

### Take a balanced approach to business attraction and support.

Economic growth strategies must not be limited to any one sector of the economy, but must build from local economic capacity wherever it is found: in large corporations, small and medium-sized companies, start-ups, entrepreneurs, and businesses owned by people of color, women, immigrants, and people with disabilities.

### Ease the path to development.

All levels of government must simplify and expedite their processes, programs and regulations in order to ease the path to investment and employment.

### Adopt a customer-oriented approach.

Just as businesses must attract and communicate with customers, City government must view current and future businesses and residents as customers, understanding that the city is in competition with other municipalities and regions.



## CHAPTER 6

# Entrepreneurship & Innovation

### 6.1 Introduction

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Private and nonprofit sector businesses are the foundation of Milwaukee's economy. Such employers provide the city and region with jobs, goods and services, identity, and support for the area's quality of life. Many have deep roots in the neighborhoods in which they are located.

Job growth in most communities comes predominantly from the expansion of existing firms rather than the attraction of new companies. Supporting the development of local companies that innovate, create and commercialize new products, services and business practices is critical to local economic growth. Also important are the formation and nurturing of businesses that deliver goods and services to underserved areas, or do so more effectively than existing entities.

This chapter discusses strategies to support the creation of new businesses and the growth of existing firms in order to employ local workers, provide a broad range of goods and services and position the regional economy for growth.

### 6.2 Current Conditions

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Major Milwaukee companies like MillerCoors, Harley-Davidson, Falk Corporation, Northwestern Mutual, A.O. Smith, Manpower, Sensient Technologies and Johnson Controls are central to the city's history and identity. They also illustrate the importance of nurturing small companies. Each of these firms began as a start-up founded by one or more entrepreneurs whose ideas, skills, savvy and willingness to take risks were the foundation for

decades of business success. While most start-ups do not have the staying power of these trademark firms, start-ups and small businesses are critical to a dynamic Milwaukee economy.

A 2010 U.S. Small Business Administration evaluation of small business trends over the past 20 years found that around 95% of new firms started with fewer than 20 employees.<sup>1</sup> In fact, small employers have led job creation as the U.S. has recovered jobs lost in the 2008 recession. ADP Payroll Services publishes monthly reports on the hiring practices of 411,000 companies nationwide. A recent ADP National Employment Report found that small firms (those with fewer than 50 employees) have been responsible for creating 41% of all jobs created since January 2005, and medium firms (50 to 499 employees) have created 36% of jobs. Less than one-quarter of new jobs have been created by large firms (more than 500 employees).<sup>2</sup>

Consistent with national trends, about half of the people working in metro Milwaukee are employed by companies defined as small and medium by ADP. Locally, nearly two-thirds of all employers have fewer than 20 people on the payroll. One-third of the state's companies of this size are located in metro Milwaukee.<sup>3</sup>

The health of small companies may be particularly important for reducing employment disparities in the City of Milwaukee. A U.S. Small Business Administration review of research found that small and medium-sized firms with fewer than 500

employees are especially effective at providing opportunities for underserved segments of the population. For example, such firms “employ higher shares of Hispanics than large firms (65.9 percent of Hispanics work for firms with fewer than 500 employees). And compared with large firms, small firms also employ higher shares of individuals with low educational attainment—a high school degree or less (63.2 percent); high school-aged workers (63.8 percent); individuals 65 or older (64.6 percent); disabled workers (59.4 percent); and rural workers (64.3 percent).”<sup>4</sup>

**Replicative Businesses**

Start-ups and small businesses can be categorized in a variety of ways. “Replicative” businesses, for example, are those that provide goods and services to the local population. There is great local interest in forming such companies. According to the Wisconsin Women’s Business Initiative Corporation (WWBIC), nearly 70% of businesses the organization counsels are start-ups of this type.<sup>5</sup> Even though they are not likely to be major job creators, these ventures—bakeries, grocery stores, gas stations, yoga studios, contracting and accounting firms, desktop publishers, law offices,



Taylor Dynamometer is a local company that has resulted from innovative entrepreneurship.  
(Source: Department of City Development / Planning)

**Figure 6.1: Minority and Women Owned Businesses in Milwaukee County and Statewide**

Owner Type	Milwaukee County	Statewide
Total Firms	58,182	433,797
African American Owned	13.2%	2.6%
Hispanic or Latino Owned	3.2%	1.3%
Other Minority Owned	4.2%	2.2%
Women Owned	33.0%	25.9%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2007 Economic Census

and others—are critical to the functioning of the larger business community and the city’s quality of life.

Increasingly, small business formation represents new sources of economic opportunity for the nation’s growing minority population. While businesses owned by white individuals grew by 81% during the period from 1982 to 2007, companies owned by African Americans jumped nearly 523%, Asian American businesses increased by 545%, and Hispanic American firms increased by a remarkable 696%. In fact, one in five small businesses in the U.S. is now minority-owned, and nearly 30% are owned by immigrants. Women-owned businesses comprise 30% of all companies, and women are creating companies at a rate that is 50% higher than the overall business formation rate.<sup>6</sup> As Figure 6.1 shows, minorities and women make up a larger proportion of business owners locally than they do in the state as a whole.

Minority-owned, replicative businesses can play an especially important role in providing employment opportunities and needed goods and services in low-income neighborhoods. According to Gazelle Index, Latino-owned businesses tend to locate in neighborhoods in which 37% of the population is Latino, while African American-owned businesses locate in areas that are 44% African American. Two-thirds of the employees of African American-owned businesses are also African American.<sup>7</sup>

Successful policies to ensure the formation and sustainability of replicative companies must concentrate on providing them access to credit

and technical assistance resources, and reforming business regulations. Indeed, the role of regulation was underscored by a 2013 survey of 8,000 small business owners which found that the cost, time and complexity of obtaining licenses and permits was the most important factor in rating a community's overall business friendliness. In that survey, the State of Wisconsin received an overall business friendliness ranking of B, while Milwaukee received a C+. Milwaukee's highest grade—an A-—was for "ease of starting a small business." Its lowest grades were for "friendliness of environmental regulations" and "training and networking opportunities" (both C-). The city's overall regulatory friendliness was a C.<sup>8</sup>

However, equally important to a healthy and thriving business climate is tailoring business support services and programs to align with opportunities grounded in Milwaukee's local economy. Regulatory reforms and improving business friendliness are no doubt essential, but so too are finding ways to help businesses develop new connection points within industries and sectors, research and development, and strengthening the local business ecosystem overall.

### ***Innovative Entrepreneurs***

"Innovative" entrepreneurs successfully capitalize on ideas for new products, services and business practices. So-called "gazelle" companies—innovators that have grown on average more than 20% for at least four years—are the biggest job creators in the U.S.<sup>9</sup>

Experience and existing data suggest that in fact, a very small number of high growth ventures may generate almost all of the social and economic benefits of entrepreneurship in a region, according to Daniel Isenberg of the Babson Entrepreneurship Ecosystem Project. "One venture which grows to 100 people in five years is probably more beneficial (to entrepreneurs, shareholders, employees and governments alike) than 50 which stagnate at two [employees each]. Just two or three unusually scaling ventures can have an utterly disproportionate impact on dozens of successors, and impact the entrepreneurship culture in a region."<sup>10</sup>



### ***Learning from Others*** ***KIVA Cities & Micro-Lending***

KIVA is a non-profit organization that provides micro-lending to entrepreneurs and small businesses by using crowdfunding techniques via the Internet to solicit money from individuals to fund 0% interest business loans around the world. KIVA has recently established domestic partnerships with several U.S. cities and features entrepreneurs from these "KIVA Cities" on its website. KIVA encourages individuals to make loans directly to these businesses. Local trustees vet the borrowers and their evaluations are provided on the KIVA website. KIVA serves as the intermediary to distribute loan proceeds to borrowers and repayment to those who provided funds.

The KIVA Cities partnerships raise the profile of local entrepreneurs and small businesses, create a new source of capital to firms featured on its website, and provide local residents with an easy means to invest in local businesses. KIVA Cities operates in Newark, New Jersey, Washington, D.C., Little Rock, Arkansas, Los Angeles, Detroit, New Orleans, Philadelphia, and Pittsburgh.<sup>11</sup>

In June 2014, City officials met with the Wisconsin Women's Business Initiative Corporation, local stakeholders, and representatives of KIVA to kick off discussions on how Milwaukee could become the next KIVA city. The meeting resulted in a number of solid commitments from local stakeholders and KIVA and shared enthusiasm for the next steps in the process.

Additionally, innovative entrepreneurs are more likely to succeed in the presence of other innovators because clustering provides synergy, a knowledge and talent base, and an efficient means of transferring information.<sup>12</sup> To support these ventures, strategies must encourage the availability of early stage capital in high growth sectors, protect intellectual property, ease technology commercialization, and stay in front of new regulations.<sup>13</sup> The support of entrepreneurship connected to key asset clusters

and other driver industries will need to take a more targeted approach than the general support provided for small business development. In much the same way that industry consultants assist board members and CEOs in developing growth strategies and management efficiencies, experienced entrepreneurs can assist start-ups in navigating the path to business success.

### ***The Immigrant Advantage***

A 2012 study found that immigrants contribute significantly to business activity, with immigrant-owned businesses employing 10% of all private sector workers in the U.S.<sup>14</sup> The U.S. Chamber of Commerce notes that “even in the midst of the recession, newcomers continued to form businesses at a record rate, while the number of businesses founded by native-born immigrants declined.”<sup>15</sup> There may be a range of reasons why immigrants establish businesses in higher numbers than native-born Americans, from language barriers, to a desire to serve their community. Regardless of the motivation, supporting immigrants in their business pursuits can benefit the larger community and city as whole.

### ***The Artist As Entrepreneur***

A 2013 study by the Ewing Marion Kauffman Foundation focused on entrepreneurship within the artist community. Local artists who produce and sell work or perform outside the community are exporters whose creative activities bring new money to the local economy. The study cited, as an example, “Prairie Home Companion,” a public radio program based in St. Paul, Minnesota, that supports “dozens of jobs and income.”

The study noted that artists are 3.5 times more likely than the typical American worker to be self-employed. As self-employed individuals, artists may lack adequate workspace, opportunities for business and professional training, marketing savvy, and networking opportunities. However, because they are less likely to be tied to an employer, artists are more likely to choose where they want to live and work based on quality of life factors. Cities that nurture and support their artist communities have seen those investments returned many-fold in business development,

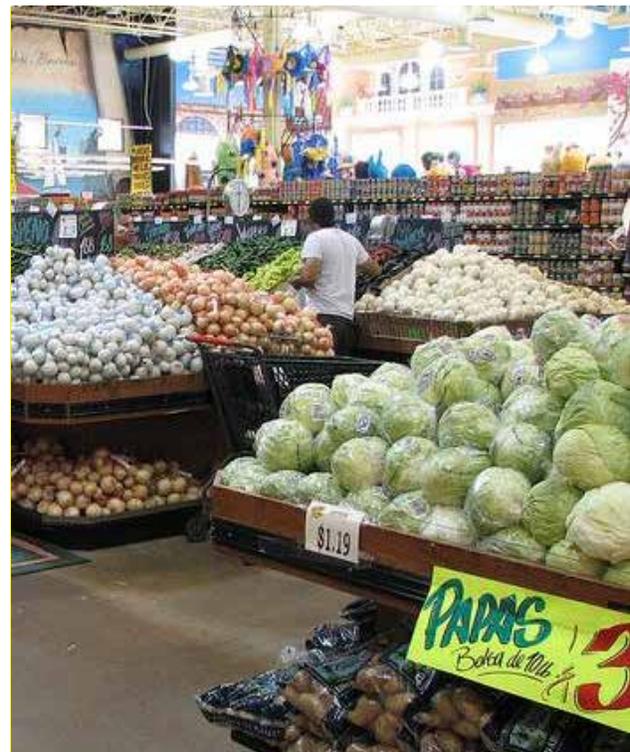
improved quality of life, creative placemaking, and increased national stature.<sup>16</sup>

The Greater Milwaukee Committee, Creative Alliance Milwaukee, and the Mandel Group recently hosted a creative place-making forum to examine all the ways that art transforms cities, adds value to communities, improves quality of life, and leads to richer public places. The objective was to inform as well as “knock down the silos” or foster communication among all the groups needed to make that transformation happen: artists, developers, engineers, elected officials, civic-minded groups that fund the arts, and neighborhoods.

## **6.3 Building on Strengths**

### ***Replicative & Innovative Businesses***

Replicative and innovative businesses both contribute to economic growth, but must be supported differently. Replicative businesses repeat a tried-and-true formula of delivering a product or service and grow along with the population, or open new outlets as the population expands. Innovative businesses make a fundamental im-



*El Rey Supermarket, an example of a successful replicative business. (Source: Milwaukee Neighborhood News Service)*

provement to a product or productivity, leading to wealth creation and generally a higher standard of living in the region.

According to Arizona State University's business school researchers at Know Economics, replicative entrepreneurs flourish wherever there is economic growth. Innovative entrepreneurship, on the other hand, is much harder to develop and sustain. It tends to flourish in places near major research universities and in places where there is a critical mass of innovative businesses at all levels of development. The reasons are complex, but economic growth does not lead *ipso facto* to increases in innovative entrepreneurship.

### **Supporting Replicative Businesses**

Replicative type businesses identify access to credit and technical assistance resources as vital to their success. Milwaukee has a broad spectrum of organizations tackling these needs. The Federal Reserve Bank of Kansas City has summarized many of the elements needed to support business start-ups and small businesses. A localized version of this framework is presented in Appendix C. Some of the key organizations are described below.

The **Wisconsin Women's Business Initiative Corporation** (WWBIC) is a Milwaukee micro-credit and business assistance organization that has gained a national reputation for its success in mentoring and financing the establishment of small firms. Founded in 1987, WWBIC focuses its efforts on businesses run by women, low-income individuals and people of color. The 3,500 businesses supported by WWBIC have benefited from nearly \$35 million in business loans, an extensive array of classes, individual coaching, money management assistance, and events that showcase their products and services.

**Local First Milwaukee** is a network of 200 companies that promotes business-to-business relationships among Milwaukee firms. Local First's "Shift Your Spending" campaign highlights opportunities to purchase goods and services locally, in order to support small companies here and keep more business spending in the local economy. Local First is planning Move Your Money, Eat Local, and Shop Local initiatives in 2014.



### **Local Success Fund Milwaukee**

To implement their vision of connecting small investors with socially conscious entrepreneurs in Milwaukee, the citizens who have joined Fund Milwaukee make direct investments in local small businesses.

Companies seeking financing are invited to present information about their ventures to Fund Milwaukee members; members decide on their own whether to invest. Collectively, Fund Milwaukee members have invested more than \$1 million in local firms that are "dedicated to improving the well-being of society and the environment in Milwaukee."

The majority of companies benefiting from these investments are part of the regional food and beverage cluster. According to Fund Milwaukee's mission statement, each investor-business relationship is a "partnership in which we collaborate as investors and business owners to solve social problems."<sup>17</sup>

The **Milwaukee Economic Development Corporation** (MEDC) is a City-sponsored community development financial institution that works in partnership with local banks to finance the growth of local small businesses. MEDC provides below-market interest rates, and has established products that provide lenders with a way to fund projects that would be considered too risky for conventional loans without MEDC participation. Since its founding in 1971, MEDC has participated in projects generating more than \$1 billion of business investment. All loan programs have a special focus on assisting minority- and women-owned businesses.

The **Hispanic Chamber of Commerce of Wisconsin** creates, expands and diversifies small and Hispanic-owned businesses in Wisconsin with a strong focus in the Milwaukee area. It offers step-by-step technical assistance to Latino entrepreneurs, helping them to design business plans, plan for business growth, and obtain required licenses and permits.



**Local Success**  
**Shared Work Spaces**

Because innovation often occurs as a result of collaboration, both for-profit and nonprofit entities are developing shared work spaces that draw people from a variety of disciplines. A 2012 inventory compiled by Creative Alliance Milwaukee in collaboration with MiKE: Innovation in Milwaukee, identified 14 “creative collaborative spaces” occupying 110,000 SF of real estate within Milwaukee.

According to the report, these shared spaces were typically created as a strategy to use vacant space, and have high occupancy rates and low rents. Facilities described in the report ranged in size from 300 SF to 27,000 SF, and offer both individual workspaces and shared facilities. In some cases, the shared spaces also provide tenants or members access to equipment and software. Large buildings formerly used for industrial purposes in the Historic Third Ward and Walker’s Point neighborhoods are popular locations for these types of work environments.<sup>18</sup>

The **Multicultural Entrepreneurial Institute** provides training and networking events geared to Latino and urban business people leading to a Bilingual Entrepreneurial Certificate. More experienced business owners can pursue an Advanced Entrepreneurial Certificate which emphasizes relationship development and retention; financing business growth; human resources management; and risk management.

The **African American Chamber of Commerce** focuses its small business assistance in five areas. The Entrepreneurship Pipeline Program provides incubator space and mentoring; the Women in Business Series facilitates networking among female entrepreneurs and community leaders; the Revolving Loan Fund makes business loans of up to \$25,000; the Certified Professional Grade Program connects small contractors with business opportunities from churches, private residents, and commercial and public works projects; and Business Briefings provides education for business sustainability.

*The Milwaukee Artist Resource Network offers opportunities for local artists to network, present their work, and find job opportunities (Source: Milwaukee Artist Resource Network)*

The **Milwaukee Artists Resource Network (MARN)** is a membership organization devoted to supporting local artists. Its website connects hundreds of local professional artists, from animators to ‘zine writers, with those who seek their services. MARN also sponsors programs that support the ability of artists to earn a living, ranging from exhibition opportunities to workshops on intellectual property rights.

Several creative local initiatives were aimed at promoting business start-ups in 2013. Layton Boulevard West Neighbors, Impact Seven Inc., the Multicultural Entrepreneurial Institute, WWBIC and the Silver City Business District conducted a business plan contest, offering the winner \$5,000 for start-up costs, free rent for renovated storefront space, and technical assistance. Revolution Labs, a program developed by the Wisconsin Economic Development Corporation, Wisconsin Housing and Economic Development Authority and

Wisconsin Department of Children and Families, selected five central city entrepreneurs for a 12-week training course in lean start-up methods. Following completion of the program, each business received \$10,000 in cash.

### **Supporting Innovative Entrepreneurship**

Despite its long history of manufacturing innovation, Milwaukee has lagged in measures of innovative entrepreneurship in recent years. Recent studies of entrepreneurial activity have consistently given Milwaukee and Wisconsin low marks on metrics such as business formation, venture capital investment, and innovation. The community has responded with renewed attention to strategies that support both innovation-based start-ups with high employment potential and entrepreneurs whose ventures, while small, deliver critical goods and services. Among the highest-profile of these strategies:

**BizStarts Milwaukee** is a nonprofit organization that inspires, nurtures, connects and celebrates entrepreneurs and their companies, with a particular emphasis on fast-growing firms. BizStarts sponsors networking events and mentoring, and works with institutions of higher education to improve entrepreneurship education and experiences.

The **Global Water Center** is a 93,000 square-foot incubator for water technology firms. The building, opened in September 2013, hosts both start-ups and established water technology companies, as well as research and development activities under the direction of the UW-Milwaukee School of Freshwater Sciences. The Center includes a state-of-the-art water flow lab to support cutting-edge water research and product development. The adjacent Reed Street Yards business park, currently under development, is designed to provide space for water technology businesses to grow. The Global Water Center and business park firmly position Milwaukee as a site for innovative entrepreneurship spurred by one of the region's and nation's most critical industry clusters.

**Scale Up Milwaukee** is a multi-year project that focuses on nurturing existing small firms with high potential for growth. Based on a model developed



### **Learning from Others** **The Idea Village**

The Idea Village, a nonprofit entrepreneurial support organization in New Orleans, was founded in 2000 to identify, support and retain entrepreneurial talent. A group of CEOs, entrepreneurs, business people, and university leaders guides the organization and has secured resources from federal agencies, national philanthropic organizations and corporations. Idea Village programs include mentorship; an entrepreneurship education program called IDEAInstitute; and IDEACorps, an organization similar to the Peace Corps that provides service learning activities related to entrepreneurship and the promotion of New Orleans locally and globally.

Idea Village has developed the New Orleans Entrepreneur Week (NOEW) as a showcase for the New Orleans entrepreneurial ecosystem. The schedule for the week includes several dozen free seminars, workshops, speeches and social events ranging from one-on-one entrepreneurship counseling sessions, to specialized workshops on legal and marketing practices, to a multitude of valuable networking opportunities. Multiple competitions for venture, angel and seed funding are also held during NOEW. The event attracts several thousand entrepreneurs, investors, and college students each year.<sup>20</sup>

by Daniel Isenberg of the Babson Entrepreneurship Ecosystem Project at Babson College, the initiative provides technical assistance to “big businesses that happen to be small right now.”<sup>19</sup> Companies selected to participate in Scale Up attend a series of intensive seminars to identify specific actions that will increase their sales. The project also operates workshops aimed at improving the local infrastructure that supports high-potential companies. Likely candidates or “targets” for these activities include business professors, investors, and those in business support professions such as accountants and attorneys.

The **Northwest Side Community Development Corp.** and City of Milwaukee are working with the Midwest Energy Research Consortium (M-WERC) to establish research and development facilities at Century City Towers, an office building just north of the Century City business park. A consortium of local industrial and academic players in the energy, power and control cluster, M-WERC focuses its efforts on technology development in the areas of distributed energy resources and systems, building energy efficiency, the energy/water nexus, renewable energy, energy storage, and biofuels.

**Victory Spark** is a three-month, intensive entrepreneurship education program that supports start-ups run by military veterans with a particular focus on web-based, software, medical device, hardware, mobile, and social companies. After a successful local test of the approach, the federal Veterans Administration has made Milwaukee the headquarters for a national expansion of Victory Spark.

Milwaukee Area Technical College has developed an **entrepreneurship diploma** to help students acquire the business management skills needed to run a business. Marquette University has established a **minor in entrepreneurship**. The University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee offers an **entrepreneurship certificate** with coursework in venture financing, business-to-business transactions, marketing, and related topics.



**Local Success**  
**MiKE & Flying Car**

In June 2013, the Greater Milwaukee Committee’s Innovation in Milwaukee (MiKE) Initiative sponsored Flying Car, a 10-day annual event that featured workshops, pitches, networking opportunities, contests and other events designed to inspire entrepreneurship and ideas around technology in Milwaukee. The event included a BuildHealth “hackathon” that brought entrepreneurs and technology thinkers together at Bucketworks to think about and propose solutions that might improve health literacy, find creative solutions to health concerns through data, and incentivize better self-healthcare.<sup>22</sup>

Organizations of young professionals, including **FUEL Milwaukee**, **NEWaukee** and **Sprenkler**, regularly convene meet ups, networking sessions and other events to help bring creative minds together and foster connections and innovation. Startup Milwaukee has developed Cue Coder Nights, a monthly gathering of local software and web developers, and #GrowthHacking Nights to expose tech start-ups to successful marketing techniques. Technology website Mashable found that Milwaukee had one of the fastest growing Meetup communities, an Internet networking platform that indicates how connected the city’s technology culture is.<sup>23</sup>

**Gener8tor** invests capital, expertise and mentorship in early-stage innovative entrepreneurs to help them grow. The organization runs a 12-week accelerator program in Milwaukee and companies accepted for the program receive an equity investment from gener8tor.

**6.4 Strategies & Actions**

Innovation, business growth and entrepreneurship are largely roles of the private sector, with public sector institutions providing support in research, training, and expertise. The strategies and action items presented on the following pages outline and emphasize ways in which local government can support the work of the private and nonprofit sectors to grow business of all types in Milwaukee and generate wealth in the region.



**Local Success**  
**Center for Teaching Entrepreneurship**

Using the slogan “Become the CEO of Me, Inc.,” the Center for Teaching Entrepreneurship (CTE) imparts financial literacy and entrepreneurship education to Milwaukee youth aged 9 to 24. The Center’s programs, delivered in a variety of settings, expose students to business owners, information about how to start a business, and help in turning a hobby into a business. CTE’s programs have served some 18,000 young people, and fostered the development of 68 home-based businesses and 8 retail businesses run by young people.<sup>21</sup>



## Strategy 6.1: Define Clear Pathways to Business Creation & Expansion

No.	Action Item	Time Frame	Lead Actor	Supporting Partners
6.1.1	Develop regulation road maps for common start-up businesses	Short	CITY	Development Center Milwaukee Public Library

New businesses must comply with a host of local and state regulations, and many smaller start-ups lack the resources to engage lawyers and accountants to identify all the applicable rules. Clear road maps that spell out regulations for the most common business types can help new businesses navigate the regulatory environment and increase their odds of success.



6.1.2	Reuse vacant City-owned commercial properties to foster start-ups in central city neighborhoods	Medium	CITY	Business Improvement Districts
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As a result of property tax foreclosure, the City owns more than 120 commercial buildings, many in neighborhoods that lack sufficient commercial services. By creating a partnership among the City of Milwaukee, technical assistance providers, and a development entity to offer low-cost space, along with business financing and mentoring to promising entrepreneurs, these properties could be repurposed to support new business development.



6.1.3	Establish a Local Business Action Team within City government to focus on improving service to business	Medium	CITY	Development Center Milwaukee Public Library
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Multiple City departments interact with businesses, but there is currently no forum to share insights about the impact of City regulations on businesses. An inter-agency small business action team would be responsible for evaluating current requirements for home-based businesses, occupancy certificates, and business licenses, to determine whether rules and processes linked to these regulations could be simplified in order to promote business development, based on feedback from customers.

6.1.4	Outstation City staff with local entrepreneurship development organizations to provide direct assistance	Long	CITY	Milwaukee Public Library
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Multiple local organizations provide technical support to would-be entrepreneurs, and link their clients to resources needed to start their businesses. Upon request, appropriate City staff will be made available to meet with clients of these groups, to assist entrepreneurs to understand City government resources and regulations that will have an impact on the businesses they hope to establish, and provide advice on how to deal with them.

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## Strategy 6.2: Maximize Effectiveness of Local Technical Assistance

No.	Action Item	Time Frame	Lead Actor	Supporting Partners
6.2.1	Invite KIVA to partner with City government and local organizations to develop micro-lending to small businesses	Short	CITY WWBIC	Local banks; philanthropic organizations; economic development groups

KIVA, a nonprofit organization that supports entrepreneurs and small businesses through Internet-based crowdfunding, has established domestic partnerships with several cities to help connect local small businesses with capital. A similar partnership with the City of Milwaukee and local organizations could provide a new source of capital for start-ups and entrepreneurs.

6.2.2	Encourage all organizations that assist small businesses to list their services on a common forum	Medium	LISC UEDA	Milwaukee Public Library
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Dozens of local organizations provide assistance to entrepreneurs and start-ups, but a structure does not currently exist that would allow them to focus on the services they are best equipped to provide, refer clients to other agencies for services they cannot provide, and track data and results for clients. The City will encourage these organizations to post their services on a “community posting board” that would serve as a resource for entrepreneurs and start-ups to identify what services are available by which organizations, and help organizations working with small businesses and entrepreneurs to refer them to other applicable services.

6.2.3	Improve communication between City agencies and the intermediaries who provide service and technical assistance to local businesses	Medium	CITY	Milwaukee Public Library
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Many local organizations and professionals interact with individuals wishing to start new businesses. These organizations include business improvement districts, chambers of commerce, commercial lenders, accountants, attorneys, and trade groups. City government can be a resource to these groups and professionals, by providing training programs and materials about City government services, public library resources and services, and other resources of value to their business clients. Similarly, groups and individuals that interact with firms can provide valuable information about the needs of their clients to City agencies. Such feedback can be used to improve the quality of City services to business.

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### Strategy 6.3: Support Milwaukee’s Entrepreneurial Culture

7  
Strategy 6

No.	Action Item	Time Frame	Lead Actor	Supporting Partners
6.3.1	Develop and host an annual “Entrepreneur Week” to showcase local talent & resources	Short	CITY	Scale Up Milwaukee Milwaukee Public Library BizStarts

Establish an annual “Entrepreneur Week” which would include forums, classes, public meetings on topics of concern to small business, opportunities to meet elected officials, business plan competitions, mentoring, express processing for permit applications, investment pitch opportunities, and a Mayoral Small Business Awards program. By acknowledging the importance of entrepreneurship in Milwaukee, and providing multiple forums for entrepreneurs to connect with others that can support their business growth, this event will help to build a stronger entrepreneurial culture in Milwaukee.

6.3.2	Introduce principles of entrepreneurship to Milwaukee students	Medium	Junior Achievement; BizStarts	Milwaukee Public Library
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Young people are more apt to consider starting a business if they have basic knowledge of the risks and rewards of doing so. A partnership between long-established local organizations like Junior Achievement and the Center for Teaching Entrepreneurship, and newer players like BizStarts, could develop strategies to provide entrepreneurship education in classrooms, after-school programs, summer camps, public libraries, and similar venues.

4.3.3

6.3.3	Foster an “Artist Entrepreneurial” city by supporting artists and creative entrepreneurs	Long	Creative Alliance	Milwaukee Artist Resource Network; Milwaukee Arts Board; MIAD
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Artists and creative entrepreneurs bring income into a city, create new businesses, add to the quality of life, and often being self-employed, can choose where to live based on factors other than employer location. Along with the strategies detailed in Chapter 7, the City will work to foster an environment conducive to artists’ success by (1) knowing who our artists are, and (2) developing programs that help artists and creative entrepreneurs get training that is geared toward their specific needs and help them to identify networking and marketing opportunities.



6.3.4	Evaluate City regulations to ensure they facilitate the occupancy of shared work spaces, live/work/sell spaces, and research and development activities	Long	CITY	
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Work habits and spaces have changed in recent years, as growing numbers of individuals work as independent contractors. They seek out spaces in which to collaborate. A comprehensive review of local regulations is required to ensure that these new work practices and spaces are welcome in Milwaukee.

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