Detroit Revitalization Fellows is now regarded as the longest-standing mid-career urban fellowship program in the country. The staff is regularly looked to for guidance from other organizations that are considering launching their own fellowship programs, and to share its expertise. Fellows are consistently being recognized for their contributions to the future of Detroit and the region, and being given increasingly influential professional opportunities. Recent examples include:

Cohort II Fellow, Allandra Bulger and Cohort IV Fellow, Madhavi Reddy were both selected to speak at Upswell’s 2020 Annual conference held in October 2020. Allandra and Madhavi collaborated with several other women of color, well-known within Detroit’s non-profit landscape, to lead a dynamic session entitled “Black and Brown Women Leading Differently through Unprecedented Times”. Cohort

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IV Fellow, Shaffwan Ahmed was featured in the book entitled “I.DETROIT – A HUMAN ATLAS OF AN AMERICAN CITY” serving as a research based exploration that maps out the stories of 100 Detroit change agents, leaders, and entrepreneurs. I. Detroit was featured by the Metro Times, Detroit Free Press, DBusiness and the local 4 news website, clickondetroit.com. Cohort IV Fellow, Nate Barnes was promoted to Associate Vice President at Invest Detroit, Cohort IV Fellow, Amy Rencher was promoted to Managing Director of Entrepreneurial Programs and Services for TechTown Detroit where she will direct TechTown’s nationally recognized suite of tech and small business programs, as well as coaching and entrepreneurial education initiatives and Cohort I Fellow, Jela Ellefson, was hired as a Project Manager/Michigan Central Station Development Urban Planner for Ford Land where she leads three strategies for Ford Land’s iconic Michigan Central Development project in the city’s Corktown neighborhood.

DRF’s program manager, Latina Black, was selected to speak at the 2020 Impact Fellowship Summit’s closing session where she discussed and shared her expertise on what it means to be adaptive as leaders of fellowship programs. DRF’s staff experience and expertise was also looked to by the City of South Bend’s leadership staff as they explore the possibility of a local urban fellowship for mid-career talent. DRF program manager, Latina Black, convened with the City of South Bend in October 2020 to share valuable insights and lesson learned for launching and managing successful fellowship programs.

Nonprofit Capacity-Building & Innovation

Co.act Detroit

Background: In December of 2017, TechTown Detroit was awarded a three-year grant from the Ralph C. Wilson, Jr. Foundation for \$4.75 million to launch the Center for Nonprofit Support at 6568 Woodward Avenue, just five blocks from the current TechTown building. Partners in the launch of the Center include the Michigan Nonprofit Association and Michigan Community Resources locally, as well as Community Wealth Partners nationally. Detroit’s nonprofit community is both diverse and expansive, addressing the myriad needs and opportunities across southeast Michigan with relevant and impactful programming. However, many of these nonprofit organizations struggle to sustain themselves and fight a constant uphill battle to keep their doors open and invest in their staffs’ long-term development. At the same time, countless opportunities for nonprofits in our region to collaborate, leverage efforts and deepen their impact go unrealized, either for lack of knowledge of one another’s work or lack of capacity to solidify connections. Through the establishment of Co.act Detroit (formerly known as the Nonprofit Center for Support), the Foundation, TechTown and our community partners will meet these challenges of our nonprofit sector head-on.

Brand Identity Development: Co.act Detroit contracted with Earlyworks LLC, a Detroit based strategy and insights firm, to develop an integrated launch and rollout strategy, develop brand assets and a positioning approach to tell the organizational story and develop a comprehensive communications plan. Co.act Detroit is currently implementing the communications plan and continuing to increase awareness about Co.act Detroit programming through local and national media platforms. Co.act Detroit recently presented at the annual Upswell conference and will appear on the Fundraising School podcast in November.

Staffing: Co.act Detroit recently hired a Digital Communications Manager to implement our comprehensive communication plan and continuing efforts to increase awareness of our services. This new position will start on December 1.

Programming: Co.act Detroit has pivoted all of our programming into the virtual space due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Our work to connect nonprofits to information and resources transcends the physical space and we continue to see an increase in the request for our services. Co.act Detroit received a \$1,975,000 grant from the Ralph C. Wilson, Jr. Foundation to support the creation of a Technical Assistance Fund (The Activate Fund) for nonprofits receiving services through Co.act Detroit. Co.act Detroit awarded \$1,400,000 in grants to support nonprofit capacity building. Grantees are currently implementing their projects and will complete grant requirements by March 31, 2021. Co.act Detroit continues to collaborate with other nonprofit intermediary organizations to provide COVID-19 relief. Since May, we have hosted webinars on the CARES Act, Reimagining the Nonprofit Workplace and Nonprofit Wellbeing. In November, Co.act will host our fifth corporate social responsibility conversation with a discussion centered on the nonprofit sector post-election. We have hosted more than 100 appointments through our Co.Lab Connect program, which connects nonprofits with subject matter experts for one-on-one coaching. In December, we will launch our nonprofit accelerator, which will afford 6-8 nonprofits the opportunity to explore viable earned revenue streams for their organization.

Fundraising Report

Economic Development Fundraising team actively pursues funding to support the place- and technology-based efforts of small business owners.

November 2020

The Office of Economic Development and TechTown have been actively pursuing funding in the three areas of focus—Business, Place and Talent—while adapting best practices to meet the specific needs of our community in this moment.

Business-Based Economic Development Fundraising

TechTown

Programs @ TechTown

Goals for 2020 were two-fold and included pursuing the traditional institutional funding sources (corporate, foundation and governmental sources) while deploying a communications strategy to acquire individual donors. The team formally requested funding from 28 institutional sources (eight more than in 2019) with a higher close rate (78%). Five requests are still pending and as many as three more will be made before year's end.

Our signature fundraiser, Toast of the Town, was held virtually on October 1 and met financial and donor acquisition goals. After expenses, we achieved slightly more than the goal of \$100,000, and acquired 161 individual donors, of which 106 are new. Many individuals attended the virtual event (182) but did not give, thereby creating a strong pipeline of prospects. In total, through Toast of the Town and Stabilization Fund efforts in the spring, TechTown has developed an entirely new individual donor base of 270 individuals in 2020.

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An end of year fundraising campaign to acquire 64 more individual donors will employ a mix of communications and programmatic strategies. Traditional broad communications via TechTown's email and social channels will be layered into a targeted, one-on-one approach. In collaboration with the Retail Services team, we will launch a limited-edition e-commerce store that features seven products from TechTown's clients and alumni, developed in collaboration and available for a limited time. Each sale will include a donation to TechTown and have the added benefit of promoting these local businesses during the holiday season.

Place-based + Talent-based Economic Development

The team is excited to submit an idea to the Bold Moves Campaign committee to detail a visionary use of the Industry Innovation Center (I2C) and surrounding innovation district. The participatory planning process completed in 2019 provides a strategy for anchoring the campus, neighborhood, industry and innovative communities in this special building.

After the Detroit Revitalization Fellows program's strategic assessment and launch of a targeted alumni strategy, legacy funders are being engaged in a conversation about supporting the on-going development of fellows.