Through the generous support of our four funding partners (Franklin County, the Columbus Partnership, Rev1 Ventures, and the Columbus Foundation) Forward Cities has worked with a set of cross-sector community stakeholders to:

1. **Discover** Franklin County’s current and evolving entrepreneurial landscape
2. **Design** interventions to persistent barriers to entrepreneurship and small business growth among entrepreneurs and small business owners of color
3. **Deliver** measured impact of the interventions for sustainable change
We assessed the barriers facing local Black and Latinx entrepreneurs to establish a baseline from which to measure progress.

**WEALTH GAP**

29 percentage point difference in the proportion of families living in homes they owned: white (non-Hispanic) 62% vs Black 33%

**ENTREPRENEURIAL DENSITY**

Substantial differences in the rate of business ownership between white and Black adults (22.4 and 4.0 per 1,000 adults, respectively)

**EARNINGS GAP**

Among full time workers, for every $1 earned by white (non-Hispanic) males, white (non-Hispanic) women earned $0.83, Black men earned $0.66, and Black women earned $0.65

Between 2012 and 2016, the earnings gap between white (non-Hispanic) workers and Black workers grew by 27% (2012: $9,322 to 2016: $11,860)

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**PILOT NEIGHBORHOODS ENTREPRENEUR SURVEY, 2019**

(Individuals who currently owned a business or were trying to start a business were asked about their most pressing needs)

- ≤ $30,000
  - 47% of participants report revenue of $30,000 or less suggesting their current business was unlikely to provide sufficient income to support their work full time
  - Less than a third of current business owners felt support organizations understood the challenges and opportunities they face.

- < 1/3

**ENTREPRENEUR SUPPORT ORGANIZATION (ESO) SURVEY, 2020**

(Organizations providing direct services to aspiring entrepreneurs and current business owners were asked about their characteristics, resources, and connectivity between organizations within the local ecosystem)

- 31%
  - 31% of participants reported that organizations were “very successful” or “completely successful” at working together to support entrepreneurs and small business owners.

A summary of evidence found in all surveys can be found in our Interactive Data Pages for Franklin County.
1. SIDE HUSTLE TO CEO

Difficulty transitioning a business idea and side job, or “side hustle,” to a formal business was among the key barriers to equity in entrepreneurship. A lack of information on pathways to success and the resources available from ESOs were intermediate roadblocks for the transition.

THE SIDE HUSTLE TO CEO TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE PROGRAM PROVIDED 1:1 COACHING AND MENTORSHIP SERVICES TO EXISTING SIDE-HUSTLE ENTREPRENEURS WHO HAD BEEN UNABLE TO GROW THEIR BUSINESS INTO A FULL-TIME VENTURE.

A Side Hustle to CEO coach served as an ecosystem ‘concierge’, connecting entrepreneurs to additional resources in the local ecosystem. Upon completion, each business owner received a $1,000 cash incentive to support the formalization of their business as prescribed by their coach.

CREATE A NEW SOLUTION

2. INNOVATION SPRINTS

Difficulty sustaining and expanding current businesses was among the barriers to equity in entrepreneurship; especially for under-connected and under-resourced entrepreneurs.

THE INNOVATION SPRINT PROGRAM WAS ENVISIONED AS AN ACCELERATED OPPORTUNITY FOR NEIGHBORHOOD-LEVEL RETAIL/FOOD BUSINESSES, IN THE KING LINCOLN OR WHITEHALL NEIGHBORHOODS, TO GAIN KNOWLEDGE, EXPERTISE, AND CAPITAL INFUSION.

Facilitated “sprints” (i.e., innovation workshops) brought together a curated fractional ‘C-Suite’ of experts to provide high-level consulting to help entrepreneurs identify barriers to growth and ideate on solutions. Participants who completed the program received a $5,000 award to help support continuing growth efforts.

CREATE A NEW SOLUTION
We offered Franklin County ESOs the opportunity to participate in our proprietary ABIDE workshop aimed at exploring the cross-section of economic development, business development, and community development through an equity lens. This training served as the cultural competency component of the engagement.

To read more about our approach or to learn how we can collaborate with your community, please visit ForwardCities.org or contact Brett Brenton at bbrenton@forwardcities.org.