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Microbusiness Best Practices

THE COMPREHENSIVE PLAYBOOK
FOR MUNICIPALITIES TO
SUPPORT MICROBUSINESSES

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league

Acknowledgements

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Municipalities

» City of Chelsea
» City of Dexter
» City of Saline
» City of Manchester
» Frenchtown Township
» Monroe Charter Township
» City of Monroe
» City of Marine City
» City of River Rouge
» City of Ecorse
» City of Pontiac
» Village of Oxford
» Village of Ortonville

Economic Development Organizations

» Ann Arbor SPARK
» Chelsea Chamber of Commerce
» Monroe County Economic Development Department
» St. Clair County Economic Development Alliance
» Region 6's Smart Zone
» Macomb County Economic Development Department
» Velocity
» Wayne County Economic Development Department
» Michigan Department of Civil Rights
» Downriver Community Conference
» Livingston County Diversity Council
» City of Pontiac's Main Street
» Village of Oxford Downtown Development Authority
» Main Street Oakland County

Financial Institutions

» Mercantile Bank
» Chelsea State Bank
» Comerica Bank
» Lake Trust Credit Union

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Project Summary

INTRODUCTION

This Playbook provides a comprehensive list of tasks for municipalities to implement as they strengthen their microbusiness communities. A microbusiness is a business with 10 or fewer employees. According to the Small Business and Entrepreneurship Council of the United States, over 90 percent of businesses in the country fall into this category.

Microbusinesses play a vital role in community well-being. For individual entrepreneurs, they are a means of economic security and a venue for self-expression and self-determination. For communities, they help define and embody local culture and character, contributing to a unique sense of place and belonging. These businesses do not arise in a vacuum—a thriving local business ecosystem relies on networks of support. This includes the financial capital, technical assistance, training, and labor pools that they draw on; the regulatory and permitting systems that they operate within; their physical environment; and the camaraderie and peer support that takes place between small business owners.

BACKGROUND

Understanding and cultivating various forms of support is an important part of local governments' economic development strategy. The Michigan Municipal League (the League) and the Michigan Municipal League Foundation, with support from the Ralph C. Wilson, Jr. Foundation, have been working on a local economies initiative to explore entrepreneurship and microbusiness support systems through southeast Michigan. Since many smaller communities lack the deep networks of philanthropic and governmental resources present in large communities, the League, MML Foundation, and Ralph Wilson, Jr. Foundation initiated a project (i.e., the Local Economies Initiative) for creating best practices for capacity-strapped municipalities to support their business community. To develop the project scope and manage the project, the League teamed up with McKenna and Life's Journey Training and Consulting (Life's Journey).

APPROACH

With support from the Ralph C. Wilson, Jr. Foundation, the League, Life's Journey, and McKenna developed five interconnected best practices that help municipalities become more microbusiness-ready and -friendly. The best practices are the result of a series of roundtable discussions, hosted across the seven-county Metro Detroit region. At these meetings, attendees discussed how municipalities, financial institutions, and business support organizations are bolstering their microbusiness community, and how they can improve such efforts. Participants were asked to complete a survey; these results are incorporated within the best practices. We also conducted a literature review of existing business support strategies to inform the best practices.

PURPOSE

The purpose of the project is to better equip municipalities to support their microbusiness communities. This includes an emphasis on ways to support people and entrepreneurs who face disproportionate barriers in accessing capital, and therefore are often not able to realize the full benefits of establishing a traditional, brick-and mortar business. Addressing these barriers can be a pragmatic route to supporting marginalized residents in achieving financial independence, prosperity, and reinvestment in their communities.

There is a direct relationship between support for microbusinesses and the health of a community's local economy. Here are some examples:

» Job Creation. About two-thirds of American jobs are created by small businesses. These jobs are given to local workers, which promotes economic self-sufficiency and helps reduce poverty in communities.

» Innovation. Small businesses provide new ways of thinking and fresh perspectives; they are generally more nimble than large businesses.

» Local Opportunities. Small business owners are more likely to do business with professionals they know and trust, which creates demand for local professional services such as accountants, real estate agents, lawyers, and marketers.

THE PLAYBOOK

There are two playbooks: Comprehensive and Essentials. The Comprehensive Playbook provides a comprehensive list of tasks for municipalities to implement as they strengthen their microbusiness communities. The Essentials Playbook is a condensed version of the Comprehensive Playbook and only provides several essential tasks. The Essentials Playbook is a great tool for municipalities that might have limited time or capacity, but are still interested in becoming more microbusiness-friendly.

Both playbooks are meant to be self-guided. Communities are encouraged to use the best practices to evaluate their current conditions and identify next steps.

While the primary audience for this guide is municipal governments, establishing a healthy entrepreneurial ecosystem is a team effort. Some of the actions recommended here will require coalitions of public, private, and nonprofit actors—building those partnerships is itself an important area which this Playbook will discuss.

Additionally, communities should take a continuous improvement approach to this work. Cultivating microbusinesses is not a race to the finish line, but an ongoing effort to continue strengthening the network and building on success. With that in mind, this guide seeks to offer tactics even for places that have already invested significant effort in this work. Communities just beginning to work actively on this should not feel overwhelmed by a need to do everything at once, but should identify the options most fundamental to their needs.

The Comprehensive Playbook is broken up into 12 chapters. Key chapters are defined below.

BEST PRACTICES

Each best practice contains sub-categories and implementation tasks. Implementation tasks consist of essentials tasks and additional approaches.

ESSENTIALS

Essentials tasks are the smaller, more manageable tasks that municipalities of any size and capacity can conquer.

ADDITIONAL APPROACHES

The Playbook also offers ideas on how to support microbusinesses that go beyond the standardized essentials, recognizing that every municipality's capacity for implementation is different.

REDEVELOPMENT READY COMMUNITIES TOOLKIT EMPHASIS

The work of supporting microbusinesses is not conducted in silos, and so the Playbook highlights opportunities to connect with the Michigan Economic Development Corporation's Redevelopment Ready Communities® (RRC) Toolkit.

The RRC initiative empowers communities to shape their future and attract investment and local business by building a foundation of planning, zoning, and economic development. Some tasks within the Playbook overlap with the goals of the RRC initiative, and communities that have already engaged with the RRC initiative may find that these tasks extend and build upon the foundations they've already laid per RRC Best Practices. The interconnectedness between the Microbusiness Best Practices and RRC Best Practices (BP) are indicated with a column beside each implementation task.

EQUITY EMPHASIS

By collaborating with a diverse group of people, we help municipalities recognize the importance of creating a more comprehensive and supportive ecosystem for equitable business development in Michigan. Integrating community voice into microbusiness policy is both an ethical imperative and a strategic benefit, fostering enhanced innovation, improved decision-making, talent attraction, and deeper customer and community engagement. The Best Practices chapters feature tasks that incorporate community voices, local stakeholders, and opportunities that reduce barriers and extend access for populations that have historically faced systemic challenges in entrepreneurship. Communities can decide which strategies make sense for them and what goals they are trying to achieve.

RESOURCES & CASE STUDIES

Municipal capacity to implement tasks and projects beyond the traditional scope of work could be limited. Therefore, the Playbook offers resources and case studies that support municipalities to accomplish the best practices. Resources include funding support, capacity support, and partnership ideas. Case studies show real-world examples of how other municipalities are supporting their microbusiness communities and accomplishing the best practices. The Comprehensive Playbook describes in detail resources and case studies. The Essentials Playbook lists resources and case studies relevant to each task.

Overview of Best Practices

This Playbook has five interconnected best practices on how municipalities can support their entrepreneurs and microbusinesses.

BEST PRACTICE 1: FRIENDLY TOWN HALL

For municipalities, supporting microbusinesses begins internally. Municipalities can make minor updates to their day-to-day operations and staff responsibilities to make their community an easy and attractive place to locate a business. From providing friendlier and timelier customer service to keeping websites up-to-date, Best Practice 1 offers ideas for municipal staff to contribute to a thriving small business economy during the normal workday.

BEST PRACTICE 2: POLICY

Municipal policies—including, but not limited to, zoning ordinances and fee schedules—can either help or hinder the ease, affordability, and success of running a microbusiness. Best Practice 2 includes policy shifts that can be pursued by municipalities in the short and long term to make doing business easier.

BEST PRACTICE 3: RELATIONSHIP BUILDING

Collaboration is the key to establishing mutual respect, transparency, and trust with local entrepreneurs. This is an essential part of developing working relationships. Supporting the wide range of needs and priorities of local entrepreneurs is a major, long-term task, and municipalities should not reasonably expect to have the knowledge and resources to achieve this on their own. Best Practice 3 is centered on fostering relationships with business owners and community partners to facilitate collaboration and resource sharing.

BEST PRACTICE 4: EDUCATION & EMPOWERMENT

Offering training is crucial for municipalities, as it empowers business owners with the knowledge and skills to start, sustain, and grow local businesses. This ultimately fosters economic development and financial stability within the community. Best Practice 4 outlines training opportunities for entrepreneurs to hone their business skills, creatively market their products and services, and develop a robust network of peers, mentors, and investors.

BEST PRACTICE 5: PLACEMAKING & PROMOTION

Placemaking and promotion activities drive economic growth and community engagement. Placemaking helps microbusiness because it creates vibrant, attractive spaces that draw residents and visitors. Promotional activities increase awareness and visibility of local businesses. Best Practice 5 outlines activities to enhance the physical and social environment of the community, which will generate more business sales.

Best Practice 1: Friendly Town Hall

For municipalities, supporting microbusinesses begins internally. Municipalities can make minor updates to their day-to-day operations and staff responsibilities to make their community an easy and attractive place to locate a business. From providing friendlier and timelier customer service, to keeping websites up-to-date, Best Practice 1 offers ideas for municipal staff to contribute to a thriving small business economy during the normal workday.

1.1 IMPROVE ONLINE IMAGE

A municipality's online image is critically important to maintain transparent and effective communication with residents, business owners, and visitors about projects, programs, resources, emergency updates, and events. Further, an effective online presence ensures that information is accessible to a broader audience, including those who may not be able to attend in-person meetings or events.

	TASK	ESSENTIALS	ADDITIONAL APPROACHES	RRC BP
A	**Perform Website Audit.** This involves a comprehensive analysis of the site's overall performance and effectiveness in offering information and supporting constituents.	X		3.2 + 3.8
B	**Perform DDA Website Audit.** This audi t can identify technical issues, content quality, user experience, and more to improve clarity and transparency of DDA initiatives and resources.		X	
C	**Perform Chamber of Commerce Website Audit.** This process can help to identify and solve any challenges with site navigation and public information access.		X	

	TASK	ESSENTIALS	ADDITIONAL APPROACHES	RRC BP
D	**Perform Social Media Audit.** This involves reviewing and assessing the city's current social media policies, strategies, and engagement, and identifying opportunities for improvement.	X		
E	**Use Search Engine Optimization.** SEO is the practice of increasing the visibility and prominence of your websites in search engine results (e.g., Google, Bing, or Yahoo).		X	
F	**Create a Style Guide.** Style guides are documents that establish a municipality's messaging tone and details standards for designing and formatting documents, such as logos, colors, fonts, graphics, photos, slide decks, and maps.		X	5.3
G	**Perform Municipal Photos Audit.** This process ensures that photos used for promotional material are high quality, contemporary, and inclusive of diverse audiences (e.g., race, age, gender, ADA accessibility).		X	5.3

1.2 PROVIDE STRONG CUSTOMER SERVICE

Becoming microbusiness-friendly can begin by providing welcoming customer service at the front desk of the Town Hall. For new business owners, navigating the municipal business development landscape can be confusing and often intimidating. Municipalities should work to make it as easy and stress-free as possible for local business owners to understand city processes and to have their business questions and concerns addressed.

	TASK	ESSENTIALS	ADDITIONAL APPROACHES	RRC BP
A	**Train Staff in Business Process.** Educate public-facing staff on the best ways to approach questions from business owners, including relevant processes, documents, and resources.	X		
B	**Use "Not Right Now" Language.** If a business isn't ready to open, treat it as an opportunity to direct them to resources that can support their readiness, rather than turning them away with a hard "no."	X		
C	**Center Community Engagement versus Code Enforcement.** Instead of issuing citations for breaking local regulations, prioritize community engagement and awareness training. Offer learning opportunities rather than punishment, especially for new business owners.		X	
D	**Provide Designated Business Support Representative.** Clearly identify a staff point of contact for small business permitting and resources. This person should be able to answer questions about municipal processes and connect entrepreneurs to partner organizations for additional resources.	X		3.2
E	**Provide Designated Office Hours.** Instead of responding to business inquiries throughout the week, designate a period in which you decide to host public-facing office hours to maintain transparency and organization in a capacity-conscious manner. Publish these designated office hours to the public.	X		

	TASK	ESSENTIALS	ADDITIONAL APPROACHES	RRC BP
F	**Prioritize Timeliness.** Create a workflow that ensures business questions and concerns are addressed in a timely manner. If there are capacity limitations, consider hiring a consultant for two hours a week to perform virtual zoning administration at an estimated cost of $200.		X	
G	**Offer Translation Services.** This could include machine translation (e.g., Google Translate) if there is no funding available, just make sure there is an established approach.		X	
H	**Create a One-Page Guide on How to Open a Business.** Develop a succinct overview of the city's business permitting and licensing process that can be handed out or shared digitally. A template is provided within this Playbook.	X		3.8
I	**Provide Videos.** Provide informational videos on the city's webpage on how to open a business or other processes involving business planning. This can be shared at meetings, events, and on social media.		X	
J	**Fund Ads.** Fund and support an ad campaign that creates notices on how to open a business. Advertisements should be designed to be shared on social media platforms such as TikTok, LinkedIn, Facebook, Instagram, and X (formerly Twitter).		X	
K	**Create an Ordinance Cheat Sheet.** Understand what ordinances are regularly in violation or regularly requested and publish guidelines and schedules to avoid municipal fines. For example, publish guidelines on trash removal and the process to install a fence.		X	2.2
L	**Showcase Specialty Certifications.** Provide a list of the different types of certifications (e.g., Black-owned, women-owned, etc.) that a business owner can apply for. These certifications can attract new customers and promote eligibility for more grant opportunities.		X	

Need capacity to create these handouts / cheat sheets?
Consider teaming up with a local university!
See the Implementation Resources Chapter for more ideas.

	TASK	ESSENTIALS	ADDITIONAL APPROACHES	RRC BP
M	**Create an Economic Development Organizations Handout.** This would be available to assist new businesses in the area. Ensure that a digital copy with links to these organizations is available.		X	
N	**Create a Financial Institutions Handout.** Provide a list of banks, credit unions, and Community Development Financial Institutions (CDFIs) and the resources they offer. Ensure that a digital copy with links to these institutions is available.		X	
O	**Offer Exit Interviews.** This process captures the successes within the local business landscapes and documents opportunities for business retention improvement.		X	
P	**Offer Funding Support for Strategic Plans.** Offer funding to support marketing and business plans for new and existing microbusinesses. This may help to reduce early financial barriers for business owners and align microbusiness planning with municipal resources.		X	5.3
Q	**Conduct a Market Analysis.** Provide a free market analysis via Esri or Placer AI. Where possible, connect small businesses with institutions and universities that offer free market analyses.		X	

Need capacity to create these handouts / cheat sheets?
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See the Implementation Resources Chapter for more ideas.

1.3 ESTABLISH A MUNICIPAL IDENTITY

A municipal identity, or branding, celebrates why your community is a great place to start a business while establishing investor confidence and driving potential visitors. This type of creative, place-based marketing is closely supported by tasks outlined in Best Practice 1.1, including creating municipal style guides and auditing photos.

	TASK	ESSENTIALS	ADDITIONAL APPROACHES	RRC BP
A	**Create a Mission Statement.** Mission statements have five elements: 1) A label such as "Our Mission"; 2) A verb in the present tense; 3) An audience (whom you're doing this for); 4) A result or benefit of the work you do; and 5) What you do and how you do it.	X		5.3
B	**Create a Community Story.** Create talking points to highlight your community's story. These might include pieces of community history, points of pride or accomplishments, or visions for the future.		X	5.3
C	**Publish Mission and Story.** This helps foster a sense of unity and shared goals among residents and business owners.		X	5.3

Best Practice 2: Policy

Municipal policies—including, but not limited to, zoning ordinances and fee schedules—can either help or hinder the ease, affordability, and success of running a microbusiness. Best Practice 2 includes policy shifts that can be pursued by municipalities in the short and long term to make doing business easier.

2.1 UPDATE THE ZONING ORDINANCE

A systems-wide approach that addresses land use, housing, transportation systems, etc., is required to create a healthy microbusiness ecosystem. Municipalities must take time to investigate the ways in which their zoning ordinance is constraining or promoting microbusiness success, and to identify solutions to such policy challenges.

|	TASK	ESSENTIALS	ADDITIONAL APPROACHES	RRC BP
A	**Implement the American Planning Association Recommendations.** Review and update the Municipal Zoning Ordinance to align with APA best practices. This process should consider the Zoning Ordinance's impact on both equity and small business success.	X		
B	**Create a Diverse Housing Stock.** Allow for more housing typologies (e.g., missing middle housing) of different densities in multiple zoning districts as permitted uses. A diverse housing stock promotes housing affordability and shorter commutes, which will support employers in attracting employees.	X		2.4
C	**Allow for Accessory Dwelling Units.** ADUs increase the housing stock by providing affordable and flexible living spaces, helping to alleviate housing shortages. They also support workers and businesses by offering convenient, nearby housing options, reducing commute times, and increasing local workforce availability.	X		2.4
D	**Allow for Manufactured and Modular Homes in all residential areas.** These homes support the housing stock by offering a faster, cost-effective way to increase the supply of affordable housing, which can house workers for businesses.		X	2.4
E	**Allow for Mixed-Use, Health.** Allow for small-scale child and elder care and outpatient medical and health support facilities in a wide variety of zoning districts, including residential. This will expand the locations in which business owners who are parents or caregivers can successfully operate.	X		
F	**Allow for Mixed-Use, Food.** Allow for smaller footprint grocery stores and restaurants in a wide variety of zoning districts, including residential. This creates new opportunities for food and restaurant entrepreneurship.	X		2.3

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	TASK	ESSENTIALS	ADDITIONAL APPROACHES	RRC BP
G	**Allow for Mixed-Use, Manufacturing.** Allow for low-impact and artisan manufacturing uses as commercial uses and allow in more zoning districts. This creates new opportunities for creative and sustainable industrial entrepreneurship.	X		2.3
H	**Allow for Mixed-Use, Agriculture.** Allow for small-scale urban agriculture in a wide variety of zoning districts, including residential. Agricultural microbusinesses can include community gardens, greenhouses, beekeeping, poultry raising, and more.	X		2.3
I	**Allow for Home-Based Business.** Update home occupation regulations to broaden the types of activities allowed to be conducted from dwelling units of all types. This creates a space in the local economy for remotely run microbusinesses.	X		
J	**Enable Low Barrier to Entry Business Activities.** Reduce zoning barriers for temporary events, entertainment, and outdoor sales, including garage/yard sales, sidewalk sales, street vending, and mobile food vending. Allowing non-brick-and-mortar businesses lowers the cost barrier of entry to establish a business.	X		
K	**Allow for Pop-Ups.** Ensure that the zoning ordinance allows for pop-ups and/or temporary businesses. This practice allows microbusiness owners to promote and experiment with services and products in a low-cost way, while adding dynamism to local events and streetscapes.		X	
L	**Allow for Micro Retail Bays.** Ensure that the zoning ordinance allows for micro retail bays, which are compact retail spaces. These spaces are designed to accommodate businesses with limited square footage needs, or to coexist with businesses that have more space than needed. To create these bays, businesses can put up a demising wall to shrink the footprint of space. Examples include temporary pop-up sheds, market stalls, food halls, and boutique retail spaces.		X	
M	**Update Site Plan Connectivity Requirements.** Require high levels of accessibility and connectivity for pedestrians and bicyclists during site plan reviews. This helps to ensure foot traffic for new microbusinesses.		X	
N	**Reduce Off-Street Parking.** This type of reform promotes downtown and commercial development, reduces barriers to small business growth, and encourages more housing options near downtown job centers.		X	2.5
O	**Post Public Hearing Notices.** Both on social media and on the municipal website. This ensures that the community is aware of and engaged with local planning and business happenings.		X	
P	**Receive Feedback.** When making a new land use policy, request feedback from business and residential tenants—not just property owners.	X		1.4

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2.2 UPDATE ADDITIONAL CITY ORDINANCES AND POLICIES

Ordinances, fees, and taxation policy can be designed by municipalities to provide a more accessible and affordable business landscape for locally owned microbusinesses. Small business-oriented incentives and grant dollars should be specifically tasked to microbusinesses, and existing internal City policies, programs, and procedures should be evaluated for opportunities to support these business owners.

	TASK	ESSENTIALS	ADDITIONAL APPROACHES	RRC BP
A	**Update Business License Ordinance.** Review the existing business license ordinance to ensure processes, fees, and additional standards are still relevant in the community and are clearly explained. This promotes transparency and clarity for new business applicants.	X		3.8
B	**Update Fee Schedule.** Update the municipal fee schedule to accurately reflect the cost of services. Review the fee schedule of neighboring municipalities for a comparison.	X		3.6
C	**Update Business License Fee.** Establish a business license fee that is less than $100. This reduces the cost of entry for new businesses.	X		5.2
D	**Offer Tax Abatements.** Offer tax abatements for new developments that set aside space for microbusinesses or BIPOC/women entrepreneurs. This financial incentive can make a significant difference to the bottom line of small businesses, especially in their early years.		X	5.2
E	**Offer Grants.** Offer grant programs to support microbusiness start-ups and building rehabilitation. Reducing or subsidizing rental rates and assisting with storefront readiness lower the cost to do business.		X	5.2
F	**Offer Low Interest Loans.** Establish a low-interest loan program that helps microbusinesses purchase buildings. This is an affordable option designed to help small business owners grow their business sustainably.		X	5.2
G	**Restrict Formula / Chain Businesses.** Adopt a business diversity ordinance, or create a provision in the zoning ordinance, to restrict 'formula' or chain businesses in strategic commercial areas. A 'restrict' formula could allow these businesses as special land use only.		X	
H	**Support Microbusiness Contracts.** Create an Equitable Procurement Policy to prioritize contracts with microbusinesses. This might include establishing a preference for local business in city purchasing, or giving preference to local businesses when leasing city-owned commercial spaces.		X	
I	**Support BIPOC/women-owned.** Create a policy to prioritize contracts with underrepresented or disadvantaged businesses. This should include a set of guidelines and practices designed to promote fair access to economic opportunities and resources for these historically marginalized groups.		X	

	TASK	ESSENTIALS	ADDITIONAL APPROACHES	RRC BP
J	**Create a Food Truck Ordinance.** This creates new opportunities for food and restaurant entrepreneurship.		X	
K	**Support Cooperatives.** To accommodate the generational changes in the workforce, cooperatives can be a solution for expanding ownership and for business survival past founder retirement. Support and even incentivize the creation of cooperative, or shared ownership, business models.		X	
L	**Decrease Costs Through Bulk Purchasing.** Use purchasing power to provide lower cost office supplies for small businesses through coordinated bulk purchases. This small incentive eases operation costs and helps to build a strong working relationship with local business owners.		X	
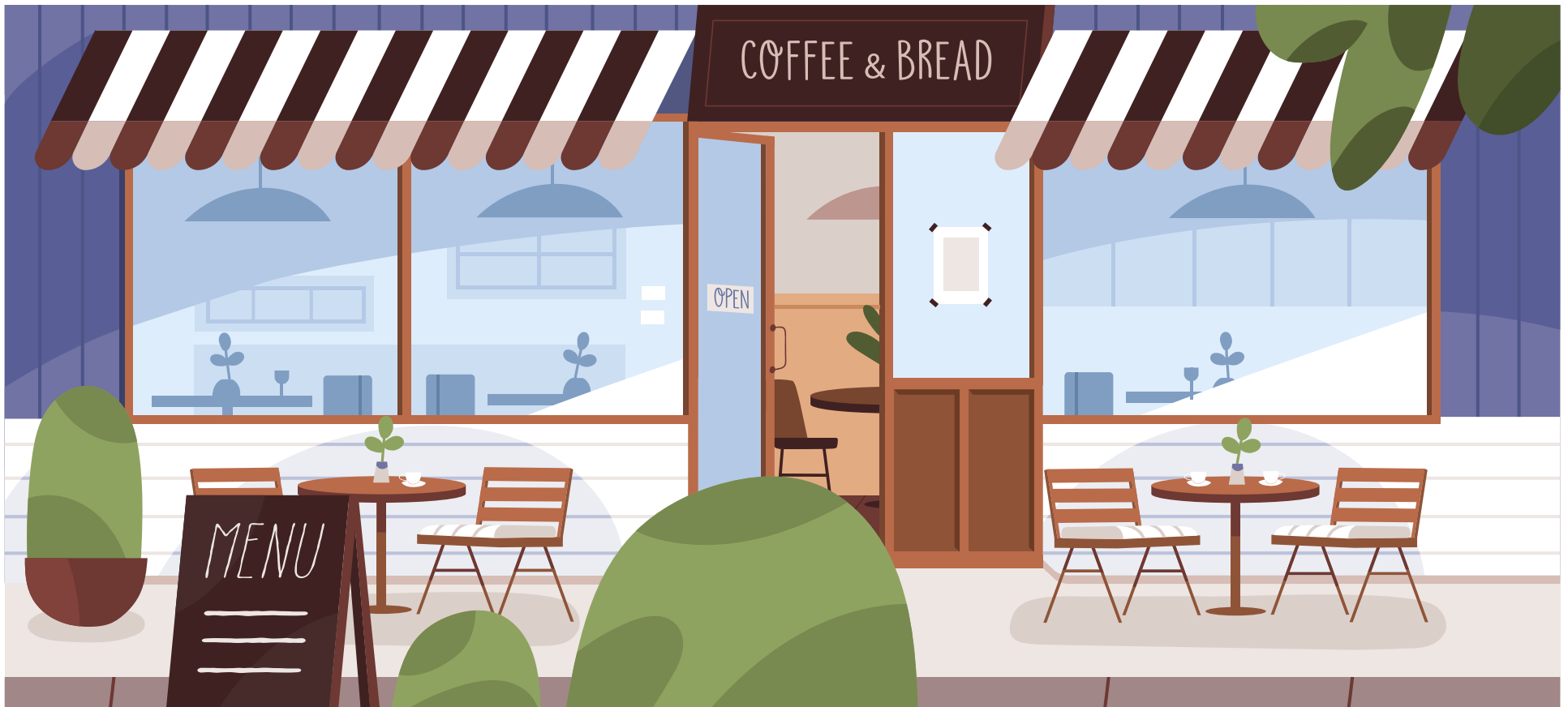
Best Practice 3: Relationship Building

Collaboration is the key to establishing mutual respect, transparency, and trust with local entrepreneurs. This is an essential part of developing working relationships. Supporting the wide range of needs and priorities of local entrepreneurs is a major, long-term task, and municipalities should not reasonably expect to have the knowledge and resources to achieve this on their own. Best Practice 3 is centered on fostering relationships with business owners and community partners to facilitate collaboration and resource sharing.

3.1 SUPPORT MULTI-CULTURAL AWARENESS

Municipalities have a unique opportunity to foster connection and understanding across business leaders and residents through education, programming, and policy. City staff should make every effort to ensure that underrepresented business leaders and community members are recognized, represented, respected, and celebrated throughout the community.

	TASK	ESSENTIALS	ADDITIONAL APPROACHES	RRC BP
A	**Offer Voluntary Training.** Host shared equity training for municipal staff, elected and appointed officials, board and commission members, business owners, and residents. Create opportunities for the community to become more culturally competent through educational offerings and events. This creates multiple avenues for relationship building and collaboration.	X		4.6
B	**Host Multicultural Events.** Host a comprehensive calendar of multicultural events to increase awareness of and exposure to diversity within the community. Ensure that a wide range of cultures, traditions, and heritages are showcased with authentic representation across age, race, ethnicity, and gender.	X	X	1.4
C	**Participate in Monthly Dedication Ceremonies.** This showcases municipal commitment to preserving history and celebrating diversity.		X	
D	**Foster Generational Awareness.** Host events that bring awareness around generational differences and similarities in the workforce and greater community. Promote opportunities for mutual learning, mentorship, and connection across generations, which can challenge traditional workforce norms and build needed trust.		X	

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3.2 BUILD TRUST WITH BUSINESS OWNERS

Establishing strong relationships and sustained trust is essential to ensuring that local business owners feel heard, supported, and confident in the municipality's ability to help them thrive. Municipalities must design a range of opportunities for listening and connection with and among the business community—including meeting business owners where they are.

	TASK	ESSENTIALS	ADDITIONAL APPROACHES	RRC BP
A	**Host Active Listening Sessions.** Coffee chats and listening sessions with business owners help municipalities to better understand their needs. Come prepared to take notes, ask questions, and identify actionable next steps.		X	
B	**Facilitate Engaged Boards and Commissions.** Recruit board members and commissioners to spread awareness of programs, projects, and partnerships within the community through activities and communication. These community liaisons are key for building trust between municipalities and business owners.		X	
C	**Host Small Group Meetings with Community Leaders.** These meetings can help to build trust and share resources. Once trust is established, gradually increase the size of meeting and audience and create collaborations from findings.	X		1.4
D	**Create Cohorts.** Cultivate collaboration and knowledge sharing by creating and facilitating natural cohorts of business and/or property owners at different stages of the business planning process.		X	
E	**Go Door to Door.** Knocking on doors still works as a tool to build bridges between municipalities, community members, and business owners. When door knocking, wear certified organizational gear and provide material with organizational logos.		X	
F	**Meet People Where They Are.** Reduce physical and informational barriers for current and potential business owners by eliminating a trip to city hall. Provide business planning resources at regular meetings of community groups such as block clubs, HOAs, and Elks lodges, and at popular spaces like barbershops, salons, food stores, laundromats, and the library.	X		1.4

	TASK	ESSENTIALS	ADDITIONAL APPROACHES	RRC BP
G	**Host Networking Events.** These develop peer networks and connect with financial and informational resources. Invite local chambers, financial institutions, real estate agents, economic development directors, and other key institutions for added value.	**X**		**1.4**
H	**Create Mentorship Opportunities.** These connect microbusinesses with business leaders who can help guide decision making and offer wisdom for overcoming obstacles. These relationships can help small business owners more readily achieve stability, growth, and sustainability.		**X**	
I	**Host Business Awards.** Host county/municipality-wide business awards to appreciate and recognize the hard work of microbusiness owners. These awards serve as an opportunity to promote local businesses to the public and showcase their unique contributions to the community.		**X**	

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3.3 FACILITATE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT PARTNERSHIPS

Local businesses cannot thrive in a silo; City staff should embed themselves in existing economic development networks to gather resources and become aware of opportunities that best support local business owners. When possible, staff should also seek out opportunities to create new partnerships tailored to municipal business needs and priorities.

	TASK	ESSENTIALS	ADDITIONAL APPROACHES	RRC BP
A	**Host Annual Check-Ins with the Chamber of Commerce.** Advocate for and learn about opportunities for the Chamber to support diverse microbusinesses.	X		
B	**Host Annual Check-Ins with the County.** Learn more about programs and resources available to support local economic development and entrepreneurship. Advocate for opportunities for the County to support diverse microbusinesses.	X		
C	**Host Check-Ins with the Small Business Support Hub.** Come prepared with questions and resource-asks related to the needs and priorities of your municipality's microbusinesses.	X		
D	**Host Check-Ins with the Region's SmartZone Organization.** Gather distinct geographical locations where tech companies and entrepreneurs can locate assets that assist in their endeavors. Come prepared with questions and resource-asks related to the needs and priorities of your municipality's microbusinesses.		X	
E	**Utilize the Small Business Development Center.** Familiarize yourself with and amplify resources offered by SBDC. This Best Practice connects to 1.2: Provide Strong Customer Service.		X	
F	**Establish an On-Site SBDC.** Provide free office space for SBDC to set up a mobile office at your location. This can ensure that business owners can have their questions and concerns fielded quickly without overwhelming capacity-strapped municipal staff.		X	
G	**Partner with Business Support Organizations.** These programs support entrepreneurs by providing training, mentorship, networking opportunities, microloans, and other funding. Many offer a distinct focus on bolstering minority-owned businesses.		X	5.2
H	**Offer DDA Training.** Facilitate training on how to initiate and/or operate a DDA. Consider reaching out to more established DDAs, requesting that they attend a meeting to share their best practices.		X	

3.4 FACILITATE FINANCIAL PARTNERSHIPS

Navigating financial institutions and securing much-needed financing can be challenging for local business owners, especially those who are just getting started. Municipalities can take steps to become accessible, trusted sources of financial information and opportunity to local business owners.

	TASK	ESSENTIALS	ADDITIONAL APPROACHES	RRC BP
A	**Host Check-ins with Financial Institutions.** Understand the community's greatest business needs and opportunities. Come prepared with questions and resource-asks related to the needs and priorities of your municipality's microbusinesses.	X		
B	**Host Dialogues with Bankers and Business Owners.** Foster trust and information sharing. These gatherings can be centered on specific financial topics relevant to microbusiness success.		X	
C	**Establish Public Partnership Banks.** Community banks supply most small business loans. To increase loan opportunities, consider setting up a public partnership bank, in which the municipality owns the bank and partners with local lenders to benefit local economies and support diverse groups, such as women- and BIPOC-owned businesses.		X	

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3.5 FACILITATE INSTITUTIONAL PARTNERSHIPS

When local businesses thrive, local institutions do, too; therefore, there is much to be gained by creating opportunities for resource sharing across both groups. Establishing working relationships with neighboring cities, key local employers, and educational institutions can drive knowledge, capacity, and opportunity to your small businesses in a cost-effective and mutually beneficial manner.

	TASK	ESSENTIALS	ADDITIONAL APPROACHES	RRC BP
A	**Host Check-ins with Real Estate Agents.** Realtors are agents of economic vitality, as they are at the front lines of activating vacant property. Host an annual meeting with realtors to discuss the commercial market, business licensing, and zoning.	X		
B	**Seek Capacity, Research, and Internship Support.** Take advantage of programs offered by the state or local universities, colleges, and community colleges that provide research projects and capacity support free of charge. Work with microbusinesses to identify projects that an intern or team of students could take on.	X		
C	**Host Check-ins with Adjacent Municipalities.** Identify shared successes and needs for supporting small business. Seek opportunities to join forces in support efforts (e.g., hosting a job fair or training).	X		
D	**Organize Job Fairs.** Partner with local business leaders, schools, and neighboring communities to host job fairs to support local business skill-building. Use this opportunity to promote full-time roles, internships, entrepreneurial fellowships, and business planning resources.		X	

Best Practice 4: Education & Empowerment

Offering training is crucial for municipalities, as it empowers business owners with the knowledge and skills to start, sustain, and grow local businesses. This ultimately fosters economic development and financial stability within the community. Best Practice 4 outlines training opportunities for entrepreneurs to hone their business skills, creatively market their products and services, and develop a robust network of peers, mentors, and investors.

4.1 HOST TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE TRAININGS

While essential to the long-term sustainability of a business, developing the knowledge and skills to financially start, manage, and grow a business can feel daunting. Municipalities can reduce this barrier by offering low- or no-cost educational training and literacy resources to best prepare their business owners for fiscal success.

	TASK	ESSENTIALS	ADDITIONAL APPROACHES	RRC BP
A	**Facilitate Business Essentials Training.** Provide training on the key information needed to open a business. This might include information at various stages of business ownership, including but not limited to: » Business and marketing plan creation » Development, permitting, and licensing processes » State law and municipal ordinances regarding small business operation » Legal support » Networking	X	X	

	TASK	ESSENTIALS	ADDITIONAL APPROACHES	RRC BP
B	**Facilitate Financial Literacy Training.** New businesses know their product and their market but not necessarily their finances, which is why they need comprehensive training starting at zero. Host financial literacy training for business owners, including but not limited to: » Accounting, budgeting, and payroll » Banking, loans, and credit » Business insurance processes » Local financial incentives		X	
C	**Facilitate E-Commerce Training.** Having an online presence allows businesses to serve a broader customer base, which also means they'll bring more dollars into the local economy. Help local businesses shift to online sales by organizing classes on marketing and e-commerce.		X	
D	**Facilitate Succession Planning Training.** Offer resources or a list of Economic Development Organizations that can educate small business owners about internal employee career and leadership development, as well as planning for future transitions and uncertainty. These skills are critical for business continuity and performance.		X	
E	**Facilitate Social Media Training.** This helps business owners to engage with customers and boost their brand. Training resources include hiring social media consultants, digital marketing agencies, online courses, local colleges and universities, and Small Business Development Centers.		X	
F	**Facilitate DEI in the Workforce Training.** This helps microbusiness owners develop the necessary skills and knowledge to thrive in a diverse marketplace. This support not only benefits individual small businesses, but also fosters an inclusive community.		X	5.2
G	**Offer High School Financial Literacy Courses.** These curricula can be supported with events and financial reality fairs hosted by local nonprofit organizations.		X	

Best Practice 5: Placemaking & Promotion

Placemaking and promotion activities drive economic growth and community engagement. Placemaking helps microbusiness because it creates vibrant, attractive spaces that draw residents and visitors. Promotional activities increase awareness and visibility of local businesses. Best Practice 5 outlines activities to enhance the physical and social environment of the community, which will generate more business sales.

5.1 CREATE ATTRACTIVE AND FUN COMMERCIAL CORRIDORS

The act of supporting microbusinesses should also serve to make your community a more vibrant, inclusive place to live, work, and play. Through investments in placemaking, including streetscape design, local partnerships, and event planning, municipalities can ensure that their commercial corridors become a favorite destination.

	TASK	ESSENTIALS	ADDITIONAL APPROACHES	RRC BP
A	**Host Special Events.** Support your local tourism industry and collaborate with partners (e.g., the Chamber, the DDA, the Arts and Culture Commission) to bring programming to key public places within commercial corridors.	X	X	
B	**Enhance Streetscape Amenities.** Streetscape amenities can include wider sidewalks, tree-lined or planter-lined streets, lighting, seating, art, and accessible paths.		X	
C	**Produce Art Installations.** Create a (temporary) art installation adjacent to a frequently travelled commercial corridor intersection. This helps to promote foot traffic for local retailers.		X	
D	**Improve Wayfinding.** Invest in a wayfinding campaign, which helps residents and visitors navigate and orient themselves within a city or town. This can include signage, maps, digital tools, and design elements that guide people to destinations, landmarks, and local businesses.		X	

	TASK	ESSENTIALS	ADDITIONAL APPROACHES	RRC BP
E	**Create a Pocket Park.** This is a small, urban park that is usually created on vacant lots, irregularly shaped pieces of land, or leftover space in densely populated urban areas. Parks provide green space, recreational areas, and social gathering spots for community members.		X	
F	**Crowdsource Funding.** Leverage a crowdsource matching fund to finance a larger project, like a new park or infrastructure for a farmer's market. Communities of all sizes can raise matching funds through online fundraising, public-private partnerships and grant-braiding, among other strategies.		X	
G	**Create a Farmer's Market.** Farmer's markets are important for microbusinesses because they offer brand exposure and a platform for market testing, direct sales, and networking opportunities.		X	
H	**Recruit Art and Decor Businesses.** Encourage art and decor businesses to open storefronts in the heart of your commercial district. Art and decor businesses provide a destination for visitors, and they can, for example, serve as an activity for guests who are waiting for their table at a restaurant.		X	
I	**Offer Facade Grants.** Offer facade grants or match funds to improve the aesthetic quality and visual coherence of key streetscapes. This helps to build relationships with business and property owners, promotes community involvement, and invites private investment along commercial corridors.		X	

5.2 ACTIVATE VACANT SPACES

Underutilized pockets of a municipality can be creatively leveraged to uplift microbusinesses, while creating new assets for the entire community in a cost-effective manner. Municipalities should work closely with business leaders, community members, local real estate firms, and design teams to identify opportunities for activation.

	TASK	ESSENTIALS	ADDITIONAL APPROACHES	RRC BP
A	**Create a Municipal Land Sale Program.** Regularly review the municipality's real property ownership and identify which parcels exceed the city's needs for the foreseeable future. Create a platform on the city's website to communicate the surplus parcels of land for sale and any policies for purchasing and/or developing it.	X		**5.1 + 5.3**
B	**Create an Inventory of Vacancies.** Approach owners to discuss opportunities for pop-up activation of those spaces. Communicate this inventory with the local real estate agents.	X		**5.1 + 5.3**
C	**Promote Adaptive Reuse.** This helps local entrepreneurs turn vacant buildings into new businesses. This approach can lower the cost of entry for new businesses while preserving the municipality's history.		X	
D	**Promote Pop-Ups.** Explore opportunities for creating an ongoing pop-up retail space in underutilized properties within the DDA that could allow a small number of new businesses to share space and resources. These types of small, shared retail options reduce the cost of entry for new entrepreneurs and provide a way for small businesses to try out their business model, test products, and eventually move to a permanent space.		X	
E	**Create Community "Adoption" Programs.** Create an Adopt-A-Neighborhood, Adopt-A-Lot, or Adopt-A-Park program to improve vacant or underutilized parcels. These programs promote community involvement with lot beautification, safety, and activation.		X	

5.3 DEDICATE SPACE FOR MICROBUSINESSES

Municipalities lend an important hand in getting local businesses in front of the public. Municipalities should take advantage of existing opportunities to amplify microbusinesses at popular events and should facilitate new opportunities to allocate dedicated space to microbusiness storefronts and activities.

	TASK	ESSENTIALS	ADDITIONAL APPROACHES	RRC BP
A	**Host Business Promotion Events.** Sponsor fairs and other events where businesses can get in front of the community and promote their products and services. These events can double as opportunities for sharing information about city happenings and for fostering community cohesion.	X		**5.1 + 5.3**
B	**Provide a Showcase.** Create opportunities to showcase local products at municipal events, city hall, and community centers. For example, allow vendors to sell products at city hall in a rotating shelf display.	X		**5.1 + 5.3**
C	**Create Space for Microbusinesses in New Development.** Require development projects to reserve a portion of their first-floor space for small storefronts and for locally owned businesses, either as a condition of permitting or through agreements in particular projects. Because of financing incentives and national relationships, new development is often oriented to the needs of large chains; spaces set aside can help close the gap.		X	**5.2**

5.4 PROMOTE MICROBUSINESSES

In addition to supporting business success behind the scenes, municipalities can continue to advocate for their local business community through creative marketing efforts. Opportunities for uplifting local businesses to the wider public should be tailored to your community's preferred mode of communication and engagement, and can span social media, print, radio, TV, podcasts, etc.

	TASK	ESSENTIALS	ADDITIONAL APPROACHES	RRC BP
A	**Update Social Media.** Take every opportunity to amplify and drive traffic to microbusinesses through existing municipal social media channels. For example, tag a local business's product or storefront on the city's social media page.	X		**5.1 + 5.3**
B	**Provide Free Advertising.** Dedicate space in places like newsletters, slideshows, and billboards for the exclusive promotion of the local small business economy. Where possible, offer free ad space for microbusinesses.		X	
C	**Create a Business Directory.** Partner with the local Chamber and DDA to create a local business directory, which is a website or printed document that lists businesses within niche-based categories. Such directories could also feature special certifications or ownership characteristics of microbusinesses, such as BIPOC-owned.		X	
D	**Provide a Free Website.** For example, Oakland County provides a website for all OC businesses, allowing customers to shop their products online. See shopocmainstreets.com.		X	

Resources & Case Studies

CONNECTING RESOURCES WITH BEST PRACTICES

Understanding that municipalities are capacity- and cash-strapped, the project provides the following resource ideas for support when implementing each Best Practice. Resources are defined as organizations that provide capacity support, potential partnerships, or funding support. A summary of the resources can be found on the following pages.

BEST PRACTICE	BP #	TASK	RESOURCE	RESOURCE DESCRIPTION	LINK
1: FRIENDLY TOWN HALL	1.1	A, B, C, E, F, G	Redevelopment Ready Communities Website Guide	A tool for Michigan communities looking to provide information to the public and build a positive image with their website.	miplace.org/4a73ce/globalassets/documents/rrc/rrc-guide-websites3.pdf
	1.1	A, B, C, D, F	WCAG Checklist	A resource to help organizations evaluate and enhance the accessibility of their websites in compliance with the Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG). The WCAG is a set of international standards developed by the World Wide Web Consortium (W3C) to ensure that web content is accessible to all users, including those with disabilities.	levelaccess.com/resources/must-have-wcag-2-1-checklist

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BEST PRACTICE	BP #	TASK	RESOURCE	RESOURCE DESCRIPTION	LINK
1: FRIENDLY TOWN HALL	**1.2**	**A, D**	Michigan SBDC Guide to Starting and Operating a Small Business (English, Arabic, Chinese)	A comprehensive guide that walks potential business owners through each step of setting up a new business, including creating a business plan, accessing legal support, managing finances, marketing, hiring employees, and more.	michiganbusiness.org/4ab164/contentassets/3012969c7e4f43468a97eb5626c-5c5f5/mi-sbdc-english-fullbook.pdf michigansbdc.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/10/MI-SBDC_FullBook_Arabic-Digital-Optimized.pdf michigansbdc.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/10/MI-SBDC_Chinese-Final-Digital-Optimized.pdf
	1.2	**A, D**	ICMA (International City/County Management Association)	Provides leadership, training, and resources to city and county managers and other local government professionals around the world. Founded in 1914, ICMA is dedicated to advancing the quality of local governance through professional management, ethical standards, and effective leadership.	icma.org/sites/default/files/110_JUNE%202007%20%C2%B7%20VOLUME%2089%20%C2%B7%20NUMBER%205.pdf
	1.2	**L**	National Native American Supplier Council (NNASC)	A certifying body for tribally- and Indigenous-owned businesses.	nnasc.org
	1.2	**L**	Certification of Disabled- and Veteran-Owned Businesses (NVBDC)	A certifying authority for veteran-owned and -operated businesses.	nvbdc.org
	1.2	**L**	Michigan Minority Supplier Development Council	A certifying body for minority-owned, -managed, and -controlled businesses	minoritysupplier.org
	1.2	**L**	Great Lakes Women's Business Council	A certifying body for women business owners and women-owned small businesses.	greatlakeswbc.org
	1.3	**A, B, C**	The Municipal Research and Services Center (MRSC)	A nonprofit organization based in Washington State that provides legal, financial, and administrative support to local governments.	mrsc.org/explore-topics/engagement/inclusion/diversity-equity-inclusion#statements

BEST PRACTICE	BP #	TASK	RESOURCE	RESOURCE DESCRIPTION	LINK
2: POLICY	2.1	A	American Planning Association (APA) Zoning for Small Business	This issue of Zoning Practice discusses how use classifications, permissions, and development standards affect small business opportunities. It summarizes key zoning considerations for a range of types of small businesses.	planning.org/publications/document/9105975
	2.1	A	APA Planning for Equity Policy Guide	This guide offers policy recommendations for planners seeking to advance equity at local, state, and federal levels.	planning.org/publications/document/9178541
	2.1	A	APA Equity in Zoning Policy Guide	This guide prioritizes reversing and alleviating the disproportionate impacts of zoning through three aspects of zoning: rules, people, and mapping.	planning.org/publications/document/9264386
	2.1	B	APA Housing Policy Guide	A short guide offering policy approaches that promote housing diversity and affordability.	housingtoolbox.org/assets/files/resources/Housing-Policy-Guide-rev.pdf
	2.1	C, D, E, F, G, H	Supporting Active Living Through Mixed-Use Developments (APA)	A blog post highlighting the environmental, economic, social, and equity benefits achieved through the establishment of mixed-use districts.	planning.org/blog/9227408/supporting-active-living-through-mixed-use-developments
	2.1	E, F, G, H	Local Initiatives Support Corporation (LISC)	LISC offers a range of resources focused on fostering inclusive economic development, including strategies that can be applied to mixed-use manufacturing zones. Their resources are particularly aimed at supporting BIPOC businesses and ensuring equitable access to economic opportunities.	lisc.org/our-initiatives/economic-development
	2.1	H	USDA Urban Agriculture Toolkit	A valuable resource for those looking to contribute to urban sustainability, improve community health, and create economic opportunities through urban farming. It provides actionable steps and access to resources that can help urban agriculture projects succeed and thrive.	usda.gov/sites/default/files/documents/usda-urban-ag-toolkit-overview.pdf
	2.1	H	National Institute of Food and Agriculture Community Food Projects Competitive Grants Program	Provides grants to support the development of community food projects that promote self-sufficiency and food security in low-income communities. This program often funds initiatives that involve mixed-use agriculture, with a focus on supporting BIPOC communities.	nifa.usda.gov/grants/funding-opportunities/community-food-projects-competitive-grants-program

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BEST PRACTICE	BP #	TASK	RESOURCE	RESOURCE DESCRIPTION	LINK
2: POLICY	**2.1**	**I**	APA Equitable Zoning for Home Occupations	This issue of Zoning Practice explores how zoning regulations can remove barriers to working from home. It briefly examines the reasons why zoning reform is necessary before providing recommendations to help planners draft updated standards that better reflect existing conditions and advance equity in zoning.	planning-org-uploaded-media.s3.ama-zonaws.com/publication/download_pdf/Zoning-Practice-2023-09.pdf
	2.1	**J**	National League of Cities' Big Ideas for Small Business Report	The National League of Cities (NLC) is a leading advocacy organization that represents municipalities across the United States. This report offers policy pathways for supporting small businesses.	nlc.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/12/NLC_Big20Ideas20for20Small20Business20Report_201420final.pdf
	2.1	**L**	Micro Retail on Main Street	This guide provides a definition and examples of micro-retail. It also discusses the cost advantages of partitioning large commercial spaces.	miplace.org/496811/globalassets/documents/michigan-main-street/resources/business/business-microretail-24.pdf
	2.1	**N**	Reforming Off-Street Parking is the Key to Fewer Emissions and More Livable Cities (ITDP)	A webpage with a series of reports and articles about the benefits of and strategies to reduce off-street parking within communities.	itdp.org/2023/09/12/reforming-off-street-parking-fewer-emissions-livable-cities
	2.1	**P**	Forbes	Forbes is a valuable resource for its articles, expert opinions, and thought leadership. This article offers ideas for giving and receiving feedback.	forbes.com/sites/hannahart/2021/05/13/giving-feedback-5-elements-of-a-more-inclusive-approach
	2.2	**H, I**	National League of Cities Inclusive Procurement and Contracting Municipal Action Guide	This action guide offers concrete examples of evidence-backed interventions city leaders can implement for minority-owned businesses to successfully apply for and win contracts	nlc.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/06/Inclusive-Procurement-Toolkit_NLC.pdf

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BEST PRACTICE	BP #	TASK	RESOURCE	RESOURCE DESCRIPTION	LINK
3: RELATIONSHIP BUILDING	**3.1**	**A**	Life's Journey Training and Consulting	Life's Journey (LJ) is dedicated to fostering inclusive environments and driving organizational progress across a broad range of sectors. LJ offers expertise in diversity and inclusion, and strategic and leadership development for government agencies, municipalities, counties, educational institutions, and other entities.	lifesjtc.com
	3.1	**A**	Diversity Resources	Diversity Resources has been dedicated to empowering organizations worldwide with comprehensive diversity and inclusion solutions. They are on a mission to create inclusive workplaces that celebrate diversity, foster equity, and drive meaningful change.	diversityresources.com
	3.2	**C**	City Leader Guide on Civic Engagement: Designing Pathways for Participatory Problem Solving (Bloomberg Harvard City Leadership Initiative)	A guide that provides analytic tools, insights from theory and practice, and step-by-step process support for city leaders and staff hoping to engage residents in public problem-solving.	cityleadership.harvard.edu/wp-content/uploads/migrate/BHCLI_CivicEngagement_0000CG.pdf
	3.2	**F**	Civic Engagement: Best Practices and Examples from Across the State (The League)	A resource dedicated to showcasing high-quality community engagement processes and practices from around Michigan.	mml.org/placemaking/wp-content/uploads/sites/2/2013/02/FINAL-MML-2014-Engagement-Booklet.pdf
	3.2	**G**	BUILD Institute	An organization that offers entrepreneurial classes, networking events, mentorship, and connections to resources.	buildinstitute.org
	3.2	**G**	Ann Arbor SPARK	Ann Arbor SPARK serves as an economic development catalyst for the greater Ann Arbor region, and offers a package of support to early-stage tech start ups and small businesses, including co-working spaces, mentorship and networking services, as well as connections to investment and funding opportunities.	annarborusa.org/spark-services/start-up-services
	3.2	**H**	Comerica Hatch Detroit	Comerica Hatch Detroit Contest, which provides funding, mentorship, and exposure to small businesses and entrepreneurs in Detroit.	hatchdetroit.com

BEST PRACTICE	BP #	TASK	RESOURCE	RESOURCE DESCRIPTION	LINK
3: RELATIONSHIP BUILDING	3.2	H	Ford Motor Company	Ford supports small businesses through initiatives like the Ford Resource and Engagement Center (FREC), which provides mentorship, resources, and funding opportunities, especially for minority- and women-owned businesses in Michigan.	fordphilanthropy.org
	3.3	A	American Indian Chamber of Commerce (AICCMI)	Empowers tribal and Indigenous businesses and entrepreneurs through funding, networking, business coaching, and more.	aiccmi.org
	3.3	A	Detroit Regional LGBT Chamber of Commerce	Advocates for the inclusion and success of LGBTQ businesses in Michigan through advocacy, LGBTQ Business certification programs, and more.	detroitlgbtchamber.com
	3.3	A	United States Hispanic Chamber of Commerce - Home USHCC	Accelerates Hispanic business growth and prosperity through advocacy, networking, grant and scholarship programs, and more.	ushcc.com
	3.3	A	Asian Pacific American Chamber of Commerce (APACC), MI	Facilitates business relationships among Asian- and U.S.-based companies and promote economic advancement of Asian Pacific Americans through workshops, networking, loans and funding, and more.	apacc.net
	3.3	A	Middle East and North African (MENA) American Chamber of Commerce	Fosters business connectivity, economic development, and cultural exchange within the MENA region and the U.S. through networking, advocacy, and educational initiatives.	menaachamber.com
	3.3	B	Michigan Association of Counties	Provides resources and advocacy for counties across Michigan, including information on economic development initiatives and programs that support entrepreneurship at the county level.	micounties.org
	3.3	C	MEDC Small Business Support Hubs	A list of local and regional small business support hubs across the state of Michigan.	michiganbusiness.org/services/small-business-support-hub/sbsh-finder

BEST PRACTICE	BP #	TASK	RESOURCE	RESOURCE DESCRIPTION	LINK
3: RELATIONSHIP BUILDING	3.3	D	Michigan Economic Development Corporation – Michigan SmartZones	An interactive map of Michigan SmartZones, which provide distinct geographical locations where technology-based companies, entrepreneurs, and researchers can locate in close proximity to community assets that assist in their business endeavors.	michiganbusiness.org/services/entrepreneurial-opportunity/smartzones
	3.3	G	Spring GR Program	Supports minority and women entrepreneurs in accessing intellectual, financial, and social capital.	springgr.com
	3.3	G	Michigan Business Incubator Association (MBIA)	Supports and promotes activities related to business incubators, accelerators, SmartZone programs, co-working spaces, and other entrepreneurial organizations in Michigan.	michiganinnovation.org
	3.3	G	Minority Business Development Agency (MDBA)	Supports minority-owned businesses in accessing capital, winning contracts, entering new markets, and more.	mbda.gov
	3.3	G	StartOut	Supports LGBTQ+ entrepreneurs with curated access to resources, expert support, financing, and engagement to support the success and growth of their businesses.	startout.org
	3.3	G	Native American Business Association (NABA)	Supports Native American business owners and entrepreneurs through advocacy, training, networking, funding, and more.	nativeamericanbusinessassociation.org
	3.3	G	Detroit United Front – National Business League	Supports, mentors, and fosters collaboration opportunities among Black business owners and entrepreneurs.	nationalbusinessleague.org/duf
	3.3	G	Grand Rapids Area Black Businesses (GRABB) Local	Works to expand opportunities for Black businesses in the Metro Grand Rapids area by assisting them with acquiring cultural, human, social, intellectual, and financial capital, while creating awareness for Black businesses.	grabblocal.com

BEST PRACTICE	BP #	TASK	RESOURCE	RESOURCE DESCRIPTION	LINK
3: RELATIONSHIP BUILDING	3.3	G	TechTown Detroit	An entrepreneurship hub that helps tech startups and small businesses develop, launch, and grow through flexible workspaces, business support workshops and training, and more. TechTown offers free consultation for business owners—and they do not have to be located in Detroit!	techtowndetroit.org
	3.3	G	Detroit Economic Growth Corporation (DEGC)	Detroit-based economic development and jobs organization that supports small businesses through real estate and business development support, small business programming, funding opportunities, and more.	degc.org
	3.3	G	Michigan SBDC Sources of Funding List	A short document listing an overview of all sources of funding to be considered by a new business owner.	michigansbdc.org/wp-content/up-loads/2021/06/Sources-of-Funding.pdf
	3.3	G	Michigan Economic Development Corporation (MEDC)	The Michigan Economic Development Corporation (MEDC) supports small businesses through a comprehensive range of services.	michiganbusiness.org
	3.4	A	Michigan Small Business Development Center (SBDC)	Offers resources and consulting services for municipalities and small business owners, including guidance on engaging with financial institutions.	michigansbdc.org
	3.4	C	Detroit Development Fund	The City of Detroit has partnered with local community banks and credit unions through the Detroit Development Fund (DDF) . The DDF provides loans and support to small businesses, particularly minority- and women-owned enterprises.	detroitdevelopmentfund.com
	3.4	C	Bank of North Dakota	An example of a Public Partnership Bank.	thebndstory.nd.gov

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BEST PRACTICE	BP #	TASK	RESOURCE	RESOURCE DESCRIPTION	LINK
4: EDUCATION & EMPOWERMENT	4.1	A	Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation Money Smart for Small Business	A full curriculum of free, downloadable trainings on financial literacy for entrepreneurs running a new business,	fdic.gov/resources/consumers/money-smart/money-smart-for-small-business
	4.1	A	SCORE Michigan	An organization that offers volunteer small business training, expert mentoring, and resources.	score.org
	4.1	A	Michigan SBDC Business Plan Executive Summary	A short document outlining the key pieces of content that should be included in a business plan.	michigansbdc.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/06/Business-Plan-Executive-Summary.pdf
	4.1	A	Michigan SBDC Simple Business Plan Template	A downloadable template for a simple business plan.	michigansbdc.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/06/MISBDC-Simple-Business-Plan-Template.doc
	4.1	A	Michigan SBDC Marking Plan Guides	A two-page document offering the key elements of a good marketing plan.	michigansbdc.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/06/Marketing-Plan-Guides.pdf
	4.1	A	Michigan SBDC Budgets and Financial Forecasting Spreadsheet	An easily editable spreadsheet with instructions for calculating yearly cash flow projections and variance analyses.	michigansbdc.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/06/Cash-Flow-Projection-and-Variance-Analysis-Spreadsheet.xlsx
	4.1	B	ProsperUS	Partners with municipalities and local organizations to offer business training and financial literacy programs for BIPOC entrepreneurs.	prosperusdetroit.org

BEST PRACTICE	BP #	TASK	RESOURCE	RESOURCE DESCRIPTION	LINK
4: EDUCATION & EMPOWERMENT	4.1	B	TechTown	Offers financial training sessions for business owners that provide essential skills in financial management, budgeting, and access to capital, aimed at helping entrepreneurs grow and sustain their businesses.	techtowndetroit.org/training-series
	4.1	F	Equality Michigan	An organization that educates and empowers LGBTQ+ community members, including by offering LGBTQ+/same gender loving (SGL)/ HIV+ cultural competency trainings to public and private institutions.	equalitymi.org
	4.1	F	Michigan Disability Rights Council	An organization that advocates for justice and equity for individuals with disabilities, including by offering trainings around Assistive Technology (AT).	mymdrc.org/training-by-matp-staff
	4.1	F	Michigan Department of Labor and Economic Opportunity (LEO)	Provides the connections, expertise, and innovative solutions to drive continued business growth, build vibrant communities, create affordable housing, generate tourism, and attract and retain key talent to fill Michigan's vast pipeline of opportunities. In support of this mission, LEO offers a wide range of DEI trainings across Disability Awareness, Universal Design, Supportive Services, and more.	michigan.gov/leo/bureaus-agencies/wd/ resources-for-businesses
	4.1	F	Life's Journey Training and Consulting	A consulting firm dedicated to supporting culturally competent organizational shifts and diversity and inclusion planning through facilitation by a Certified Diversity and Inclusion Professional.	lifesjtc.com
	4.1	G	Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation (FDIC) Guide to Organizing Reality Fairs	A webpage introducing reality fairs as an engaging option to young adult financial literacy training, with organizing guides.	fdic.gov/resources/consumers/mon- ey-smart/organizing-reality-fairs

BEST PRACTICE	BP #	TASK	RESOURCE	RESOURCE DESCRIPTION	LINK
5: PLACEMAKING & PROMOTION	5.1	A	City of Grand Rapids Special Event Planning and Resource Guide	A list of resources for planning a special event in a municipality, including event planning checklists and timelines, associated permits, and more.	grandrapidsmi.gov/Directory/Guides/Special-Event-Planning-and-Resource-Guide
	5.1	A	City of Grand Haven Special Events Planning and Resource Guide	A resource guide that offers step-by-step information and visuals about local event planning requirements and processes.	grandhaven.s3.amazonaws.com/pdf_documents/forms/departments/special_events/special_event_planning_resource_guide.pdf
	5.1	A, B, C, D, E, G	Placemaking as an Economic Development Tool: A Placemaking Guidebook (Michigan State University and the Land Policy Institute)	A guidebook around placemaking in Michigan, including different types of placemaking and strategies to develop placemaking partnerships and projects for unique neighborhoods and communities.	canr.msu.edu/nci/uploads/files/pmguidebook_final_wcag2.0_v.01.06_metadata.pdf
	5.1	A, B, C, D, E, G	Northern Michigan Community Placemaking Guidebook	A guide to developing successful, vibrant public spaces through creative partnerships and engagement with the community.	createmiplace.org/userfiles/filemanager/133
	5.1	B	Michigan Department of Transportation Grants	MDOT provides funding for competitive grant programs and loan programs primarily, but not exclusively, for state and local road agencies. MDOT offers a series of grants for streetscape improvements, including the Transportation Alternatives Program (TAP).	michigan.gov/mdot/programs/grant-programs
	5.1	C	Arts and Planning Toolkit	A toolkit with strategies to help planners push forward arts and culture for community development, including ideas, strategies, engagement activities, and case studies.	artsandplanning.mapc.org
	5.1	C	Municipal Artist Partnership	A webpage dedicated to resource to support relationship-building between municipalities and artists, including resources for partnership facilitation, sample RFPs and contracts, and more.	municipal-artist.org

BEST PRACTICE	BP #	TASK	RESOURCE	RESOURCE DESCRIPTION	LINK
5: PLACEMAKING & PROMOTION	**5.1**	**C**	American Planning Association Arts and Planning Division	Offers a library of resources, newsletters, and funding opportunities for municipalities seeking to strategically integrate art into their communities.	planning.org/divisions/arts
	5.2	**A, B, C, D, E**	A Community Guide to Repurposing Vacant and Underutilized Historic Buildings (SHPO, MSHDA, MHPN)	A guide to support municipal leaders in identifying basic strategies to deal with their vacant, underutilized historic buildings. These include helpful guides and resources to create a plan to identify, evaluate, market, and finance these buildings so they can once again become valuable resources to the community.	mhpn.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/12/A_Community_Guide_to_Repurposing_Vacant_and_Underutilized_Historic_Buildings.pdf
	5.2	**C**	Michigan State University Extension School – The Basics of Adaptive Reuse	A blog post defining the three main types of Adaptive Reuse to pursue at the community level.	canr.msu.edu/news/the_basics_of_adaptive_reuse
	5.2	**D**	LISC Michigan (Local Initiatives Support Corporation)	Provides funding and support for pop-up retail initiatives that aim to revitalize communities and promote economic inclusion.	lisc.org/our-resources/resource/equitable-pathways-small-business-recovery
	5.3	**A**	Michigan Festivals and Events Association (MFEA)	Provides municipalities with guidance, networking, and resources, including marketing tools and best practices, to successfully plan festivals and fairs that maximize business participation and community engagement.	michiganfun.com
	5.4	**B, C, D,**	SCORE	Offers free mentoring and resources for small businesses and municipalities. Their guides include tips on creating business directories, providing free advertising, and helping businesses develop an online presence.	score.org/semichigan

CONNECTING CASE STUDIES WITH BEST PRACTICES

Understanding that municipalities may have limited capacity and funding, this project offers resource ideas based on case studies. These case studies provide examples of how municipalities have utilized capacity-building organizations, partnerships, and funding opportunities to implement Best Practices. A summary of these resources and successful approaches are listed below.

BEST PRACTICE	BP #	TASK	CASE STUDY	CASE STUDY DESCRIPTION	LINK
1: FRIENDLY TOWN HALL	1.1	F	City of Detroit Style Guide	A webpage depicting the City of Detroit's Style Guide, which includes municipal colors, fonts, document templates, and more.	detroitmi.gov/departments/department-in-novation-and-technology/style-guide
	1.1	A, B, C	City of Seattle's Digital Equity Initiative	A comprehensive program aimed at ensuring that all residents have the necessary access to technology, digital literacy skills, and the opportunity to participate fully in the digital divide.	seattle.gov/tech/reports-and-data/about-digital-equity
	1.1	D	City of Austin	The City of Austin conducted a Social Media Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) Audit and developed a corresponding strategy to ensure that its social media communications are inclusive, equitable, and representative of the diverse communities it serves. The audit aimed to assess the City's social media content, engagement practices, and audience reach, with a focus on identifying gaps and opportunities to improve DEI outcomes.	austintexas.gov/page/digital-inclu-sion-strategic-plan
	1.2	A	Comstock Township	An example of a township that has staff, including planners and other administrators, trained in the business development process and prepared to share out economic development resources.	comstockmi.gov/economic-development
	1.2	A	City of Monroe's Department of Economic and Community Development	An example of a municipal webpage that directs new and potential business owners to a suite of resources to support their launch and success, rather than leaving them to navigate the business landscape on their own.	monroemi.gov/b_u_s_i_n_e_s_s/busi-ness_resources
	1.2	D	City of Seattle, WA, Small Business Advocates	Information about Seattle's effort to provide each neighborhood with small business support from a dedicated staff member.	seattle.gov/office-of-economic-develop-ment/small-business
	1.2	D	City of Kalamazoo	The City of Kalamazoo's effort to provide potential business owners with a designated business support representative.	kalamazoocity.org/Business-Development

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BEST PRACTICE	BP #	TASK	CASE STUDY	CASE STUDY DESCRIPTION	LINK
1: FRIENDLY TOWN HALL	1.2	D	City of Ludington	Examples of municipal websites providing potential business owners with collected resources and designated support contacts.	ludington.mi.us/191/Business-Services
	1.2	D	City of Mason's DDA		business.masonchamber.org/list/member/mason-downtown-development-authority-10639
	1.2	D	Village of Sparta's DDA		spartami.org/sparta-dda.php
	1.2	E	Detroit Business Opportunity Program (DBOP) Office Hours	DBOP offers and promotes monthly virtual office hours for residents seeking to open new businesses in the city, across multiple tiers.	detroitmi.gov/departments/civil-rights-inclusion-opportunity-department/detroit-business-opportunity-program
	1.2	E	Plymouth Township	An example of a community that offers regular community development office hours and promotes them both with signage and on the Township webpage.	plymouthtwp.org/government/departments/community_development/index.php
	1.2	H	How to Open a Business Guide (City of Eastpointe)	An example of a short handout offering a clear and compelling overview of the business development process in the City of Eastpointe.	cms9files.revize.com/eastpointemi/Eastpointe-OpenABusiness-Checklist-DRAFT-2024-0216-FINAL.pdf
	1.3	A, B, C	City of Sterling Heights	The Strategic Planning Session Book for the City of Sterling Heights, dated January 30, 2024, provides a comprehensive overview of the City's strategic goals and initiatives. The document outlines the City's vision for the future, including key priorities, initiatives, and action plans aimed at enhancing the quality of life for residents and ensuring the city's long-term sustainability.	sterlingheights.gov/DocumentCenter/View/15917/Strategic-Planning-Session-Book-1-30-24
	1.3	A, B, C	Oakland County	The Oakland County Strategic Framework outlines the County's vision, mission, and strategic priorities aimed at driving the county forward in a sustainable and inclusive manner. This framework serves as a guiding document for county leadership, providing a roadmap to ensure that Oakland County remains a prosperous, vibrant, and equitable community for all its residents.	oakgov.com/government/county-executive/strategic-framework

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BEST PRACTICE	BP #	TASK	CASE STUDY	CASE STUDY DESCRIPTION	LINK
2: POLICY	2.1	A-P	US EPA: How Small Towns and Cities Can Use Local Assets to Rebuild their Economies: Lessons from Successful Places	A compilation of case studies demonstrating a rage of economic development tactics successfully taken by cities across the U.S.	epa.gov/sites/default/files/2015-05/documents/competitive_advantage_051215_508_final.pdf
	2.1	B	City of Ferndale Zoning Ordinance	An example of a zoning ordinance that specifically prioritized development of a diverse housing stock with intentional text and policy.	ferndale.municipalcodeonline.com/book?type=ordinances#name=CHAPTER_24_ZONING
	2.1	B, E, F, G, H, N	City of Eastpointe Zoning Ordinance	Examples of zoning ordinances that address a diverse housing stock, mixed-use districts, and reduced off-street parking.	cms9files.revize.com/eastpointemi/Eastpointe-ZoningOrdinance-Spring2024%20Update-06.18.2024-Final-Adopted.pdf
	2.1	B	Holland Township Zoning Ordinance		hct.holland.mi.us/code-of-ordinances
	2.1	B	City of Walker Zoning Ordinance		walkermi.gov/DocumentCenter/View/3322/Zoning-Ordinance-Effective-February-8-2024
	2.1	E	City of Grandville Zoning Ordinance	An example of a zoning ordinance that prioritizes health and well-being by promoting access to child care (for example, by allowing child care facilities in the mall).	cityofgrandville.com/Zoning%20Ordinance%20EFFECTIVE%2012-2-21.html
	2.1	E	City of Ann Arbor Unified Development Code	The City of Ann Arbor implemented a mixed-use zoning initiative focused on expanding access to health and care services. The initiative aimed to integrate small-scale health and care facilities, such as clinics, elder care, and child care services, into a variety of zoning districts, including residential areas.	a2gov.org/departments/planning/Pages/Unified%20Development%20Code.aspx
	2.1	F, H	City of Minneapolis Small Food Retail Zoning Initiative	The City of Minneapolis implemented the Small Food Retail Zoning Initiative as part of its broader efforts to improve access to healthy food options in underserved neighborhoods. The initiative focuses on adjusting zoning regulations to encourage the establishment and operation of small food retailers, such as corner stores and small grocery stores, particularly in areas identified as food deserts.	minneapolismn.gov/media/-www-content-assets/documents/Minneapolis-Food-Action-Plan.pdf

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BEST PRACTICE	BP #	TASK	CASE STUDY	CASE STUDY DESCRIPTION	LINK
2: POLICY	**2.1**	**F**	Village of Oxford Zoning Ordinance	Examples of zoning ordinances that promote food accessibility in a wide range of districts.	library.municode.com/mi/oxford/codes/code_of_ordinances
	2.1	**F**	Village of Webberville Zoning Ordinance		codelibrary.amlegal.com/codes/webberville/latest/webberville_mi/0-0-0-1
	2.1	**G**	City of Holland's Unified Development Ordinance	An example of a zoning ordinance that promotes small manufacturing in a wide range of zoning districts (for example, Holland offers a makerspace designation).	cityofholland.com/DocumentCenter/View/5359/Chapter-39-Unified-Development-Ordinance-UDO-Effective-September-25-2024?bidId=
	2.1	**G**	City of Hazel Park Master Plan	An example of a master plan that lays the groundwork for a walkable, mixed-use artisan corridor.	cms4files1.revize.com/hazelparkmi/Hazel-Park-MasterPlan-101320.pdf
	2.1	**H**	Armada Township Special Ancillary Agricultural Uses Overlay District	Armada Township uses zoning districts to promote novel agricultural activities, such as cider mills, breweries, and agritourism.	armadatwp.org/go.php?id=2150&table=page_uploads
	2.1	**H**	City of St. John's Zoning Ordinance	An example of a zoning ordinance that promotes small-scale agricultural businesses within the community (for example, see the Keeping of Animals section).	codelibrary.amlegal.com/codes/stjohns/latest/stjohns_mi/0-0-0-2
	2.1	**I**	City of Grand Rapids	The City of Grand Rapids undertook a significant reform of its zoning regulations to better accommodate and support home-based businesses. Recognizing the growing trend of home-based entrepreneurship, particularly among BIPOC communities and during the COVID-19 pandemic, the city aimed to create a more flexible and supportive environment for small businesses operating out of residential properties.	grandrapidsmi.gov/Government/Departments/Planning

BEST PRACTICE	BP #	TASK	RESOURCE	RESOURCE DESCRIPTION	LINK
3: RELATIONSHIP BUILDING	3.1	A	Association of Washington Cities – Equity Resource Guide	A series of case studies demonstrating efforts made by cities in Washington State to promote diversity, equity, and inclusion across municipal budgeting, housing, transportation and infrastructure, criminal justice, and more.	wacities.org/docs/default-source/resources/equityresourceguide.pdf?s-fvrsn=dd05244f_3
	3.1	A	San Francisco Department of Human Resources (SFDHR)	The San Francisco Department of Human Resources (SFDHR) implemented a comprehensive Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) strategy to promote an inclusive workplace and ensure equitable treatment of all employees within the city's workforce. The initiative focuses on embedding DEI principles into all aspects of human resources management, from recruitment and hiring to training and employee development.	sfdhr.org/diversity-equity-and-inclusion
	3.1	A	Southfield Area Chamber of Commerce Diversity and Inclusion Council	Examples of a community's commitment to the integration of diversity, equity, and inclusion in policy, programming, and community life.	southfieldchamber.com/equity-inclusion-and-sustainability
	3.1	A	Livingston County Diversity Council		livingstondiversity.org
	3.1	A	Traverse City's Groundwork Center for Resilient Communities		groundworkcenter.org
	3.1	A	Midland County Diversity and Inclusion Alliance		midlandinclusioncouncil.com
	3.1	B	City of Ferndale's Pride and DIY Street Fair	An example of a multicultural community event.	ferndalepride.com

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BEST PRACTICE	BP #	TASK	RESOURCE	RESOURCE DESCRIPTION	LINK
3: RELATIONSHIP BUILDING	3.1	B	City of Southfield's Jazz Festival	Examples of multicultural community events.	cityofsouthfield.com/visitors/attractions/kimmie-horne-jazz-festival
	3.1	B	City of Troy's Public Library Cultural Series		troypl.org/information/learn/policies/programs.php
	3.1	B	City of Novi's Public Library International Festival		novilibrary.org/programs-events
	3.1	B	City of Farmington Hills Multicultural Festival		fhgov.com/play-explore-learn/arts-culture/festivals
	3.2	C	Park Township's Airport Park Community Engagement	An example of active dialogue and engagement within a community to build trust and advance shared project objectives.	parktownship.org/news_detail_T28_R58.php
	3.2	F	Village of Stockbridge's Master Plan Engagement at a Motorcycle Rally	Examples of community engagement facilitated within community gathering spaces.	villageofstockbridgemi.gov/wp-content/uploads/2024/03/Draft-3-dated-January-19-2024-Stockbridge-Village-MP-Draft-2024-0122-1.pdf
	3.2	F	City of Ferndale's Zoning Ordinance Engagement at Summer Concert Series		zoneferndale.com
	3.2	G	Detroit Regional Chamber	An example of a networking series for small business owners, hosted by a local Chamber of Commerce.	detroitchamber.com/events

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BEST PRACTICE	BP #	TASK	RESOURCE	RESOURCE DESCRIPTION	LINK
3: RELATIONSHIP BUILDING	3.2	G	Macomb County Chamber of Commerce	Examples of networking series for small business owners, hosted by a local Chamber of Commerce.	mccbiz.macombcountychamber.com/events
	3.2	G	Monroe County Chamber of Commerce		business.monroecountychamber.org/community-events
	3.2	G	Kansas City, MO, Chamber Networking Opportunities		kcchamber.com/what-we-do/networking-opportunities
	3.3	A	Ann Arbor/Ypsilanti regional Chamber Partnerships	Examples of regional chamber partnerships that host regular check-ins.	a2ychamber.org/about-us/chamber-partners
	3.3	A	City of Grand Rapids Chamber Partnership Calendar		grandrapids.org/events
	3.4	A	BankOn Detroit	BankOn Detroit is a collaboration between financial institutions, community-based organizations, and local government to ensure that all residents have the opportunity to be financially healthy.	detroitmi.gov/departments/department-neighborhoods/financial-empowerment-center-fec/bankon
	3.5	B	City of River Rouge Development Handbook	A comprehensive handbook created by a pro bono team of students in the University of Michigan Taubman College's Fundamentals of Planning Course to promote small business ownership in River Rouge.	drive.google.com/file/d/1mUz-eFdGN-3jQX5SuzX_yxT-BQhrhuuhH/view
	3.5	B	City of Hamtramck Business Resource Guide	A one-page resource guide created by a pro bono team of students at the University of Michigan to organize and clearly communicate all relevant business contacts and processes in Hamtramck.	hamtramckcity.gov/wp-content/uploads/2024/06/Final-Hamtramck-One-Pager-Resource-Updated-QR-Codes.pdf

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BEST PRACTICE	BP #	TASK	RESOURCE	RESOURCE DESCRIPTION	LINK
4: EDUCATION & AWARENESS	**4.1**	**A**	City of Southfield BizBOX	The City of Southfield offers a webpage dedicated to free business essentials training resources for interested residents.	cityofsouthfield.com/business/bizbox
	4.1	**B**	Washtenaw County Financial Empowerment Center (FEC)	Offers regular, free coaching sessions for residents looking to learn more about financial literacy and get a better handle on their own personal and business finances.	washtenaw.org/3061/Financial-Empowerment-Center
	4.1	**B**	City of Detroit Financial Empowerment Center (FEC)	Offers professional, one-on-one financial counseling as a free public service to enable residents to address their financial challenges, answer needs, and plan for their futures. Residents receive free, one-on-one professional counseling assistance with money management, budgeting, reducing debt, establishing and improving credit, connecting to safe and affordable banking services, building savings, and referrals to other services and organizations.	detroitmi.gov/departments/department-neighborhoods/financial-empowerment-center-fec

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BEST PRACTICE	BP #	TASK	RESOURCE	RESOURCE DESCRIPTION	LINK
5: PLACEMAKING & PROMOTION	5.1	A	Project for Public Spaces: Great Places in the Great Lakes State – 20 Years of Placemaking in Michigan	A blog post explaining the value of placemaking to Michigan and documenting the best, linked examples of Michigan's placemaking efforts.	pps.org/article/great-places-great-lakes-state-20-years-placemaking-michigan
	5.1	A	Port Huron's Blue Water Fest		thebluewaterfest.com
	5.1	A	Zeeland's Pumpkin Fest	Examples of special events that attract tourists and provide spaces to showcase small businesses.	zeelandfestivals.com/copy-of-event-details-1
	5.1	A	Ann Arbor Top of the Park Summer Festival		a2sf.org
	5.1	B	City of Detroit Streetscape Program	A webpage documenting the City of Detroit's comprehensive streetscape program, which includes a range of example projects and their associated plans, resources, and imagery.	detroitmi.gov/departments/department-public-works/complete-streets/streetscape-program
	5.1	B	2015 PlacePlan: Traverse City West Front Corridor Action Plan	An action plan for streetscape improvements in Traverse City that uses zoning and code updates, infill and city lot development, and creative public participation to reinvigorate a commercial corridor.	mml.org/placemaking/wp-content/uploads/sites/2/2015/04/PlacePlans_TraverseCity-reduced.pdf
	5.1	B	City of Holland's Heated Sidewalks and Fireplace	An example of streetscape amenities provided along a key commercial corridor to promote pedestrian comfort and safety and to ensure foot traffic for small businesses during winter months.	holland.org/snow-free-holland
	5.1	C	City of Muskegon's Shoreline Installation	An example of an art installation along key commercial shoreline corridors, which served to pave the way for new bike and walking paths alongside the installation.	muskegon-mi.gov/muskegon-city-public-art-initiative-portal
	5.1	C	City of Tecumseh's Art Trail	An example of an art installation trail that creatively lines and encourages foot traffic along key commercial corridors.	downtowntecumseh.com/things-to-do/art-trail.php

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BEST PRACTICE	BP #	TASK	RESOURCE	RESOURCE DESCRIPTION	LINK
5: PLACEMAKING & PROMOTION	5.1	C	City of Detroit Arts Alleys	An example of a community-driven and place-based art installation initiative across multiple neighborhoods in Detroit.	ace.detroitmi.gov/about-arts-alleys
	5.2	A	City of Detroit Properties Webpage	Resources for purchasing public property from the City of Detroit, including an interactive map of all available properties, a visualized process for purchasing property, and more.	detroitmi.gov/government/mayors-office/properties
	5.2	A	Genesee County Land Bank "Featured Lots for Development" Webpage	Resources for purchasing public property from Genesee County Land Bank, including an interactive list of all available properties, a visualized process for purchasing property, and more.	thelandbank.org/featured_lots.asp
	5.2	A	City of Hamtramck's Community and Economic Development Department "Property for Sale" Webpage	Information about auctions for vacant or surplus public property, including a list of available properties and a step-by-step process to purchasing them.	hamtramckcity.gov/community/property-for-sale
	5.2	B	City of Detroit's Development Opportunities Map	An interactive map that allows potential buyers to easily browse and compare the available commercial properties for sale.	detroitmi.gov/webapp/detroit-development-opportunities
	5.2	C	Muskegon Western Market Chalets	Documents the work happening within the City of Muskegon to promote small business ownership through creative placemaking and tiny modular storefronts.	muskegonwesternmarket.com/our-chalets
	5.2	E	City of Muskegon "Adopt-A-Lot" Program	The City of Muskegon's efforts to beautify neighborhoods and increase maintenance standards for underutilized lots across the city through public engagement.	muskegon-mi.gov/explore-muskegon/neighborhoods/adopt-a-lot
	5.3	A	Portland Indigenous Marketplace	A community-focused event series that supports Indigenous artists and entrepreneurs by providing a platform to sell their goods, share their cultures, and connect with the broader public.	indigenousmarketplace.org

BEST PRACTICE	BP #	TASK	RESOURCE	RESOURCE DESCRIPTION	LINK
5: PLACEMAKING & PROMOTION	5.3	A	Ann Arbor Art Fair	Information about the annual Ann Arbor Art Fair, including sponsorship, programming, communications, and more.	artfair.org
	5.3	A	City of Royal Oak Small Business Saturday and Small Business Passport	Showcases the City of Royal Oak's downtown small business promotional programming, including special events and unique projects to engage community members in supporting small business.	romi.gov/1450/Small-Business-Saturday
	5.3	B	City of South Bend, IN, Small Business Showcase Magazine	A free published magazine dedicated to promoting the small businesses of Northern Indiana and Southwest Michigan.	smbizshowcase.com
	5.4	A	City of Battle Creek Small Business Development Office Social Media	Highlights the social media promotion efforts made by the City of Battle Creek Small Business Development Office.	smallbusinessbattlecreek.com/social-media
	5.4	B,C,D	City of Grand Rapids - GR Forward	As part of the GR Forward plan, Grand Rapids collaborates with organizations like the Grand Rapids Chamber and Downtown Grand Rapids Inc. to create business directories and provide free advertising for local businesses across multiple channels.	grandrapidsmi.gov/Government/Programs-and-Initiatives/GR-Forward

Appendix

"HOW TO START A BUSINESS" GUIDE TEMPLATE

This guide provides aspiring entrepreneurs and municipal workers with the essential steps, resources, and legal requirements to start and operate a business. This guidance helps reduce common pitfalls, ensures compliance with regulations, and increases the likelihood of long-term success, fostering economic growth and innovation. Municipalities of all sizes can personalize, reproduce, and share this guide, as well as the templates from this guide, on their website and in their community.