

University Economic Impact

The Office of Economic Development (OED) released its [2022-2027 economic impact strategy](#) in April 2022. The strategy is inclusive of work happening across schools, colleges and divisions and is intended to guide the university's \$2.6 billion annual economic impact over the next five years. Over the past year, OED has been sharing the strategy with internal and external stakeholders, including city and state leadership and potential funders.

The strategy is organized around five high-level goals. Each goal is accompanied a set of objectives, sample strategies—things Wayne State has done or is doing to achieve these objectives, and key performance indicators (KPIs). OED recently compiled its first annual progress report, which will be featured in our May 2023 newsletter. Our [March newsletter](#) highlighted the work the university and TechTown do around entrepreneurship.

Our quarterly newsletter ([sign up here](#)) and the forthcoming impact dashboard on our website are two of the many ways OED is working to grow Wayne State's reputation as an economic driver—a goal of both the impact strategy and university strategic plan. Additionally, Emily Thompson, Director of Economic and Community Development, was recently named one of DBusiness Magazine's 30 in their 30s for her work on the strategy.

Place-Based Economic Development

Campus Re-Activation

University leadership would like to see the return of a vibrant Wayne State and Midtown over the next two years. OED – in partnership with the Provost – convened academic and administrative leaders to develop an activation plan with the overarching goal of making sure that Warriors who want to engage on campus have ample opportunities to do. In 2022-23, OED partnered with the Dean of Students Office, Facilities, Marketing and others to:

- Activate the front of the UGL with green Fermob bistro sets and Keast Commons with colorful Adirondack chairs.
- Curate a Today@Wayne feature called Open for Lunch! that highlights nearby businesses that offer discounts through Show Your One Card & Save.
- Arrange and promote a series of City Institute (formerly Detroit Experience Factory) tours of campus and Midtown.
- Participate in Noel Night with university activity concentrated in Woodward | Warren Park and Old Main.

We are in the planning stages for spring/summer 2023 and 2023-24, but anticipate executing a similar, but expanded suite of initiatives.

Industry Innovation Center (I2C)

OED and TechTown have been leading efforts to re-imagine and activate the Industry Innovation Center (I2C) since Wayne State purchased the building from NextEnergy in 2018.

In 2019, we engaged the Detroit Collaborative Design Center (DCDC) to facilitate a participatory design process to reimagine both the building and site. The resulting conceptual design seeks to better serve university and industry needs, and encourage collaboration between these groups, by upgrading existing building amenities and adding much-needed meeting space and an open kitchen. Suggested exterior improvements included new, more-inviting building entrances and outdoor spaces.

We initially shared the conceptual design in fall of 2019, just months before the Covid-19 pandemic began, and have re-revealing it to key stakeholders over the past year via conceptual design displays in I2C and high-profile events. We are also leading efforts to re-work the former NextEnergy office suite for the newly announced Office of the Business Engagement and Strategic Partnerships and have already started to work with Heidi Coates and her team on fundraising for the larger improvements.

Mobility

Wayne State continues to subsidize four-hour Dart and annual MoGo passes for all enrolled students, as well as full- and part-time employees, allowing them to ride DDOT and SMART buses, the QLINE streetcar, and MoGo bikes for free. In February, DDOT transitioned from using the Dart app powered by Passport to using the Token Transit app. OED partnered with Parking and Transportation Services to manage and communicate that transition to Warriors, who will continue to go to go.wayne.edu/waynerides-request to start the process of unlocking free Dart passes.

We are currently in the process of surveying Warriors who signed up for free Dart and MoGo passes during the 2022-23 school year. That survey will close in late April. Results will be shared with university leadership, including the Board, beginning in May.

Early Stage Business Support

Goldman Sachs 10,000 Small Businesses Program

The Goldman Sachs 10,000 Small Businesses Program continues normal operations. Cohort #26 is nearing completion with 29 scholars. We just completed our interviews for Cohort 27, with 32 scheduled interviews and 10 deferrals from the Cohort 26 interview cycle.

- **Cohort 26 (January – April 2023):** We started the cohort with 32 scholars, but had 3 drops during the first 2 weeks. We continued to deliver in person and will finish the cohort on April 7th with 29 scholars. On Friday March 24th we had our scholars pitch their 5-year financial projections to 12 reviewers from various banks and lending institutions.

- **Outreach & Recruitment:** We finished the recruiting cycle for Cohort #27, with the initial part 1 application total of 102 applicants, and 32 of those scheduled for interviews. As we continue to return to in-person events, we are building out our 2023 Calendar to include a mix of online information session, in-person events with our community college partners, and attendance at events sponsored by local and regional partners in the eco-system. Of note, we will be hosting the Leadership Learning Team from Macomb CC on June 22nd so that they can get a better understanding of the work we do and the entrepreneurial eco-system in Detroit.
- **Alumni Support:** We continue our alumni activity with a required alumni clinic on 3/31 – Driving Profitable Growth in Uncertain Times. We continue with our quarterly resource calls and several Alumni Ambassador led meeting schedule between now and June.
- **Program Support** – As anticipated Cohort 26 started with 30+ scholars and we will continue to have cohort of this size through 2023. We will finish our staff hiring with adding a full-time business advisor and are on the lookout for a lead faculty employed through Macomb Community College to start in September.

TechTown Programs

ENTREPRENEURIAL EDUCATION

Tech Town Strategy Sessions

Aspiring and existing entrepreneurs continue to seek the expertise of our internal strategists. We held 234 Tech Town Strategy Sessions during the period from January 1, 2023, to March 27, 2023.

Ask An Expert

The Ask an Expert program utilizes volunteers who are entrepreneurs and members of the Professional Service Network. Our experts provide free 25-minute consultations to aspiring and existing business owners in the areas of Accounting, Marketing, Public Relations, Technology, Law, and Business Operations. We recorded ninety-five (95) appointments during the period of January 3, and March 27, 2023.

We also conducted 40 follow-up calls to entrepreneurs and business owners who utilize the AAE service to ensure they receive the information they need.

Professional Services Network

The Professional Services Network provides subject matter experts who volunteer their services through the Ask an Expert program as well as conducting workshops for the Training Series. We are accepting new members. In February and March 24 subject matter experts were interviewed by EE department in Finance, Graphic Design and Website design, Project Management, Productivity, Insurance, Business Technology, Software Design, Finance, Business Development, E-commerce, Digital Marketing, IT and Software development, and Product Development.

Tech Town Training Series

Two online training sessions, “What every Boss should know about Accounting,” led by Lawrence Jackson with 34 views; and Growth + Mindset led by Myles Morgan, Life coach, for entrepreneurs to push through limiting beliefs and flourish with 17 views.

In observance of Black History Month, EE Department partnered with Technology-based programs and Capital to host the Detroit on the Move: Evolution of Black Mobility. The event had two panels with ecosystem partners and mobility entrepreneurs; a high school mobility pitch competition with 7 high school students who participated; vendors – electric bike company, a drone company, financial institutions, and Livegistics (TT alumnus); Marygrove Conservatory Robotics Team; and a fireside chat with Dr. Donna Bell of Lordstown Motors.

87 attendees with a special video produced by the Automotive Hall of Fame with African American contributions to mobility from the 20th century to the present.

Held a small business exporting workshop with U.S. Commercial Service, MEDC, and SBA with 19 attendees.

Building Business Podcast

A series of interviews to provide Business Builders with insight from entrepreneurs, business service professionals, and industry leaders. Episode downloads totaled forty-seven (47) of the interviews we recorded during this review period. Our guests included the following:

- Marlo Rencher, Ph.D., Mobility and Black History
- Rainesha Williams-Fox, MAIN (Mobility Accelerator and Innovation Network)

TechTown Alumni Newsletter

We send one out regularly with current news about resources and opportunities for TechTown Program Graduates. If you’ve read this far, send me a note at ned@techtowndetroit.org and **you will win** a prize.

SMALL BUSINESS SERVICES

313 Strong

As previously shared, 313 Strong continues leading small business support work in the local ecosystem. Two things are exciting and worth sharing: 1) We are returning to being more active in the ecosystem as small business community-wide meetings in collaboration with our partners become more normal again. This has supported our reaching more owners where they are and creating more opportunities to introduce them to our suite of services; exciting news for our entire team of 313 Strong Strategists as well as the organization at large. 2) Though not marketing our services to Wayne County there is an ask for our services. Mayte Penmen, our bilingual Strategist is seeing an increase in referrals from western Wayne County communities. This is attributed to the quality of service and expanding Mexican community in Lincoln Park which she describes as “Little Mexican Town”. What is great about this is the expressed interest of our funding funders to increase support of business owners in expanded geographies particularly western Wayne County. We have an advantage having already begin to do so via organic relationships.

Retail Services

The Spring Retail Boot Camp cohort (Cohort 14) is underway. We saw 50 business owner complete

applications which resulted in a strong cohort totaling fifteen. One highlight being that one particularly strong business/owner (Halie & Co./Halie Conyers) elected to participate in RBC 14 after having an opportunity to benefit from RBC style services via our support of Bedrock's Winter Market. In that collaboration we supported 18 total businesses. This pilot demonstration has resulted in conversations around how additional support can be afforded.

2023 has been an interesting year as it relates to The SHOP. Despite scheduling The SHOP activations for each of the first three months of the year, March will be the first executed due to weather related cancelations. Nonetheless we've observed that interest and participation have been increasing as confirmed participants has moved from five, to seven, to nine.

Our new Fisher Building small business pop-up shop opportunities are exceeding expectations. Highlights include businesses like ComodiTeas seeking opportunities to extend participation. This has resulted in discussions with The Platform (newly minted primary owner) to fill additional underutilized larger spaces within the building in need of viable businesses with our help. Success with this and demonstrated small business support efforts ie merchandising and photoshoot assistance by Christina Devlin and Carrie Vestrand has expanded/increased our influence as subject matter experts (SMEs). The result being creating opportunities for additional collaborations with The Platform connected to improving the marketing and activation of all Fisher Building retail spaces and elsewhere.

Hatch Detroit

The 2023 Comerica Hatch Detroit Contest by TechTown launched in January. We received more than 300 applications with 150 were completed and submitted. The Comerica Hatch Detroit Contest by TechTown is a retail competition that gives savvy entrepreneurs the chance to win a cash grant and package of in-kind services to open up their brick-and-mortar storefront in Detroit, Hamtramck or Highland Park.

After a rigorous selection process, the Top 10 semifinalists of the 2023 Comerica Hatch Detroit Contest by TechTown will be announced on Tuesday evening, April 4 at TechTown. These finalists represent a mixture of food, services, and retail business plans and current pop-up operations. During this round, the ten businesses will campaign to garner the most public votes to move on to pitch for the grand prize.

On April 26, is the final Hatch Off where the final four finalists of the 2023 Comerica Hatch Detroit Contest go head-to-head to compete for a cash grant to open up their brick-and-mortar retail business in the city. The finalists will make one last pitch, "Shark Tank-style," in front of a panel of judges and attendees. Thanks to the support of Comerica Bank, one winning business will be awarded \$100,000! We'll make a dream come true, and you'll have a front-row seat.

TECH-BASED PROGRAMS

Capital

TechTown committed \$133,000 to nine founders thus far in 2023 through Tech Startup Fund grants supported by the Gilbert Family Foundation.

The TechTown Catalyst Angel Program, funded by the US Economic Development Administration, has now recruited 90 emerging angel investors. Most of the participants have completed the training through the Angel Capital Association's Angel University. The program participants are beginning to engage in local and national angel investing communities. The goal is to recruit, train, and engage 200 emerging angel investors by September 30, 2024.

TechTown hosted a pitch competition for the BBCetc MI-CAN program. MI-CAN is designed to help traditionally underserved business owners and entrepreneurs prepare their technology for SBIR/STTR funding. This program is funded by the Small Business Administration (SBA).

Tech programs

Start Studio MVP – Winter cohort ran from January 17 – February 22, 2023 with eight participants. Cohort participants worked with developers to build a working prototype for their business

- Traction - Currently there are 8 participants in our Traction program. Traction runs on a rolling basis and applicants are accepted as capacity allows. Traction focusses on the revenue generating MVP and go-to—market strategy.
- Start Studio Discovery – Spring cohort kicks off on March 29 with 20 accepted participants. The goal of this studio is to take a raw idea for a startup and, through rigorous customer discovery, develop a fully-supportable Unique Value Proposition (UVP).
- Scale Studio – A pilot endeavor in partnership with the Gilbert Family Foundation. Scale Studio focuses on helping participants to document and convert their intellectual property into monetized education or infotainment-based content. A small pilot will launch this spring.
- In addition to our programs, our EIR's and tech staff have held 163 one on one meetings with our clients to better serve their needs.

Black History Month

In February, multiple TechTown programs collaborated to hold a day-long conference celebrating the evolution of black mobility, "Detroit on the Move." Tech programs supported this event by creating the concept, supporting a student pitch competition, building relationships with key stakeholders and outreach efforts. Additionally, our team was on the scene, day of the event to meet stakeholders and provide hands-on support for the day's event.

BAM

In February, Tech leadership traveled to San Francisco to participated in 500 Global's Bootcamp for Accelerator Managers (BAM). This is a global program that focusses on founder program's best practices, insights from global leaders, key performance indicators, operational excellence. The 5-day

program brought 16 organizations from around the globe to participate in workshops, thought leadership, shared experiences, brainstorming sessions, lessons learned and hub tours. The cohort was given front door access to some of the leading community builders, founders, and funders.

TechTown Operations

Coworking/Office Space

Immediately following the announcement of WeWork closing its Midtown location at 6001 Cass, TechTown reached out to The Platform (the building owner for 6001 Cass) to establish a short-term arrangement whereby TechTown would manage the remaining coworking and office tenant community for a fee. That arrangement has been extended through June, and we are currently in discussions with The Platform to determine what a more permanent agreement could entail.

Office space occupancy at TechTown is at 100% (representing an increase from the most recent report to the WSU Board of Governors).

We currently have 902 members (a 3% increase from the previous report). The total member number includes both tenants and coworking space users. It's worth noting that we averaged 9 new memberships sold/month throughout 2022 and have more than doubled that monthly average in 2023 (20 new memberships sold/month), thanks in large part to the efforts of our Membership Manager, Erica Overstreet. Our monthly building visitor count is averaging 7,592/month in 2023 (a slight decrease from our 2022 monthly average).

Bookings at both TechTown and the Industry Innovation Center totaled 817 for January-March 2023:

		<u>Jan</u>	<u>Feb</u>	<u>Mar</u>	<u>TOTAL</u>
# Events hosted at TT	Number of room bookings in TT meeting rooms and event spaces	227	277	231	735
# Events hosted at I2C	Number of room bookings in I2C meeting rooms and event spaces	27	24	31	82
Total Events Booked/Managed by TT	Number of room bookings in TT + I2C meetings rooms and event spaces	254	301	262	817

TechTown's Covid protocols were updated in September to no longer require masking inside the building. Our policies continue to be informed by specific data points (citywide and county-wide case numbers, hospitalization numbers, and number of Covid-related deaths), which we will continue to monitor.

Org-wide Culture Audit

The TechTown team (including Co.act) and the WSU Office of Economic Development team participate in a culture audit survey every two years to inform org-wide culture goals and surface areas of organizational culture that are strong and those that require improvement.

The 2023 audit survey was distributed on Feb. 7, and anonymous responses were compiled throughout the month. Questions addressed six categories:

- **Collective Leadership** (10 questions)
- **Culture + Staff Communications** (10 questions)
- **Your Role Within This Organization** (11 questions)
- **Your Relationship With Your Immediate Supervisor** (10 questions)
- **Training, Development, Time + Resources** (9 questions)
- **Overall Employee Experience** (10 questions)

Based on the culture goals and action plan that resulted from the 2021 Culture Audit, we hope to see improvement in four specific rating areas (see below). 2023 survey results will be presented to executive staff March 29 and to the full team April 17.

- *Improve "I understand the long-term strategy of this organization" from 62% to 80%.*
- *Reduce the percentage of employees who feel burned out from work by 10%.*
- *Improve overall rankings of Training, Development, Time + Resources category from 62% to 80%.*
- *Improve overall rankings of Culture and Staff Communications category from 70% to 80%.*

Talent-based Economic Development

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.

Evolution:

After leading the charge for driving mid-career talent in the city of Detroit for eight years (4 cohorts) and acknowledging the changes occurring across the city since 2011, the program embarked on a strategic assessment resulting in DRF's 2020 - 2024 five-year Strategic Plan. As part of the 2020 - 2024 Five-Year Strategic Plan and in the wake of COVID-19 and the widening of social and racial inequities in our country, DRF has evolved to make a deliberate shift towards disrupting the current leadership culture that exists in the City of Detroit through the proposal of the DRF 2023 Hybrid Program Model.

DRF 2023 Hybrid Program Model:

The Detroit Revitalization Fellows (DRF) is committed to actively addressing talent-pipeline needs in the city and expanding the impact and network of diverse leaders who drive positive systemic change within Detroit's civic, community, and economic development landscape. DRF staff has worked to develop a 2023

Hybrid Program Model which is designed to facilitate greater access to leadership for Community & Resident Leaders and capacity-building resources for neighborhood-based organizations in Detroit while enhancing our support of DRF Alumni.

Community & Resident Leader Pipeline (18mo. Pilot)

DRF's proposed Community/Resident Leader Pilot is designed to facilitate greater access to leadership for Community & Resident Leaders and capacity-building resources for neighborhood-based organizations. The Community/Resident Leader Pilot will maintain core components of DRF's traditional mid-career talent model but will also seek to build neighborhood capacity and create a talent/leadership pipeline that doesn't currently exist for this specific demographic.

In 2023, DRF will launch an 18-month fellowship pilot poised for grassroots resident leaders who have, for years, demonstrated leadership in their neighborhood and community (no degree requirement). The DRF Community & Resident Leader (C&RL) pipeline will connect community and resident leaders to an ecosystem focused on equitable and sustainable access to leadership and neighborhood-based revitalization in Detroit.

Enhanced Alumni Engagement

DRF will continue to support its current network of 79 Alumni Fellows, three-fourths of which live and work in the Detroit Region, through the Enhanced Alumni Engagement Model. Fellows will have continued access to executive coaching, training stipends, monthly leadership and professional development, and a network that fosters collaboration and continuously promotes diversity, equity, and inclusion. DRF Alumni will directly engage community through peer mentorship and integrated monthly programming over the 18-month C&RL pilot.

And, to honor the implications posed by COVID-19, the DRF program continues to offer virtual alumni programming that is informed by Alumni surveys and feedback from DRF's Alumni council.

Based on the 2022 – 2023 Alumni Needs Assessment (conducted October – November 2022), Alumni engagement will continue to be facilitated virtually Q1 – Q2 2023 but now alongside in-person cohort building/social activities.

In June/August of 2022 DRF Staff began the design and installation of a virtual Community Engagement & Networking Platform for the Alumni Network. This virtual platform will foster and facilitate increased engagement in various areas as programming, peer networking, cross-collaboration, cohort building and program to end user visibility. The fellowship program has partnered with Higher Logic to power the online platform and is on scheduled to launch the platform for full use by the end of Q1 2023.

Funding:

DRF Staff, WSU Foundation Relations, and OED's development team submitted concept plans for the 2023 DRF Hybrid Program Model to the Gilbert Family Foundation, the Ballmer Group, and the Kresge, Ford and Ralph C. Wilson Foundations (legacy and new funders) as early as March of 2022. DRF and its fundraising team engaged all five funders at the DRF 2022 Funders Roundtable (October 2022) and has, most recently, submitted 4 major program deliverables ranging from DRF's 2023 Alumni Economic Impact Report to the DRF Employer Call for Interest which kicks-off the C&RL employer process.

Overall, DRF is confident it has identified about 80% of the budget will be supported by legacy and other new funders and is expecting to receive invitations to submit grant proposals as early as Feb – March of 2023.

Partnerships: Since 2020, DRF has convened five local talent/leadership development programs/organizations to explore possible connections across our work. The Detroit Talent/Leadership Group continues to convene virtually and has served useful in thinking through the shifts talent/leadership programs/organizations need to consider as we all work to navigate various impacts on our organizations and program participants. The group will convene for its first meeting of 2023 in early April.

DRF is partnering with WSU's Department of Urban Studies and Planning as well as the University's Office of Executive and Professional Development to develop a credentialed certificate in community development for individuals who complete the Community/Resident Leader Pilot Fellowship. Planning for the pilot certificate curriculum will continue throughout 2023 to ensure program goals and priorities are reached. As of January 2023, department leadership from the University of Detroit Mercy's Master in Community Development program has provided support around the development of the credentialed certificate in community development and is now in talks regarding a formal cross-institutional collaboration between UDM and WSU.

Partnership conversations with Community Development Advocates of Detroit (CDAD) around program recruitment and structure are ongoing. DRF has also connected with Eastside Community Network, Building the Engine of Community Development, Enterprise Community Partners to support the ongoing development of the C&RL Pilot. DRF continues to work towards landing solid partnerships with the City of Detroit, Mayor's Office and/or Department of Neighborhoods.

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:

In March of 2023, Cohort IV Fellow Madhavi Reddy accepted the position of professors of practice in urban and regional planning with a Detroit Planning focus at the University of Michigan's Taubman College of Architecture and Urban Planning. In this role, Madhavi will serve a nine-month untenured appointment for a five-year term. Madhavi will teach two courses per year (one per semester, including one capstone project) and will be actively engaged in the ongoing intellectual development and administrative governance of the Urban and Regional Planning program. Madhavi will also be responsible for engaging professional practice outside of the University of Michigan in Detroit-based community development.

Cohort III Fellow, Kalisha Davis, was featured in Crain's Detroit Business' "Detroiters on why they decide to stay — or want to leave" article. In the article, Kalisha credits the DRF program with providing an "appealing opportunity to connect, build relationships and be reintroduced to the city as a working professional."

In March of 2023, Ford Motor Company's Michigan Central Station sought out the expertise of DRF staff as a potential partner for the design of a new Mobility Talent Fellowship. Also, in March of 2023, the Obama Foundation's Change Collective leaned on the expertise of DRF staff to support recruitment efforts for their upcoming Detroit Cohort.