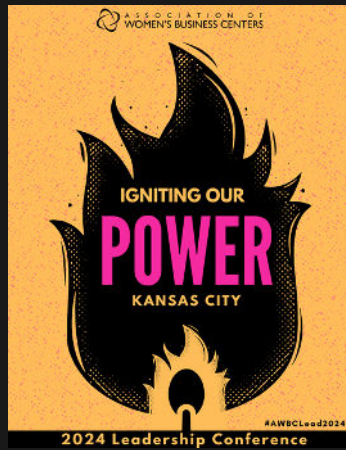


2024 AWBC LEADERSHIP CONFERENCE

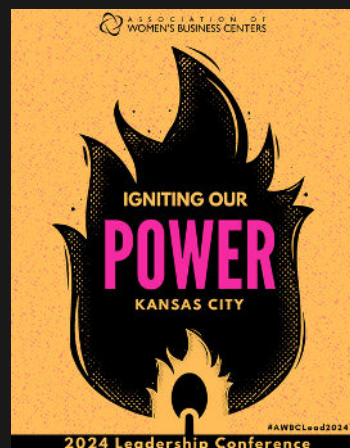
Bridging the Gap: How Retail Incubators are Supporting Entrepreneurs



Missouri Women's Business Center &
Maryland Women's Business Center



SEPTEMBER 2024



Missouri Women's Business Center Team



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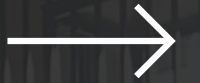
MISSOURI WOMEN'S BUSINESS CENTER

a program of Central Missouri Community Action



U.S. Small Business
Administration

Funded in part through a Cooperative Agreement
with the U.S. Small Business Administration.



www.theshopsatsharpend.com



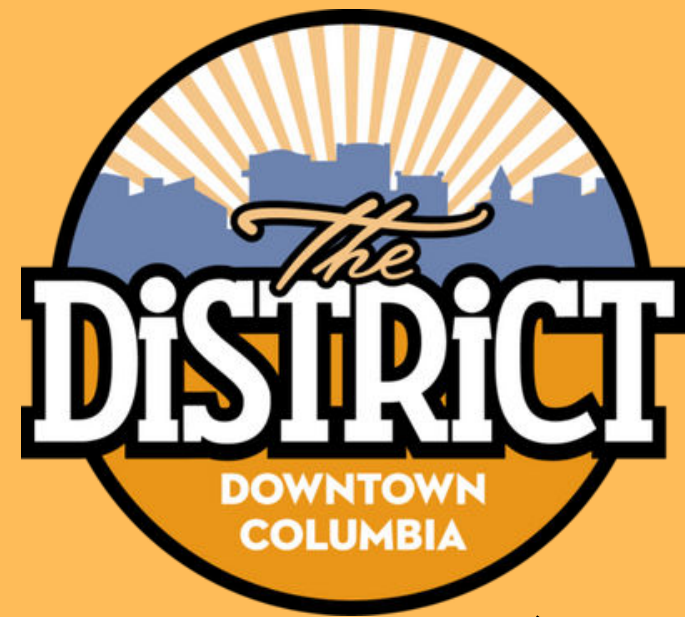
Facebook: The Shops at Sharp End
Instagram: @theshopsatsharpend

The Sharp End

The "Sharp End" in Columbia, Missouri, was a historic African American district that thrived during the mid-20th century. It was a vibrant hub of Black culture and entrepreneurship, featuring numerous businesses, jazz clubs, and community gathering spaces. Sharp End served as a testament to the resilience and creativity of the Black community in the face of racial segregation. Though it was eventually displaced by urban renewal projects in the 1950s and 1960s, its legacy remains an integral part of Columbia's history, symbolizing the enduring spirit of the local African American community.



The Shops at Sharp End Managing Partners



Promotions

Staffing

Space



The Shops at Sharp End Today

Vision – Highlight innovative and creative retail businesses in a collaborative gathering space where passionate entrepreneurs come together, connect with the public, share their ideas, and grow their businesses.

Mission – Reduce barriers to entry for low to moderate income individuals and minoritized populations who desire to start new retail enterprises by **helping them become financially viable, freestanding, successful business owners through participation in the retail incubator program.**





The Shops at Sharp End Offers

Low monthly participant fee of \$50

Participants pay a flat monthly fee to display their products in The Shops at Sharp End.



Shared retail space in a downtown location

The Shops at Sharp End has one location on the corner of 5th and Walnut in downtown Columbia, MO.



Ongoing coaching and support

Participants receive coaching and mentorship from the Program Manager, business coaches, and experts brought in for workshops and demonstrations.



PRODUCTS OFFERED

Adult & Children's Books, Jewelry, Accessories, Tee Shirts, Dresses, Candles, Teas, Keychains, Tumblers, Skincare, and Makeup

Participant Journey

Participants must undergo an application and orientation process before they are officially admitted to The Shops at Sharp End. These steps mirror those they would take if they were starting their own brick and mortar.

MISSOURI WOMEN'S BUSINESS CENTER

1

Initial connection

2

Application and documentation

3

Participant Spotlight Event

4

Inventory Move In

5

Ongoing monthly coaching and support



Tiowana Warrick Program Manager

Role: to help guide participants as they learn what it takes to run a retail business.

Tiowana comes from a strong retail background and is in the shop daily with participants, coaching them on inventory management, merchandising, marketing, point of sale system use, and more.

MISSOURI WOMEN'S BUSINESS CENTER



Challenges

Initial Setup

External pushes to open sped things up. Getting Managing Partners on the same page was a learning process.

Finding Participants

Finding participants who were ready to take their business to the next level was difficult.

Keeping Participants

Participants are often busy in other areas of their lives, making it difficult for them to make the required time commitment.

Cohesiveness

Coordinating product lines and offerings from multiple businesses at different levels is difficult. Managing Partners presenting a unified front has been a challenge due to different internal agency structures.

Expectations/Guidelines

Adhering to requirements of the program (hours to be worked, etc.) has proven to be difficult.

Location

Traffic flow has been an issue during some seasons – we rely heavily on events which take time and resources to plan.



Candace Hulsizer
Black Tea Bookshop



Aaron Fox
Aaron Fox Writes



Success Stories



U.S. Small Business
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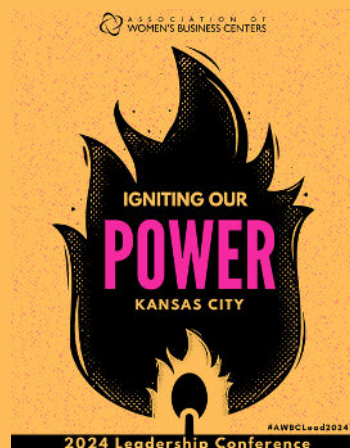


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Maryland Women's Business Center



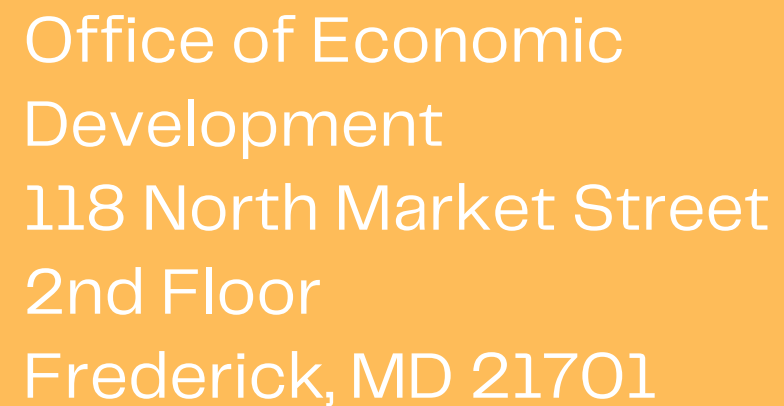
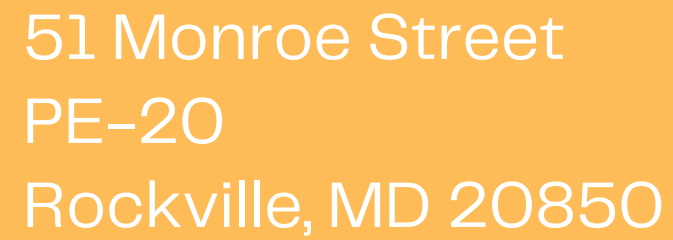
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MWBC Shop Local



MWBCSHOPLOCAL.COM



Program Components

- Flexible Space
- Shared Resources
- Expert Guidance

Businesses Supported

- Clothing
- Selfcare
- Jewelry
- Home Goods
- Original Art
- Handmade Items
- Personal Accessories

**Categories that have not worked: food, florals and stationery.*

Locations

📍 MWBC Shop Local Rockville

36-D Maryland Ave
Rockville, MD 20850

📍 MWBC Shop Local Savage Mill

8600 Foundry St
Savage, MD 20763

📍 MWBC Shop Local Bowie

Opening 2025

📍 MWBC Shop Local Powered by the 3rd

10215 Wincopin Circle, Suite 100
Columbia, MD 21044

📍 MWBC Shop Local Powered by Lotus

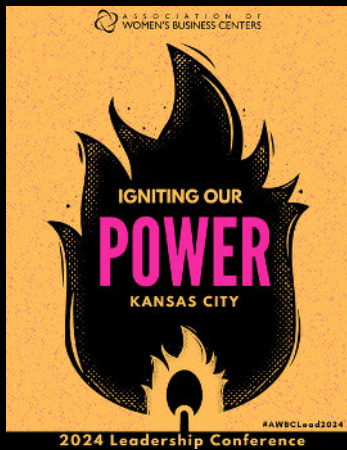
8429 Main St
Ellicott City, MD 21043

📍 MWBC Shop Local Powered by Frederick

May 2025



Recruitment & Program Timeline



Scaling Considerations

Benefits

- Empower Entrepreneurs
- Neighborhood Revitalization
- Retail Pipeline
- Small Business Support

Expenses

- Permits
- Signage, Fixtures, etc.
- Rent
- Utilities
- Cleaning
- Marketing
- Personnel





Tips for Success



Develop Partnerships



Budget by Location



Standard Operating Procedures



**Formalize Participant Agreements
and Sub-Licenses**



Read & Negotiate the Lease



Program Personnel & Mentors



Communicate & Connect Regularly

Steps to Scaling a Program



01

Research

- Area/ Vacancy
- Existing Programs
- Plans: Economic Development & Gov

02

Partner

- Property Owners
- Existing Businesses
- EDO/A's
- SME's

03

Communicate

- WBC Value/ Program
- Activation
- Entrepreneur Support
- Alignment w/ Goals

04

Agreements

- Execute Agreements for Pilot (if needed)

05

Pilot

- Small is OK
- Show Program Potential
- DRIVE Foot Traffic & Sales

06

LOSs & Data

- LOSs from Participants & Partners
- Compile Data & Update Research

07

Proposal

- Align with Vision, Goals, and Strategic Plan
- ALWAYS w/ Small Business Support

08

Reports

- Demonstrate Value
- Opportunity for Funders to Connect

Howard County Expansion

Pilot



5-month project in a 250 sq. ft. café of The 3rd, with no financial support

LOS



Letters of support and quotes from partners and participants to validate need

Research



Pilot data, demographic, business data (BLS), economic development plans, gov goals, and available space

Proposal



Pilot data, LOIs, research, and WBC small business support, tailor to the audience

Agreement



Execute agreements with partners – funders, licensor, and participants

Report



Monthly to demonstrate program value and provide opportunity for funders to connect



City of Bowie Expansion

Research



Demographic, business data (BLS), economic development plans, gov goals, and available space

Funding



Line-item budget of expenses and projected revenue. Program contingent on small business support.

Proposal



Tailor to audience, include success stories, metrics, and research information, specifically outline small business support and program needs

Champion



Identify how your program benefits constituents. Have a champion in your corner.

Present



Don't be afraid to present to Mayor & Council – MWBC did over 5x's



Success Stories



Sha's Creations

- Scaled business from skincare to include medspa services
- Opened a storefront
- Secured 6 grants and grossed over \$2.5M in revenue since launching



DOV Jewelry

- Grew from online store to retail storefront upon graduation
- Storefront includes a curated selection of women-owned business that compliment DOV



Questions?