Resources to Support Proto-Business Development: Report to the Nehemiah Center for Urban Leadership Development

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Introduction

How do people become entrepreneurs before they are in a position to file all the legal forms, get the loans, secure a location, get all the startup supplies, procure all the formal education, and build all the networks needed to even have a chance at success? In particular, how do Black people do that in a context of institutionalized racism that makes all those things harder?

Mr. Harry Hawkins and Dr. Karen Reece of the Nehemiah Center for Urban Leadership Development brought this question to the Community and Environmental Sociology Fall 2021 Capstone Course. Mr. Hawkins had experienced and witnessed both the potential and the challenges of Black people attempting to start up what he terms *proto-businesses*–ways that people put their talents and skills to use helping friends and neighbors for relatively small amounts of income or barter or as generalized reciprocity–being part of a sustained mutual aid culture. Mr. Hawkins and Dr. Reece wanted someone to gather up knowledge and resources that they could use to build a program to support the development and sustainability of proto-businesses that could then be grown into entrepreneurial businesses.

This report is divided into three major sections. You can quickly see which section you are in by looking at the color of the bar in the footer. The literature review section is first, and has a blue bar. The interviews section is second, with a pink bar. And the resources section is third, with a yellow bar.

For the literature review we co-designed an “environmental scan” research project to find out what literature might exist on proto-business, or pre-entrepreneurship, development. We amassed over 180 references– including books, journal articles, blogs, videos, and podcasts–and organized them into the thematic sections you see here. We found remarkably little designed specifically to help Black proto-business development. The vast majority of resources are designed for people attempting to start full-fledged businesses, and of those the bulk of resources are for tech start-ups. There is clearly a gap of information resources for those taking the very first steps toward making their talents available to people for small amounts of income. We have emphasized resources written by Black authors for Black entrepreneurs, but included more general resources when it seemed appropriate.

In another part of the project we interviewed experienced Black entrepreneurs in and around Madison to learn what resources were most important to them when they first started. We promised confidentiality to our interview participants so they could speak as freely as possible. The interview results appear in the *Voices* section of this report and we will point out where they confirm and contrast with the literature.

Finally, the “Resources” section provides more in-depth information on specific resources that might be of value. We have highlighted those resources that were recommended by our interview participants.

Literature Review

Theoretical Context

No single document could ever begin to uncover all of the causes or justifications of structural racism that affect Black proto-businesses and entrepreneurs. Therefore, this section aims to provide a very broad and simplified background on the causes of structural racism in the United States.

On one hand, with the election of President Barack Obama, many Americans perceived the United States to be a "post-racist" society.[2] Time has been used against Black people in the way that people, predominantly White people, currently see racism as an issue of the past. They view it as something that has been solved and no longer affects people of color. Unfortunately, the harsh reality is that American society is still very much racist and the idea of "post-racism," contributes to the perpetuation of structural racism. White people are unconsciously participating in structural racism by ignoring the policies and systems that have been set up to protect them from the same dangers that perpetually affect Black communities.

On the other hand, with the election of Donald Trump to the office of President and the rise of White supremacist fascism in the United States, virulent racism was unleashed across the land in a way that has only intensified. In this context, any discussion of race and racism is deemed a threat to White power. Bans prohibiting speech about the boogeyman *critical race theory* (which includes any discussion of how White people actively constructed a racist society for their own benefit) are now rampant across the country.[3]

So now is the time to speak up about structural racism, and defy the bans and the censorship to promote understanding of structural racism and its many effects.

What is Structural Racism?

Race is not a biological difference, but a social construct that has long been used to weaponize skin color. The social construction of race has been used to justify enslavement, racism and violent oppression. Racism is so deeply ingrained in the social institutions of the United States, it becomes hard to discern what is conscious and what is unconscious. Racism is such a complex concept, yet in the United States it has been dangerously oversimplified to the point where it is not taken seriously.[4]

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[2] Cooper, Brittney. 2016. "The Racial Politics of Time." TEDWomen. https://www.ted.com/talks/brittney_cooper_the_racial_politics_of_time

[3] Education Week. 2021. Map: Where Critical Race Theory Is Under Attack. https://www.edweek.org/policy-politics/map-where-critical-race-theory-is-under-attack/2021/06.

[4] Ray, Rashawn. 2021. "Is the United States a Racist Country?" Brookings Institution. https://www.brookings.edu/blog/how-we-rise/2021/05/04/is-the-united-states-a-racist-country/

There is more propelling racism than attitudes and prejudice. Eduardo Bonilla-Silva urged us to move beyond thinking about attitudes and values to consider how racialized social structures form. For Bonilla-Silva, socially constructed racial categories are created and then arranged in a hierarchy, where those groups assigned to the top of the hierarchy get more for no reason other than their place in the racial hierarchy. This system is created and reinforced through interactions between people within and across those racial categories. It is maintained by force when necessary, but most commonly by informal norms and formal policies that direct and constrain people's actions and interactions.[5] Iris Marion Young states that race is a structure of oppression and that oppression has five faces.[6] These five faces include exploitation, marginalization, powerlessness, cultural imperialism and violence, and domination.

The Madison Black entrepreneurs we interviewed for this project are thoughtfully aware of these realities. As one says:

> "I also read recently that it could take Black families 200 plus years to actually accumulate the same amount of wealth as white families due solely to the structural racism just in housing. But then you think of all the other structural inequities and isms that impact Black folks...it has a significant adverse impact."

Another interview participant notes that structural racism impacts Black people in not just material ways, but it also can affect a person's outlook:

> "Look at the George Floyd stuff, look at the Ahmaud Arbery stuff, look at the Breonna Taylor stuff. All of those things make young people feel like they don't got agency in this context."

We will also see, however, the many ways that Black entrepreneurs have been countering this reality, against the odds.[7]

Structural Racism and U.S. Capitalism

Structural racism constructed the basic foundations of the United States and some are still prevalent in modern American capitalism. The oppressive mechanisms of capitalism allow for White people to maintain control, while preventing Black people and other people of color from accessing different forms of capital. The living nightmares associated with capitalism are often ignored, and most disproportionately experienced by people of color. Regardless of how one feels about the U.S. economic system, when

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[5] Bonilla-Silva, Eduardo. 1997. "Rethinking Racism: Towards a Structural Interpretation." American Sociological Review 62:465-480.

[6] Young, Iris M.1990. "The Five Faces of Oppression." *Justice and the Politics of Difference*. https://drive.google.com/file/d/10brrbLqqBYuMSNDtlITQ2FG6hwAjCeX7/view

[7] Wills, Shomari. 2018. Black Fortunes: The Story of the First Six African Americans Who Escaped Slavery and Became Millionaires. Amistad.

thinking about American capitalism it is important to acknowledge that “It is not true capitalism because not everyone has access to the system. Taking away the rights of someone to participate and compete in the system, so that others can succeed, is not true capitalism.”[8]

Political, social and economic policies have long discriminated against people of color, limiting their potential for upward mobility, opportunity and prosperity. White supremacist ideology has created the illusion that “the market” would be negatively affected by the participation of Black people.[9] In addition, the effects of segregation have persisted into the present day, disproportionately preventing Black people from accessing quality education, employment opportunities, healthcare, and fair treatment.[10] Urban development, and especially the construction of freeways through cities, destroyed Black neighborhoods and their economic centers.[11] Outright violence has destroyed Black community economies including the original Black Wall Street in the Greenwood district of Tulsa, Oklahoma, destroyed by White rioters in 1921.[12]

Effects of Structural Racism on Black Entrepreneurship

How does structural racism impact Black entrepreneurial success? Despite the ability of Black people to close education gaps over the past few decades, bias and racism still prevents them from receiving the same amount of financial capital as white business owners.[13] Racist and discriminatory policies have allowed banks to prevent Black entrepreneurs from receiving loans, low interest-rates, and lines of credit. Black entrepreneurs have additionally been segregated from important social networks that could support their entrepreneurship.[14] SCORE cites statistics that Black-owned

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[8] Hawkins, Harry. Personal Interview. November 29, 2021.

[9] Johnson, Walter. 2016. “What Do We Mean When We Say ‘structural Racism’?” Kalfou 3(1), https://scholar.harvard.edu/files/wjohnson/files/ferguson_kalfou_published.pdf

[10] Urban Institute. 2021. Structural Racism in America. https://www.urban.org/features/structural-racism-america. Struyven, Daan, Gizelle George-Joseph, and Daniel Milos. 2021. “Black Womenomics Investing in the Underinvested. Goldman Sachs.” https://www.goldmansachs.com/insights/pages/black-womenomics-f/black-womenomics-report.pdf

[11] Archer, Deborah N. 2021.”Transportation Policy and the Underdevelopment of Black Communities.” Iowa Law Review 106:2125

[12] Fain, Kimberl . 2017. “The Devastation of Black Wall Street.” JStor Daily. https://daily.jstor.org/the-devastation-of-black-wall-street/. Ellsworth, Scott. 1992. Death in a Promised Land. Louisiana State University Press.

[13] Bates, Timothy. 1997. “Unequal Access: Financial institution lending to Black- and White-owned small business startups.” Journal of Urban Affairs, 19 (4), 487-495. Goldschein, Eric. 2021. “Racial Funding Gap Shows Black Business Owners Are Shut Out From Accessing Capital.” Nerdwallet. https://www.nerdwallet.com/article/small-business/racial-funding-gap

[14] Hammer, Diana, Joseph Malual, Angie Allen, & Christian Schmieder. 2021. “How African American business owners navigate startup in northeastern Wisconsin: Challenges and opportunities.” Unpublished manuscript. Hammer, Diana, and Joseph Malual. 2021. “Entrepreneurs of Color in Wisconsin: Bridging The Gap In Resources To Mobilize Potential,” Community Development, 52(2), 169-185. Snobar, Abdullah. 2021. “Black Entrepreneurship: The Opportunity Gap Explained.” Forbes. https://www.forbes.com/sites/forbestechcouncil/2021/02/05/black-entrepreneurship-the-opportunity-gap-e

businesses were twice as likely as white-owned businesses to seek funding, but less than half as likely to receive funding. The situation is the same for applications for delayed loan payments.[15] The Consumer News and Business Channel cites similar statistics for 2007 and 2018 and additionally reports that 80% of Black-owned businesses fail in the first eighteen months. They also explain that Black-owned businesses don't tend to have formal institutional relationships with banks, and thus have no inside resources and are excluded from opportunities.[16] Similarly, Fairilie and colleagues explain that the largest quantitative difference between Black-owned and white-owned businesses is the amount of outside debt they use for their business. Black-owned businesses not only have lower leverage ratios than white-owned businesses, they also have lower levels of all other major sources of funding, with only one-third of the start-up capital compared to white-owned startups. And those differences aren't explained by differences in credit ratings.[17] COVID-19 had a similarly inequitable impact on Black-owned businesses, and government support during the pandemic has been similarly inequitable.[18]

Black people who have been targeted by racially motivated policies find it incredibly hard to accrue wealth and capital. Comparatively, less than one third of White people, but over two thirds of Black people, have no financial assets.[19] The barriers in accessing social and financial capital directly hinder attempts at successful business-ownership and entrepreneurship. Closing racial divides will not only uplift Black communities, but will significantly improve the overall economy of the United States. If racial divides had been overcome 20 years ago, the economy would be around 16 trillion dollars larger.[20]

An important part of capitalism is the ability to pursue entrepreneurship, yet this ability is largely reserved for wealthy, White individuals and entrepreneurial cultural norms reflect that bias.[21] Black entrepreneurship consequently lags well behind white

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xplained/?sh=3f34345d6d89. Blanchard, Lloyd, Bo Zhao, and John Yinger. 2008. "Do Lenders Discriminate Against Minority And Woman Entrepreneurs?" Journal of Urban Economics 6, 467-497.

[15] SCORE Association. 2021. SCORE for Black Entrepreneurs. https://www.score.org/black-entrepreneurs

[16] CNBC. Feb. 3, 2021. Why Black-Owned Businesses Don't Survive. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MV4Nq1GaIAA

[17] Fairlie, Robert, Alicia Robb, and David T. Robinson. 2016. "Black and White: Access to Capital among Minority-Owned Startups." SIEPR Discussion Paper, 17-03, Pp. 1-56. https://doi.org/10.1287/mnsc.2021.3998

[18] Mills, Claire Kramer and Jessica Battisto. 2020. "Double jeopardy: COVID-19's Concentrated Health And Wealth Effects In Black Communities," Federal Reserve Bank of New York, https://www.newyorkfed.org/medialibrary/media/smallbusiness/DoubleJeopardy_COVID19andBlackOwnedBusinesses

[19] Miller-Adams, Michelle. 2002. Owning Up: Poverty, Assets, and the American Dream. Brookings Institution Press.

[20] McGhee, Heather C. 2020. "What Racism Costs Everyone." *TedTalk,* https://open.spotify.com/episode/38M6YW58Qf2hGD4i646DFH?si=1cc7c81a57094dc6&nd=1

[21] Harper-Anderson, Elsie. 2019. "Contemporary Black Entrepreneurship in the Professional Service Sector of Chicago: Intersections of Race, Entrepreneurship, and Economic Transformation." Urban Affairs Review, 55(3), 800–831.

entrepreneurship in the proportion of wealth generated compared to wage workers.[22] Estimates are that the percent of U.S. entrepreneurs who are Black is in the single digits, and their rate of entrepreneurship is below those who identify as White, Latine, or Asian.[23] In addition minority business owners are shut out of white-dominated business networks, are discriminated against for business loans, and receive less support for navigating government regulations.[24]

Structural racism has also resulted in massively unequal incarceration rates for Black people in this country.[25] For those returning from incarceration, finding a stable income is difficult to say the least. And while this report will not emphasize entrepreneurship in relation to people formerly incarcerated, the topic does have a place in the literature. For some, entrepreneurship can figure importantly for people who have been incarcerated. Discriminated against in the labor force, formerly incarcerated people may turn to self-employment as the only means of income available to them.[26] It appears that people who are formerly incarcerated are more likely than the general population to be entrepreneurs and that the formerly incarcerated who are Black are

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[22] Bradford, William D. 2003. "The Wealth Dynamics of Entrepreneurship for Black and White Families in The U.S." Review of Income and Wealth Series 49(1), 89-116. https://www.researchgate.net/profile/William-Bradford-7/publication/4785665_The_Wealth_Dynamics_of_Entrepreneurship_for_Black_and_White_Families_in_the_US/links/59cd46430f7e9b225635d438/The-Wealth-Dynamics-of-Entrepreneurship-for-Black-and-White-Families-in-the-US.pdf .

[23] Zippia. 2021. "Entrepreneur Statistics and Facts in the U.S." https://www.zippia.com/entrepreneur-jobs/demographics/. Ewing Marion Kauffman Foundation. 2016. "Kauffman Compilation: Research on Race and Entrepreneurship." https://www.kauffman.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/12/kauffman_compilation_race_entrepreneurship.pdf

[24] Sofoluke, Opeyemi. 2021.Twice as Hard: Navigating Black Stereotypes And Creating Space For Success. DK. Bates, Timothy. 1989. "The Changing Nature of Minority Business: A Comparative Analysis of Asian, Nonminority, and Black-owned Businesses." The Review of Black Political Economy 18, 25-42. Blanchard, Lloyd, Bo Zhao, and John Yinger. 2008. "Do Lenders Discriminate Against Minority And Woman Entrepreneurs?" Journal of Urban Economics 63, 467-497. El-Namki, M.S.S. 1988. "Encouraging Entrepreneurs In Developing Countries." Long Range Planning 21:98-106. Gnyawali, Devi. R. and Daniel S. Fogel. 1994. Environments for Entrepreneurship Development: Key Dimensions and Research Implications. Entrepreneurship Theory and Practice 18, 43-62. Robb, Alicia M and Robert W. Fairlie. 2007. "Access to Financial Capital Among U.S. Businesses: The case of African American firms." Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science 613, 47-72. Puryear, Alvin, and Edward Rogoff, Myung-Soo Lee, Ramona Heck, Elissa Grossman, George Haynes, and Joseph Onochie. 2008. "Sampling Minority Business Owners and Their Families: The Understudied Entrepreneurial Experience. Journal of Small Business Management. 46, 422 - 455.

[25] Alexander, Michelle. 2020. The New Jim Crow: Mass Incarceration in the Age of Colorblindness. Anniversary Edition. New Press. Nellis, Ashley. 2021. "The Color of Justice: Racial and Ethnic Disparity in State Prisons." The Sentencing Project. https://www.sentencingproject.org/publications/color-of-justice-racial-and-ethnic-disparity-in-state-prisons/

[26] Lahr, Darcelle Cox. 2018. Piercing the Cycle of Recidivism: A Self-Study to Inform Social Entrepreneurship Education as a Path to Successful Reentry for Previously Incarcerated African American Women. Dissertation, Mills College. https://www.proquest.com/docview/2033483559. Hwang, Kylie Jiwon. 2021. Entrepreneurship and Incarceration. Dissertation, Columbia University. https://academiccommons.columbia.edu/doi/10.7916/d8-gj2p-sr53/download. Escamilla, Justin Jessica Reichert, Lauren Weisner and Christopher Mayer. 2019. "Entrepreneurship for the Formerly Incarcerated: A Process Evaluation of the Pathway to Enterprise for Returning Citizens (PERC) Program." Illinois Criminal Justice Information Authority. https://icjia.illinois.gov/researchhub/articles/entrepreneurship-for-the-formerly-incarcerated.

even more likely.[27] Lahr advocates that social entrepreneurship is a particularly important option for African American women who are formerly incarcerated, as many of them will be returning to communities that are themselves stressed and need creative strategies to build themselves up.[28] There is some suggestion in the literature that entrepreneurship may yield greater income and lower long-term recidivism among formerly incarcerated people compared to regular employment.[29]

The mainstream advice for entrepreneurs also may not serve Black entrepreneurs. Much of that advice, as we will see, starts with identifying a passion or marketable problem, that may not be the case for the formerly incarcerated and others experiencing serious economic stress. For those individuals, the path to entrepreneurship may more likely begin from the economic stress itself, and the fact of being shut out of the regular employment market. And some observers saw among the imprisoned many of the personal qualities lauded in entrepreneurs and noted that in fact entrepreneurs albeit in commerce deemed illegal.[30] But that does not mean entrepreneurship is easy for the formerly incarcerated, particularly for Black people. Discrimination in access to capital is compounded for such individuals.[31]

The situation for Black Madisonians is in many ways worse than the rest of the nation, not just in terms of entrepreneurship, but education, incarceration, and many other important measures of quality of life.[32] A special section of this report, *Voices of Black Entrepreneurs*, will confirm what the literature says about how structural racism affects Black entrepreneurs. Those voices will also, however, speak to how Black entrepreneurs in Madison have managed the challenges placed in front of them.

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[27] Armel Irankunda, Gregory N. Price, Norense E. Uzamere, Miesha J. Williams. 2020. "Ex-Incarceree/Convict Status: Beneficial for Self-Employment and Entrepreneurship?" The American Economist, 65(1). https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/10.1177/0569434519846624.

[28] Lahr, Darcelle Cox. 2018. Piercing the Cycle of Recidivism: A Self-Study to Inform Social Entrepreneurship Education as a Path to Successful Reentry for Previously Incarcerated African American Women. Dissertation, Mills College. https://www.proquest.com/docview/2033483559.

[29] Lahr, Darcelle Cox. 2018. Piercing the Cycle of Recidivism: A Self-Study to Inform Social Entrepreneurship Education as a Path to Successful Reentry for Previously Incarcerated African American Women. Dissertation, Mills College. https://www.proquest.com/docview/2033483559. Hwang, Kylie Jiwon. 2021. Entrepreneurship and Incarceration. Dissertation, Columbia University. https://academiccommons.columbia.edu/doi/10.7916/d8-gj2p-sr53/download.

[30] Lahr, Darcelle Cox. 2018. Piercing the Cycle of Recidivism: A Self-Study to Inform Social Entrepreneurship Education as a Path to Successful Reentry for Previously Incarcerated African American Women. Dissertation, Mills College. https://www.proquest.com/docview/2033483559. Escamilla, Justin Jessica Reichert, Lauren Weisner and Christopher Mayer. 2019. "Entrepreneurship for the Formerly Incarcerated: A Process Evaluation of the Pathway to Enterprise for Returning Citizens (PERC) Program." Illinois Criminal Justice Information Authority. https://icjia.illinois.gov/researchhub/articles/entrepreneurship-for-the-formerly-incarcerated.

[31] Hwang, Kylie Jiwon. 2021. Entrepreneurship and Incarceration. Dissertation, Columbia University. https://academiccommons.columbia.edu/doi/10.7916/d8-gj2p-sr53/download.

[32] The State of Black Madison Coalition. 2008. "The State of Black Madison 2008: Before the Tipping Point." Urban League of Greater Madison. https://ulgm.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/04/State_of_Black_Madison_2008_web.pdf. Wisconsin Council on Children and Families. 2013. Race to Equity: "A Baseline Report on the State of Racial Inequities in Dane County." http://racetoequity.net/wp-content/uploads/2016/11/WCCF-R2E-Report.pdf.

Types of Entrepreneurship

Before delving into a discussion of the how-tos of entrepreneurship, it may be useful to briefly look at the types of proto-businesses the beginning entrepreneur might get involved with. The type of business someone is trying to start impacts the advice that is relevant. A small brick and mortar store functions differently, and needs different services, than an online store. Additionally, people looking to grow their business will have different needs than those who are starting their first entrepreneurship project. This section will look at the different advice we found for freelancing/side gigs, online businesses, and civic and social entrepreneurs and nonprofits. However, most of the resources and advice for entrepreneurs focuses on starting new businesses that provide for a person's primary income. That information will appear in the *Resources* sections of this report.

Secondary income/Freelancing

Most proto-businesses will provide for only part of an individual's income. It's also the starting point for many pre-entrepreneurs who are not ready to start out with a full scale business, or are looking to start selling goods that are a product of a hobby. One special type of proto-business might be the micropreneur–a term coined for high-tech software designers but maybe applicable in its framework to a wider range of proto-businesses. A micropreneur focuses on a single product for a niche market. They may build out into a few other products, but they stay small. Their particular focus is a highly technical skill, combined with marketing knowledge.[33]

But proto-businesses can also build on skills that everyone has and require little startup money. Jay Jones, discusses three proto-businesses that most people can do. One is reselling underpriced items, and Jones goes through the process of locating and selling such things. Another is a service business like resume writing. Jones describes how it's possible to develop such a business without having special skills by subcontracting with those who do. Third is selling handcrafted products that are a hobby you do anyway.[34]

Resources for those just starting out as a proto-business include websites like *Start Your Business*, which has an interactive map of co-working spaces, prototyping/technology centers, makerspaces, commercial kitchens and more on their website, making it easy for people to find locations close to them.[35] This is great for

[33] Taber, Mike, and Rob Walling. 2010. Episode 1: What is a Micropreneur. Startups for the Rest of Us. https://www.startupsfortherestofus.com/episodes/episode-1-what-is-a-micropreneur.
[34] Jones, Jay . 2021. Black Entrepreneur Blueprint: 376 - Three Profitable & Simple Businesses You Can Start Under $250. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8EZYbaRY_Xs
[35] Madison Region Economic Partnership. 2021. Start Your Business. http://madisonregion.org/start-locate-expand/start-your-business-2.

people who need specialized equipment, a small office space to separate work and personal life, or who need to meet food safety standards or are looking to grow their cooking business and need more space.

In addition to community spaces available, there are also several tips and recommendations for people starting a proto-business. Santa Clara University has a free online program for people interested in freelancing/gig economy, including several tips and a checklist with some basics to consider.[36] They recommend the following for starting a small business:

- A phone number
- An email address
- A computer
- A printer
- A business license
- The appropriate permit(s) required for your business
- A way to accept payments
- A way to invoice customers for your product or service
- An estimate on pricing for your product or service
- A separate bank account
- A separate credit card to make payments
- A mailing address
- Online marketing (Facebook, Instagram, etc.)
- A website
- A logo

They also recommend looking into:

- Filing a Fictitious Business Name with the city
- A Business Tax License for your business?
- Calendaring software
- Bookkeeping software

Additionally, they provide information on common challenges gig entrepreneurs face, like finding new customers, understanding the rules regarding business expenses and deductions, risk and liability, and license, permits and permissions. Lastly, they have a list of ten don'ts:

1. Overlook a hobby as a potential home-based business
2. Quit your job until all preparations are complete
3. Compete with your employer
4. Conduct business on your employer's time
5. Overlook a small and humble beginning
6. Overlook zoning and permitting requirements

[36] My Own Business Institute. 2022. Quick Start Entrepreneur. Santa Clara University: https://www.scu.edu/mobi/business-courses/quick-start-entrepreneur/

7. Be in a rush to get started: use the Business Readiness Template
8. Incur unreasonable liabilities in financial obligations and dealings
9. Think it's too late to start
10. Neglect the importance of selling, servicing and finding new customers

The last piece of advice in this section comes from a podcast interview with Chris Misterek, an entrepreneur who has helped others start their own businesses. There is one quote that stuck out from the podcast, “there is knowledge and success that come from mistakes. Someone who plays piano has made hundreds of mistakes and has learned from them, someone who has never played piano has made no mistakes, but they do not even know how to play”.[37]

Many proto-businesses will operate out of someone’s home. A web search for “home-based business” turns up a wealth of resources. For example, Small Business Trends lists “52 Home Based Business Ideas.”[38] Shopify lists “25 Ideas for How to Start a Small Business at Home.”[39] Most sites concentrate on business ideas rather than how to start and run a business from home. Nerdwallet does provide some how-to advice that is quite similar to the lists above. Most important to their list is understanding what approvals and licenses you need to run a business from home.[40]

Finally, our interview participants also recommended a number of Madison-based resources that are listed at the end of the *Voices* section of this report.

Online businesses

This section looks at advice for E-commerce, including general advice for those getting started, web hosting platforms, and shipping and returns.

E-Commerce Expert Steve Kesselring offers advice on how to start an online business. In a webinar he walks people through developing a business and setting up a site on Shopify.[41] He says the first step is to work on the product and get the materials needed to make it. The second step is to build a “brand attitude,” what you want people to know about your business. You should think about the target audience, style, customer support, experience and story. Next, work on the company look, including logo, colors, and fonts. Kesselring recommends testing out multiple designs/styles and

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[37] Misterek, Chris. 2020. Episode 239: Secrets to a Successful Side Hustle. Spotify. https://open.spotify.com/episode/5z3IdajBq6ASm9qZrf5WzQ?si=kFhgNFVwTTa3TaoHHcycVQ
[38] Pilon, Annie. 2021. 52 Home-Based Business Ideas. Small Business Trends. https://smallbiztrends.com/2016/01/fun-home-based-business-ideas.html
[39] Kumar, Braveen. 2022.25 Ideas for How to Start a Small Business at Home. Shopify Blog. https://www.shopify.com/blog/home-business
[40] Godlewski, Nina. 2020. How to Start a Home Business: The Ultimate Guide. Nerdwallet. https://www.nerdwallet.com/article/small-business/how-to-start-a-home-business
[41] Kesselring, Steve. 2021. Starting an E-Commerce Business from Scratch on Shopify. SCORE https://madison.score.org/event/starting-ecommerce-business-scratch-shopify

getting feedback from friends and family. Lastly, build your site, start easy, and launch big. Do not worry about making the site perfect the first try, focus on the product.

Numerous online services will help you set up an online store and they have varying strengths and weaknesses.[42] *Shopify* is a popular resource website, which users found easy to use and offers a 14 day free trial. It provides attractive templates, easy refunds, apps for shipping management, and has an email marketing system. There are different tiers, with one of the most popular being the $29.00/month plan. It has no product post limit, and comes with other features.[43] Another popular site is *Bigcartel*, for artists and makers, which offers several affordable plans: a free plan where you can sell up to 5 products at once, $9.99/month plan - can sell up to 50 products at once, $19.99/month - can sell up to 250 items at a time.[44] Another popular site is *Square Space*, which has a $12.00 - personal plan that includes a custom domain, as well as an $18.00 business plan that includes a custom domain plus square space extension, business gmail, and advanced analytics.[45] *Amazon*, *ebay*, and other similar sites make your wares easily searchable on a popular site. And there are many specialty sites such as *Reverb*[46] for guitar enthusiasts.

There are a lot of options for shipping and returns, but someone has to cover the cost and that can be important to the customer. When a customer does not pay for shipping, the seller can raise the price of the product to cover shipping costs.[47] If the customer pays for shipping, it should not be too expensive, as that does factor into the total price of the product for the customer. Some places offer free returns for the customer when they pay for shipping, as an incentive. Which model is best depends on several factors like what is being sold and the business model. The amount of expected returns also factors into this, such as if clothing is being sold. The first step is to know what is being sold, then look at shipping options.

Which shipping service to use is the next question. There are several different options for shipping, and what a business starts off with does not have to be the shipping provider they stick with forever. The U.S. Post Office is a great place to start, but as a business grows it may need a partnership. Additionally, one should take into account the cost for tracking, which can be important if the business is shipping perishable or fragile items. Companies like Fedex had partnerships with Walgreens, Dollar General and other places, where there are secure drop off locations.[48] Additional

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[42] Lexis. 2021. Best Website Platform for New Businesses?? Shopify vs. Square Space vs. Wix Vs. Bigcartel. YouTube. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yt5Uws4HNT0&list=PLA8EWeqJi0ffKp3qcZymwqWFYaKZYcDnJ&index=1

[43] Shopify. https://www.shopify.com/

[44] Big Cartel. https://www.bigcartel.com/

[45] Squarespace. https://www.squarespace.com/

[46] Reverb. https://reverb.com/

[47] Carere, Brie . 2019. Building an E-commerce Based Small Business, SCORE. https://madison.score.org/event/building-e-commerce-based-small-business

[48] Mason, Jamie. 2021. Shipping as a Small-Business Growth Strategy: Here's What You Need to Know. SCORE. https://madison.score.org/event/shipping-small-business-growth-strategy-here-what-you-need-know

factors that go into the cost of shipping are residential surcharges, which are fees that apply to deliveries made to residential areas, and the shipping zone. Most shipping companies do zone shipping, where zones closer to your business cost less to ship to, and further zones cost more.

Civic and Social Entrepreneurs and Nonprofits

This section will cover those entrepreneurs whose passion includes a strong social, environmental, or other civic commitment. We will distinguish civic and social entrepreneurs from nonprofits. A nonprofit is sometimes placed into the category of "social entrepreneurship,"--an activity designed to address a social issue or problem, but traditional for-profit businesses are also placed into this category.[49] A nonprofit organization can, technically, make a profit, but it must be related to the nonprofit's mission and must be invested into the organization rather than distributed to shareholders or investors. There are also many different types of nonprofits, but the one we most commonly think of is what the Internal Revenue Service designates as a 501(c)(3). This is the classic nonprofit organization that people can donate to and deduct it from their income taxes.

This classic nonprofit is different from a for-profit business in a couple of crucial ways. First, in a for-profit business your "customer" pays you directly for the goods or services you provide to them. In a classic social service nonprofit, the "customer" or "client" usually does not pay you. Instead, a donor or a grant pays you to provide the social service for no or lower cost. So while businesses have to market themselves to one consumer segment, nonprofits must market themselves to both potential funders and potential clients. Second, a sole individual cannot have their own nonprofit, as the government requires such organizations to be overseen by a board of directors. So a nonprofit must formally be a collective effort.

We will begin by looking at civic and social entrepreneurs, as they fit the classic entrepreneurial model the easiest. Civic entrepreneurs, according to Tyrone Brackens, are focused on building strong and resilient communities. They are community developers, focusing on trying to grab onto the potential that exists in changing times. They are also collaborators, organizing people to make the changes in their educational, economic, and other systems needed for communities to thrive. Brackens lists nine traits of civic entrepreneurs:

1. They see opportunity in the new economy
2. They possess an entrepreneurial personality
3. They provide collaborative leadership to connect the economy and the community
4. They are motivated by broad, enlightened, long-term interests

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[49] Peek, Sean. 2022. What Is Social Entrepreneurship? 5 Examples of Businesses with a Purpose. U.S. Chamber of Commerce. https://www.uschamber.com/co/start/startup/what-is-social-entrepreneurship

5. They work in teams, playing complementary roles
6. They know how to work with people
7. They are constantly honing their Collaborative Leadership skills
8. They preach about Interdependence
9. They are Motivators and Social Networkers [50]

Social entrepreneurship is quite similar. The focus is not on maximizing profit but on maximizing social benefit. That includes using one's business to create jobs and build workforce skills in the community.[51]

But the most common way to address social issues is still the nonprofit organization. So next we cover what goes into starting a nonprofit, as well as advice and tips for nonprofit entrepreneurs. Lastly, there will be information on several webinars in early spring about nonprofits. Once the event has passed, a recording will be posted, making it accessible to anyone with access to a computer.

TRUiC has a youtube video on how to start a nonprofit in Wisconsin. This covers the six steps covered in the video, however they do have several useful links in the video description.[52]

1. Choose and secure the nonprofit name
    a. Do a name search for WI businesses to be able to claim the name
    b. Make sure the website domain name for the nonprofit name is available
2. Appoint a registered agent to handle legal papers
    a. Can be the entrepreneur, or they can hire a professional
3. Select directors and officers
    a. Create a board of at least 3 people not related to each other
    b. Create policies and rules for the organization
    c. Assign officers–president, secretary and treasurer, from the board
    d. Hire staff if funding is available
4. File the certificate of formation
    a. Articles of incorporation
5. Operating procedures and housekeeping
    a. Create bylaws and a conflict of interest policy
    b. Apply for EIN (Employment Identification Number) like a social security number for your business. It will be needed to apply for tax exemption
6. Lastly, apply for 501(c)(3) status (Federal Tax Exemption)

Candid Learning provides more information on some of the steps above.[53] When creating the board, recruitment can be important. However they say that "a systematic

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[50] Brackens,Tyrone. 2013. How Civic Entrepreneurs Optimize Collaboration. HBCU Lifestyle. https://hbculifestyle.com/civic-entrepreneurs/

[51] Brackens,Tyrone. 2013. Social Entrepreneurship: Creating Wealth in the Black Community. HBCU Lifestyle. https://hbculifestyle.com/social-entrepreneurship/

[52] TRUiC. 2021. How to start a nonprofit in Wisconsin - 501c3 Organization. YouTube. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EKeKl3ZuIvk

[53] Candid. 2022. How Do I Start a Nonprofit Organization? https://learning.candid.org/resources/knowledge-base/starting-a-nonprofit/

approach to board development, including orientation, training, evaluation, and the cultivation of prospective board members, is critical to ensuring its long-term success" (Candid. Learning). Additionally, when applying for tax exempt status, the application fee can be between $275-600, depending on the method. Plus, it can take the IRS three to twelve months to process the application. Nonprofits with tax exemption status will need to file a form 990 income tax form each year, which includes finances, activities, governance processes, directors, and key staff. Requirements on reporting and renewing this form vary by state, so if the business is new to Wisconsin, or operates in several states, they may need to file different forms. Lastly, they include a list of rules 501(c)(3) status nonprofits must follow:

- Nonprofits cannot permit someone with a personal or private interest in the organization to benefit substantially from the activities of the organization.
- Lobbying is allowed to an extent. However, lobbying activities cannot take up a substantial portion of the businesses time, funds and resources.
- Nonprofits and their members (while acting in an official capacity) may not campaign for or against candidates for elected office.
- An organization can have its tax exemption status removed if it generates excessive income from a repetitive trade or business action that is not substantially related to the organization's purpose.
- An exempt organization is expected to operate in accordance with the charitable purpose or purposes outlined in its application for recognition of tax-exempt status (Form 1023 or 1023-EZ). Additionally, it must notify the IRS of any substantial changes to its operating purpose.

Because of the unique nature of nonprofits, where their funding primarily comes from donors rather than clientele, fundraising is a constant issue for such organizations. There is no shortage of websites, books, and consultants on nonprofit fundraising. It is important to reflect, however, on the constraints placed on nonprofits by this funding system,[54] which is why some social entrepreneurs opt to develop for-profit structures.

Organizations like SCORE Madison offer resources for those interested in starting or sustaining nonprofit organizations.[55] But there is a lack of resources designed specifically for Black-led nonprofits, whose experience of discrimination in the nonprofit sector makes mainstream resources less applicable.[56]

Mindset

Regardless of which entrepreneurial path someone chooses, at the very earliest stages of trying to earn self-employment income, the books and the pundits emphasize

[54] INCITE!. 2007. The Revolution Will Not be Funded: Beyond the Non-Profit Industrial Complex. South End Press.
[55] SCORE workshop calendar, https://madison.score.org/content/take-workshop-19
[56] Wilson, Greg, and Randy Stoecker. 2020. "Not-Profiting, but Persisting: The Experiences of Black-led Organizations in the Racialized Nonprofit Sector." Presented at the American Sociological Association Annual Meetings.

having the right attitude. In fact, this "mindset" can help someone choose their path. Much of the advice out there makes it seem a little too easy–have the right attitude and success will follow. Though they also note that success will follow eventually–sometimes after multiple failures, and so part of the mindset they emphasize is being comfortable with multiple failures.

There is a bias in much of this literature, however, toward the white, high-tech, high-risk entrepreneur prepared to put their own and other's money into an expensive start-up. That is different from the proto-businesses we are focusing on. So our discussion of mindset will be a little different, and we will focus on the qualities of mind that may fit best in the proto-business context.

What is a "mindset"? Mindset is how an individual processes what goes on around them, and is the filter through which a person reacts to life events. It is how we think about and evaluate ourselves.[57] Genuine motivation, passion, and confidence are all commonly cited as critical for an entrepreneurial mindset. Many people will tell you to chase your dreams, but that requires a certain level of self-confidence, fearlessness, hope, and resilience. Moreover, not all people are born with the resources or privilege to achieve dreams as easily as others. Identities including race and gender can play a major role in achieving entrepreneurial success. As a result, different intersectionalities may impact how a businessperson navigates the business world.

This section will discuss some of the important mindset characteristics that are attributed to successful entrepreneurs. We will begin with passion and motivation, then creativity, motivation and confidence, opportunity hesitancy, growth, and mental health.

Passion

Passion and motivation may be the most basic mindset conditions for pre-entrepreneurs. Earning an income from self-employment can be infinitely rewarding and even self-motivating,[58] but it is a lot harder being both the boss and the employee in one person. One has to set the goals, set the work hours, set the work standards, and even design the work itself. And given that most entrepreneurs won't get rich quickly,[59] or probably ever, money is only a partial motivator. In a study of why people enter and leave pre-entrepreneurship, following a passion was one of the primary reasons for starting the entrepreneurial journey, and loss of passion was one of the top reasons for

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[57] Da Costa, Olivia . 2021. Black Success. Become a Successful Black Entrepreneur: How to Grow a Successful Business and Overcome Anti-Black Discrimination. Independently published.
[58] Desai, Sameeksha, and Travis Howe. 2020. Who Doesn't Start a Business in America.Ewing Marion Kauffman Foundation. https://www.kauffman.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/12/Who-Doesnt-Start-A-Business-in-America-November-2020.pdf
[59] Patel, Neil. 2022. 7 Warning Signs You're Not Cut Out to Be an Entrepreneur. https://neilpatel.com/blog/7-signs-not-cut-entrepreneur/

ending it.[60] Our interviewees, as we will see in the *Voices* section, confirmed the importance of passion. That passion, however, needs to be shaped. In the steps for entrepreneurship, later, we will discuss the advice to combine passion with empathy–talking to people to sharpen an idea.[61]

Motivation

The top five reasons for starting a business, according to Desai and Howe, are to be your own boss, make money, follow a passion, manage work-life balance,and leave something behind for kids. Black women were more likely to choose the first and fifth ones than men or other races.[62] The interviewees in the *Voices* section of this report echo these findings.

It is important to explore one's motivations for entrepreneurship as their absence or weakness may also lead to ending the journey. Again, reading Desai and Howe, the reasons for leaving entrepreneurship are based in concerns that the business might fail, the time commitment is too great, there is either a loss of passion or burnout, and family or personal needs are being neglected. [63]

Problem Solving and Creativity

Solving problems, especially those experienced personally, can also motivate a person into entrepreneurship. Neil Patel cites not being able to find problems to solve as one of the warning signs against becoming an entrepreneur.[64] The problem can be as personal and immediate as finding a solution to managing your daughter's skin

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[60] Desai, Sameeksha, and Travis Howe. 2020. Who Doesn't Start a Business in America.Ewing Marion Kauffman Foundation. https://www.kauffman.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/12/Who-Doesnt-Start-A-Business-in-America-November-2020.pdf

[61]Kramis, Luca. 2019. The Pre-Entrepreneurial Journey: Part One. https://blog.hslu.ch/majorobm/2019/03/05/idealuca-pre-entrepreneurial-journey-part-one/. Kramis, Luca. 2019. The Pre-Entrepreneurial Journey: Part Two. https://blog.hslu.ch/majorobm/2019/03/06/idealuca-pre-entrepreneurial-journey-part-two/

[62] Desai, Sameeksha, and Travis Howe. 2020. Who Doesn't Start a Business in America.Ewing Marion Kauffman Foundation. https://www.kauffman.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/12/Who-Doesnt-Start-A-Business-in-America-November-2020.pdf

[63] Desai, Sameeksha, and Travis Howe. 2020. Who Doesn't Start a Business in America.Ewing Marion Kauffman Foundation. https://www.kauffman.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/12/Who-Doesnt-Start-A-Business-in-America-November-2020.pdf

[64] Patel, Neil. 2022. 7 Warning Signs You're Not Cut Out to Be an Entrepreneur. https://neilpatel.com/blog/7-signs-not-cut-entrepreneur/

condition.[65] The advice is to find a solution to a problem you have a passion to solve,[66] but with the caution of focusing on understanding the problem and not becoming too attached to a solution.[67]

Solving problems takes creativity and, as such, becomes another part of the mindset. Creativity is not inborn, and can in fact be nurtured through maker training.[68] According to one study by Nair et al.,[69] high school students in underserved communities demonstrated increased confidence in their entrepreneurial abilities after an intervention to increase their access to resources and education on creativity and innovation. Some may need training more than others. In research on pre-entrepreneurship, women are less likely than men to report having an idea, and are less likely to pursue the ideas they do have.[70] Trying an idea once makes it more likely you will try it again.[71] And celebrating failure can encourage creativity.[72] We will explore further in a later section how models of idea development can nurture creativity.

Independence, Confidence, and Resilience

Among the top reasons for starting down the road to entrepreneurship is to become one's own boss. This reason shows up especially powerfully for Black women.[73] A sense of independence is so important to Neil Patel that he warns those

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[65] Boswell, Shanicia. 2020. My Piece Of The Pie: A Collection Of Stories From Black Women Entrepreneurs. Independently published.
[66] Ferreira, Nicole Martins. 2021. How To Start A Business: A Guide to Starting a Business. Oberlo. https://www.oberlo.com/blog/how-to-start-a-business
[67] Indiana Black Expo. 2021.. Moving Beyond Ideation. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OuwnK20MMPM
[68] Nair, Rajes, Jose E Corpus, Michael Frese, Willem Smit. 2019. Maker Education as an Early Intervention to Catalyze Development of Pre-entrepreneurs in Under-served Communities. International Symposium on Academic Makerspaces (presentation), https://assets.pubpub.org/9jq6f838/71583710572995.pdf ; (paper) https://asb.edu.my/wp-content/uploads/2020/06/22-Maker-Education-as-an-Early-Intervention-to-Catalyze-the-Development-of-Pre-entrepreneurs-in-Underserved-Communities.pdf
[69] Nair, Rajes, Jose E Corpus, Michael Frese, Willem Smit. 2019. Maker Education as an Early Intervention to Catalyze Development of Pre-entrepreneurs in Under-served Communities. International Symposium on Academic Makerspaces, https://asb.edu.my/wp-content/uploads/2020/06/22-Maker-Education-as-an-Early-Intervention-to-Catalyze-the-Development-of-Pre-entrepreneurs-in-Underserved-Communities.pdf
[70] The University of Montana Bureau of Business and Economic Research Blackstone Launchpad. 2016. Understanding Women's Participation in Pre-Entrepreneurial Activities: Evidence from a Blackstone Launchpad. http://www.bber.umt.edu/pubs/survey/Women%20pre-entrepreneurs.pdf
[71] The University of Montana Bureau of Business and Economic Research Blackstone Launchpad. 2016. Understanding Women's Participation in Pre-Entrepreneurial Activities: Evidence from a Blackstone Launchpad. http://www.bber.umt.edu/pubs/survey/Women%20pre-entrepreneurs.pdf
[72] Indiana Black Expo. (2021, September 29). Moving Beyond Ideation. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OuwnK20MMPM
[73] Desai, Sameeksha, and Travis Howe. 2020. Who Doesn't Start a Business in America.Ewing Marion Kauffman Foundation. https://www.kauffman.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/12/Who-Doesnt-Start-A-Business-in-America-November-2020.pdf

who “get along with everyone” against entrepreneurship.[74] In discussing “micropreneurs”, Rob Walling describes their sense of independence as focused around time independence (choosing when to do things), location independence (choosing where to do things), and income independence (choosing the source and amount of income).[75]

Confidence is closely related to independence, as it is the confidence in one’s self that supports a sense of independence. It’s not easy for Black entrepreneurs to overcome negative thinking and develop that confidence.[76] Black entrepreneurs face a more difficult path than their white counterparts. But that doesn’t mean it can’t be done. What’s more, as more and more Black entrepreneurs enter the business realm, it creates a domino effect. Black business people become role models for aspiring entrepreneurs, proving that it’s possible for Black people to thrive in American business.

Related to confidence, and especially important to people of color, is resilience. Resilience is a survival strategy for living in a country with deep roots in racial hierarchy. Systemic racism is an epidemic in America and every Black entrepreneur is acutely aware of the unequal treatment that comes with their race. Resilience can also be expressed in endurance and perseverance. Many businesses take years to get off the ground or start turning a profit. There are so many stories of multiple failures in entrepreneurship, and resilience is part of the mindset needed to try again after a failure.[77] It is related to the advice for entrepreneurs about being comfortable with risk.[78]

Opportunity Hesitancy

A major barrier for entrepreneurs of color is that decades of systemic racism have taught BIPOC entrepreneurs that they are not welcome in business. As we saw above, Black Americans have a much more difficult time accessing loans and technical support networks. This situation does not offer encouragement to Black entrepreneurs, and could lead to hesitation in starting a business. Similar to this phenomenon is what Harry Hawkins, Executive Vice President of the Nehemiah Community Development Corporation, calls *opportunity hesitancy*. Opportunity hesitancy is the hesitation that people experience when offered an opportunity such as training or mentoring, or other resources that could help them and their business succeed. This hesitancy can stem from many different sources such as systemic racism. Opportunity hesitancy can be paralyzing because it can prevent someone from accessing and mobilizing crucial

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[74] Patel, Neil. 2022. 7 Warning Signs You’re Not Cut Out to Be an Entrepreneur. https://neilpatel.com/blog/7-signs-not-cut-entrepreneur/
[75] Taber, Mike, and Rob Walling. 2010. Episode 1: What is a Micropreneur. Startups for the Rest of us. https://www.startupsfortherestofus.com/episodes/episode-1-what-is-a-micropreneur.
[76] Da Costa, Olivia . 2021. Black Success. Become a Successful Black Entrepreneur: How to Grow a Successful Business and Overcome Anti-Black Discrimination. Independently published.
[77] Ferreira, Nicole Martins. 2021. How To Start A Business: A Guide to Starting a Business. Oberlo. https://www.oberlo.com/blog/how-to-start-a-business
[78] Mariotti, Steve. 2014. The Young Entrepreneur's Guide to Starting and Running a Business: Turn Your Ideas into Money! Currency. Jerry. 2012. Tips for Becoming an Entrepreneur. HBCU Lifestyle. https://hbculifestyle.com/tips-for-becoming-an-entrepreneur/

supports that could determine success of failure for Black entrepreneurs. Opportunity hesitancy can manifest itself in a lack of confidence, feelings of hopelessness, or giving up at the first sight of trouble.

In the literature, opportunity hesitancy might appear under other names, such as procrastination.[79] Milkman includes procrastination, along with impulsivity, forgetfulness, laziness, lack of confidence, and conformity in her list of barriers to self-change.[80] And it may be related to a sense of risk and also be gendered. In research on entering and leaving the entrepreneurial journey, women are more likely to see pursuing an idea as requiring too many sacrifices from other areas of life and be too emotionally risky.[81] Jennifer Farmer points out fear as an important challenge for Black women to overcome.[82]

Opportunity hesitancy may also be racialized. A Black male entrepreneur-focused YouTuber who calls his channel The Uzziah Show described opportunity hesitancy during a networking livestream when he said, “You know the reason why most black men don’t have a network? Because they’re not tapping into shows like tonight. And it’s out there; it’s here for you; it’s all for free. The network is right here; we’re doing networking right now. . . . So, again, if we want the opportunity, it's in front of us, but we’ve got to take it, y’all. We’ve got to take it.”[83] Though Uzziah was most likely doing his best to encourage Black entrepreneurs and pre-entrepreneurs to take advantage of resources like the networking event he was offering, his blunt push to just take opportunities seems to lack appreciation of why a Black entrepreneur might hesitate to do so.

One possible reason for opportunity hesitancy among Black entrepreneurs is that they are constantly reminded of their minority status as they attempt to enter “white spaces”--areas where white people dominate.[84] Black entrepreneurs struggle more than their white counterparts because in most cases, they must assimilate to these white spaces while white entrepreneurs do not need to enter Black spaces. They may also be the first of their friends or family members to work for themselves rather than for someone else, which creates not only pressure from the economic risk but also from

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[79] Patel, Neil. 2022. 7 Warning Signs You’re Not Cut Out to Be an Entrepreneur. https://neilpatel.com/blog/7-signs-not-cut-entrepreneur/

[80] Milkman, Katy. 2021. How to Change: The Science of Getting from Where You Are to Where You Want to Be. Portfolio.

[81] Desai, Sameeksha, and Travis Howe. 2020. Who Doesn’t Start a Business in America.Ewing Marion Kauffman Foundation. https://www.kauffman.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/12/Who-Doesnt-Start-A-Business-in-America-November-2020.pdf

[82] Jennifer R. Farmer. 2021. First and Only: A Black Woman's Guide to Thriving at Work and in Life. Broadleaf books.

[83] The Uzziah Show. 2021. Are Black Men Scared to Start a Business. YouTube. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2nAD___UwI4

[84] Anderson, E. 2015. “The white space.” *Sociology of Race and Ethnicity*, *1*(1), 10–21. https://doi.org/10.1177/2332649214561306

their community[85]. In addition, people who have experienced poverty, and sought out services to put food on the table or pay the rent, know the self-esteem price exacted for that help. Having to present oneself as "needy" and consequently deficient harms the psyche and the spirit. And it makes one reluctant to ask for help.[86] The *Voices* section of this report will discuss how Black entrepreneurs in Madison experience opportunity hesitancy.

Understanding Success, Profit and Sustainability, Disruption and Risk

Given what we know about the motivators to engage in entrepreneurship, and the different types of entrepreneurship, it is difficult to come up with singular understandings of its core terms. So here we look to define the meaning and larger understanding of what makes the entrepreneurial journey successful, including understanding what it means to make a profit and sustain a business, and how to manage disruptions and risks.

Defining Success

Success can come from many aspects of someone's life, but in today's current society there seems to be a disconnect. Under a capitalist system, success is primarily defined in terms of economic and financial wealth and stability. However, trying to start or grow a business under this definition can be extremely limiting. Success as an entrepreneur can be defined using the capitalist definition, or through more human definitions of personal growth, community development, and other non-economic standards.

Under a capitalist system, success is like a ladder used to reach the American Dream. It is very hierarchical with the financial wealth a person holds determining their place on the ladder of success. And, as we saw earlier, the ladder is not structured fairly in regard to race. In the United States where capitalism dominates our social culture, success is mostly defined through achieving the American Dream. As one of our interviewees stated, "we live in a capitalistic structure, the root of capitalism is capital… It takes money to get by in this world." The measurement of the American Dream is most often defined through money and is usually determined by having entered the middle class, which is primarily symbolized through the purchase of a home.[87] While being able to afford a home, as well as other living expenses, can be an important aspect of someone's life, it shouldn't be the determining factor in whether that person is seen as successful. As our interviewee learned "happiness and success come from achievement, not money". An entrepreneur may be starting from a strong resource base or they may be starting from nothing and that should not be a deterrent. Everyone has special skills, talents, and interests which can help them develop and build a business. As Arlan Hamilton states "a privileged background, an influential network, and a fancy college degree are not prerequisites for success." Moreover, our society underestimates the underrepresented which

[85] The Uzziah Show. 2021. Are Black Men Scared to Start a Business? https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2nAD___UwI4
[86] Ryan, William. 1979. Blaming the Victim. Vintage Books. Kretzmann, John P. and John McKnight. 1993. Building Communities from the Inside-Out. Asset-Based Community Development Institute.
[87] Miller-Adams, Michelle. 2002. Owning Up: Poverty, Assets, and the American Dream. Brookings Institution Press.

comes from the oppressive building blocks on which the capitalist system is founded.[88] Building a successful business has less to do with initial finances and more to do with finding the resources to help make the venture as successful as possible. However, financial success is not a given, as "beyond these high-profile successes lie the realities: self-employment does not make many people millionaires, but it does provide millions of Americans with gainful work and a degree of flexibility hard to find elsewhere."[89] Entrepreneurship is not an easy business pursuit, but it is possible and can have intended as well as unintended benefits, "[T]hose who start successful businesses usually increase their income and may eventually build equity in their company. But clients also gain the skills, connections, and confidence that can lead to a better life, whether they end up working for themselves or others."[90] Defining success under the capitalist system can not only be discouraging, it can also limit your perception of success, which is why creating a personal definition of what success means to you is far more valuable as an entrepreneur in establishing and growing a business.

When we add race to the picture, the idea of the American Dream becomes even more complicated. In 1960, Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. delivered an address, "The Negro and the American Dream", to the North Carolina NAACP.[91] King speaks of the American Dream in terms of democracy–not just a voting democracy but of a society where all feel like they can influence the course of events that affect them. He charges racial discrimination and, particularly, segregation with undermining that form of democracy. He explicitly connects suffering and sacrifice to achieving this form of the American Dream. In King's analysis, achieving the American Dream is not simply about working hard as an individual, but about overcoming barriers.

In our discussions with our Nehemiah collaborators, we hear similar sentiments. For those struggling through the harsh realities of systemic racism, the dream may be less about individual achievement and more about the achievement of family and community. It may be less about climbing the ladder and more about living life.

The relevance of these barriers become important in the research that reveals Black American skepticism of the idea of the classic depiction of the American Dream. This does not mean that Black people don't share a desire for a comfortable middle-class life with all its trimmings, Rather it means that the "dream" is about removing the barriers erected by racism that make those aspirations so difficult to achieve. Further, there is skepticism that the American Dream, as a concept, is even meant to apply to Black people.[92] Doing the things that the

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[88] Hamilton, Arlan. 2020. It's About Damn Time: How to Turn Being Underestimated into Your Greatest Advantage. John Murray.
[89] Miller-Adams, Michelle. 2002. Owning Up: Poverty, Assets, and the American Dream. Brookings Institution Press.
[90] Miller-Adams, Michelle. 2002. Owning Up: Poverty, Assets, and the American Dream. Brookings Institution Press.
[91] King, Martin Luther, Jr. 1960. "The Negro and the American Dream," Excerpt from Address at the Annual Freedom Mass Meeting of the North Carolina State Conference of Branches of the NAACP https://kinginstitute.stanford.edu/king-papers/documents/negro-and-american-dream-excerpt-address-annual-freedom-mass-meeting-north
[92] Dalgo, Emily, 2016. "The American Dream: Discourses of Equality and Achievability for Black Americans." Clocks and Clouds, 6(2). http://www.inquiriesjournal.com/articles/1573/the-american-dream-discourses-of-equality-and-achievability-for-black-americans. Armstrong, Joslyn, Fiorella L. Carlos Chavez, Julia H. Jones, Shar'Dane Harris, and Gregory J. Harris. 2019. "A Dream Deferred: How Discrimination Impacts the American Dream

American Dream ideology say will provide a secure life–getting an education, working hard, following the rules–don't yield results of comfort and security.[93]

So what can be the definition of personal success for a Black entrepreneur? The literature, when read from King's standpoint, is unsatisfying. In the mainstream literature, the definition is about what has come to be known as the Protestant work ethic.[94] The concept has a long history, but in brief it shows the link between White Protestant Christian theology and capitalism that posits success in business as a sign that one has a reserved happy place in the afterlife. And, of course, the way to achieve success in business is through hard work, often hard work that sacrifices self and other.

What are the definitions of success from those speaking specifically to Black entrepreneurs? Some center racism in defining success. Dante Lee begins by reviewing the history of structural racism in preventing Black economies from developing and violently destroying those that did develop. He goes on to show the disparity between Black business ownership and those of other races. For Lee, overcoming structural racism through expanding Black business ownership is the definition of success.[95] Similarly, Olivia Da Costa focuses on lived Black experience and how to overcome the societal barriers and stereotypes that many Black and other marginalized groups face throughout their entrepreneurial journey.[96] For Jennifer Farmer, as a Black woman,success is about healing one's self.[97] For Dorothy Pitman Hughes, success is about reclaiming the dollars that are spent outside of Black communities, and redirecting them to circulate within the community by building vibrant Black businesses.[98] Others see success as becoming a role model for other aspiring Black entrepreneurs.[99]

In contrast, for others race and racism remain in the background. For Daymond John, race and racism are in the background–implied but sidelined as an explanatory variable. Instead, success is all about the "grind" and the "hustle"--work hard and you will be rewarded with success. And that success will be success in business.[100] Similarly, Dennis Kimbro quotes W. E. B. Du Bois, but then equates success with hard work and perseverance.[101]

For yet others, success is personal and custom-designed. On the first episode of the *Black Business Podcast*, Chad Oubre discusses the steps he made to grow his live podcast show. He defines success for an entrepreneur as "whatever makes you happy and gives you

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Achievement for African Americans." Journal of Black Studies, 50(3) 227–250, https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/pdf/10.1177/0021934719833330

[93] Reniqua Allen. 2019. It Was All a Dream: A New Generation Confronts the Broken Promise to Black America. Bold Type Books.

[94] Weber, Max (2003) [First published 1905]. The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism. Translated by Parsons, Talcott. New York: Dover.

[95] Lee, Dante 2010. Black Business Secrets. Smiley Books. Also see https://www.blacknews.com/ , https://www.blackscholarships.org/ , https://blackpr.com/ ,https://www.blackbusiness.com/

[96] Da Costa, Olivia . 2021. Black Success. Become a Successful Black Entrepreneur: How to Grow a Successful Business and Overcome Anti-Black Discrimination. Independently published.

[97] Farmer, Jennifer R. 2021. First and Only: A Black Woman's Guide to Thriving at Work and in Life. Broadleaf Books.

[98] Hughes, Dorothy Pitman. 2000. Wake up and Smell the Dollars. Amber Books.

[99] Inside Bloomberg. 2019. Building a Brand: Lessons From African-American Entrepreneurs. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ROYMnvjs6YY

[100] John, Daymond, and Daniel Paisner. 2018. Rise And Grind: Outperform, Outwork, and Outhustle Your Way to a More Successful and Rewarding Life. Currency.

[101] Dennis Kimbro. 2013. The Wealth Choice: Success Secrets of Black Millionaires. Palgrave MacMillan.

peace". As he began to grow his business he first discovered that "creating a space where you can operate independently is the most powerful thing in the world… If you have talent, are creative, and can execute your idea, that is the first step in seeing if your business will be successful...You can't know what is even right or wrong if you don't try to put it out." Secondly, he describes two types of "creators" or entrepreneurs, "one that is okay living in ignorance of the business world and trusting others to do that aspect, and the other is that you should be a starving artist, which is a lie and has been specially told to Black creators so that the people around you can benefit from your creativity and then move on to other people." To be successful in business you must have at least a little understanding of financing, "if you spend this then you'll get this return, and if the investment is a loss it's alright…the two basic things to be successful is execute and be financially sound"[102].

Understanding Profit, Financing, and Sustainability

When operating a business, or even a nonprofit organization, one must be constantly aware of their financial standing. According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, approximately 20% of new businesses fail during the first two years of being open, 45% during the first five years, and 65% during the first 10 years. Only 25% of new businesses make it for 15 years or more, and this has been a persistent trend in the United States since the 1990s.[103] And Black-owned businesses were approximately twice as likely as white-owned businesses to be financially distressed before the pandemic, and twice as likely to fail during the pandemic.[104]

Additionally, as discussed earlier, one of the best ways to measure the financial success of a business venture is to measure profit. However, before you can measure profit you must first understand what it is, how it occurs, and how to make it so your business can be sustainable. Thus, overall financial literacy is important for entrepreneurs.[105] Loans, which are often used to start up businesses, provide one important part of the picture. You need to be able to identify and avoid predatory lenders. That includes credit cards, which can be one of the most predatory forms of lending, with astronomical interest rates. Not being able to repay a loan, or pay off a credit card, can hurt your credit rating. Many people need financial literacy training and education on how to maintain a good credit rating and use credit cards strategically. The flip side of loans is savings, and this is something that many people also need training and education on. There are high-risk high-return ways to save and low-risk low-return ways, and choosing the best strategy can be complicated. Those entrepreneurs starting off from poverty are, obviously, in the most precarious situation and need to be the wisest with their money.[106]

Profit, in the entrepreneurial game, can also be difficult to understand. It is more than simply the money left over after paying the costs of a business. There are gross profits, which subtract the costs of sales from sales, and net profits, which subtract all operating costs from

[102] Oubre, Chad. 2020. Episode 1: Black Business Podcast. https://open.spotify.com/episode/0v9h6fKzWEOCWpI4c56AG6?si=VSa4WbJrTAaKzVpFNRBudg&nd=1
[103] Deane, Michael, and Katharine Beer. "Top 6 Reasons New Businesses Fail." Investopedia, https://www.investopedia.com/financial-edge/1010/top-6-reasons-new-businesses-fail.aspx.
[104] Mills, Claire Kramer, and Jessica Battisto. 2020. "Double jeopardy: COVID-19's concentrated health and wealth effects in Black communities." Federal Reserve Bank of New York, https://www.newyorkfed.org/medialibrary/media/smallbusiness/DoubleJeopardy_COVID19andBlackOwnedBusinesses
[105] Kimbro, Dennis. 2013. The Wealth Choice: Success Secrets of Black Millionaires. Palgrave MacMillan
[106] Miller-Adams, Michelle. 2002. Owning Up: Poverty, Assets, and The American Dream. Brookings Institution Press.

sales. And the costs and sales do not all happen at the same time, so it can in fact be difficult to track how profitable your business is–its profit margin. Often you need an accountant to tell you.[107] Profit can also be about more than money, particularly for civic or social entrepreneurs. Some people use triple-bottom-line accounting, which attempts to track the social, environmental, and financial outcomes of the business.[108] In this accounting system, success is measured across all three standards, where not just the survival of the business, but also the people and the planet, are important.

Financing a new business, of course, is essential, though how much money is needed can vary tremendously from business to business. And navigating the funding maze is daunting. It is impossible to list all the possible sources of funding.

These are some basic ways to access funds for small businesses:

- U.S. Small Business Administration (SBA)
- Grants
- Venture capital and Angel investors
- Loans and Microloans
- Incubators and Accelerators
- Crowdfunding
- Personal funding

The SBA doesn't lend money directly to small business owners but provides funding and guidelines for lenders who do, and can help entrepreneurs find lenders and grants.[109]

Grants differ from loans in that they usually don't need to be paid back. But there are often heavy restrictions on how they can be used and onerous reporting requirements. Consequently, they often are not useful for those seeking general funding.

Outside investors like venture capitalists generally don't invest in startups. They also explain that the process can be time-consuming and it is hard to get. "Angel investors" can be quite idiosyncratic in who they fund and often care about the characteristics of the founder as well as the business. Crowdfunding sides can be considered angel investors.[110]

As we have seen, structural racism continues to create barriers to Black entrepreneurs obtaining loans. And along with discrimination, getting a business loan requires a lot of paperwork–filing all the appropriate government forms, writing a business plan, having good credit, and putting up collateral.

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[107] Hatton, Ed. 2017. "Understanding Profit in Your Business." Entrepreneur. https://www.entrepreneur.com/article/328214

[108] Kenton, Will. 2022. "Triple Bottom Line." Investopedia. https://www.investopedia.com/terms/t/triple-bottom-line.asp

[109] https://www.sba.gov/funding-programs

[110] Harroch, Richard. 2018. "The Complete 35-Step Guide for Entrepreneurs Starting a Business." Forbes. https://www.forbes.com/sites/allbusiness/2018/07/15/35-step-guide-entrepreneurs-starting-a-business/?sh=5f4b4323184b. Fairlie, Robert, Alicia Robb, and David T. Robinson. December 15, 2016. "Black and White: Access to Capital among Minority-Owned Startups." SIEPR Discussion Paper, 17-03, Pp. 1-56. https://doi.org/10.1287/mnsc.2021.3998

Microloans, also called microlending or microcredit can be very small amounts of credit–sometimes only a few hundred dollars, but some include loans of a few hundred thousand dollars to also fit in this category. Sometimes these loans do not even require any collateral. The SBA does work with microloan intermediaries (SBA-backed non-profit organizations) with the ability to issue microloans up to $50,000.[111]

Many pre-entrepreneurs self-fund their initial ventures, either because they can't, or believe they can't, get other funding or they believe they can't.[112] Britney Winters, a Black female entrepreneur, states: "Sometimes it is hard to access capital, so just figure out what your most basic prototype of what you can present… to get your foot in the door. Then you can work towards building it out to your ultimate vision." She offers the suggestion, based on her experiences and successes, to sell what you can at an early stage (in something like a pop-up shop) to generate capital and an initial customer base.[113]

Incubators and accelerators are programs that provide wrap-around services for new businesses. Incubators tend to serve those at the pre-entrepreneurial stage and are less likely to include funding. Accelerators are targeted at those with an initial product, and often include some seed funding.[114]

Crowdfunding is a strategy of asking a large number of people for small amounts of money to fund a new business, usually using a crowdfunding website such as Kickstarter, IndieGoGo, GoFundMe. The legal and tax implications of such funding systems are still being worked out.[115]

But for the entrepreneur starting out, the primary goal is to have their business survive their first year.[116] This definition of survival may seem very brief and potentially vague, but as you continue through this resource you will receive a more in- depth understanding, along with helpful resources to further understand and achieve business survival in the sections titled *Supports for Success* and *Steps to Success.* Having this brief background knowledge of what it takes for a business to survive will help form the foundation of your business knowledge. Creating a strong foundation allows you to build upon it and can keep you grounded in your entrepreneurial journey, even when things don't go as planned.

Disruption and Risk

It may seem that there is only one risk facing the entrepreneur–the risk of failure. But failure is more a result of not managing other risks There are many risks facing the beginning

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[111] U.S. Small Business Association. n.d. Microloan Program. https://www.sba.gov/loans-grants/see-what-sba-offers/sba-loan-programs/microloan-program%20

[112] Diana Hammer, Joseph Malual, Angie Allen, & Christian Schmieder. 2021. "How African American Business Owners Navigate Startup in Northeastern Wisconsin: Challenges and Opportunities." Unpublished manuscript.

[113] Johnson, Simone. 2021. "Tips Black Women Business Owners Have for Black Female Entrepreneurs." Business News Daily. https://www.businessnewsdaily.com/15749-tips-for-black-female-business-owners.html

[114] Richards, Robbie. 2021. "Accelerators Vs Incubators: How to Choose the Right One." Masschallenge. https://masschallenge.org/article/accelerators-vs-incubators

[115] Masur Griffitts Avidor. 2018. Legal Issues with Crowdfunding. Startup.law https://startup.law/legal-issues-with-crowdfunding/

[116] BBC Bitesize. 2022.Business Aims and Objectives - Business Aims and Objectives. https://www.bbc.co.uk/bitesize/guides/zkhby9q/revision/2.

entrepreneur, as well as challenges, setbacks, and roadblocks along the way to building a business. How one approaches and handles each disruption will help to determine the survival and success of the business.

The risks just starting out hark back to the mindset section. Darren Hardy warns us about the roles of our fears, our doubts and even our biography that may get in the way. Then there are the "naysayers" and the "dream-stealers" who can tap into our fear of rejection and/or failure. Developing the personal qualities discussed in the mindset section above is one way to manage those risks.[117] For Black entrepreneurs, those risks include both structural racism and the in-your-face variety that an entrepreneur risks by venturing out into capitalism.[118] There are many other material and practical risks. A lack of knowledge–about finances, marketing, idea development, time management, and many others–is its own risk that can increase other risks.[119]

Some risks can be managed by seeking out the appropriate education, training, and mentoring. Other risks can be managed by putting that knowledge into action. For example, understanding the risks of starting a business as a "sole proprietorship" or a "limited liability company"[120] can help avoid problems down the road.

Then there are the disruptions. Some disruptions are personal–a health issue, a sudden financial problem, a change in family circumstances, and others–can lead to problems managing time and money.[121] Other disruptions are societal or global–a global economic crash or even a pandemic. During the pandemic around 3 out of 4 Black small business owners reported needing emergency funding to survive, and 69% of Black applicants for the COVID-19 Business for All Emergency Grants identified as women according to Hello Alice.[122] Sometimes governments respond to such crises with grants and loans, and knowing what supports are available may be the best way to weather such crises. The U.S. Treasury Department lists resources for small businesses during the pandemic.[123]

This may seem like a lot to handle. The next section will explore the paths to success that can help prevent or lessen the impacts of these risks.

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[117] Hardy, Darren. 2019. The Entrepreneur Roller Coaster. Folio Literary Management
[118] Sofoluke, Opeyemi. 2021. Twice as Hard: Navigating Black Stereotypes and Creating Space for Success. DK.
[119]Goldsby, Michael G. 2014. The Entrepreneur's Toolkit. The Great Courses The Teaching Company. Harroch, Richard . 2018.The Complete 35-Step Guide For Entrepreneurs Starting A Business. Forbes. https://www.forbes.com/sites/allbusiness/2018/07/15/35-step-guide-entrepreneurs-starting-a-business/.
[120] Harroch, Richard . 2018.The Complete 35-Step Guide For Entrepreneurs Starting A Business. Forbes. https://www.forbes.com/sites/allbusiness/2018/07/15/35-step-guide-entrepreneurs-starting-a-business/.
[121]Miller-Adams, Michelle. 2002. Owning Up: Poverty, Assets, and the American Dream. Brookings Institution Press.
[122] Hello Alice. 2020. "Hello Alice Releases Black Business Report Uncovering Significant Inequities Faced by Black-Owned Small Businesses during COVID-19: The Report Spotlights the Unique Challenges that Black-Owned Small Businesses Face and Identifies Opportunities to Better Serve the Black Small Business Community." Cision PR Newswire. https://www.prnewswire.com/news-releases/hello-alice-releases-black-business-report-uncovering-significant-inequities-faced-by-black-owned-small-businesses-during-covid-19-301104750.html
[123] U.S. Department of the Treasury. n.d. Assistance for Small Businesses. https://home.treasury.gov/policy-issues/coronavirus/assistance-for-small-businesses

Paths to Success for Pre-Entrepreneurs

There is no single path to becoming an entrepreneur, but there may be some common steps to take. Since our focus is on pre-entrepreneurs and proto-businesses, we will start with the earliest recommended steps for them.

Starting a new business can be exciting, if you find rollercoasters exciting.[124] To prepare for the excitement it's important to understand what starting a business entails and how to do so in a successful way.[125] It is here where the importance of pre-entrepreneurship and business planning can be seen.

Pre-entrepreneurship involves getting familiar and educated on the steps to starting a business.[126] One of the first steps is developing a business idea.

Ideas and Design Thinking

Where does a business idea come from? Anna Akana says they come from "our passions, our complaints, and our egos."[127] This harkens back to the *Mindset* section above. Passion is a primary part of mindset. And complaints connect directly to problem solving. Ego is the challenging one, as it's important to not get too connected to a specific idea to solve a problem or pursue a passion. It is important to know who the business idea will serve and how much of a market there is for the business idea (is competition for potential business within the area low or high?, etc.).[128] So it is important to test ideas with people and get feedback before committing too much time and too many resources.[129]

So at the earliest pre-entrepreneurial stage, the advice draws on design-thinking.[130] The Nielsen Norman Group design thinking model[131] starts with trying to learn about the people who might be interested in your idea and understanding it from their perspective–to *empathize*. After

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[124] Black Women About Business. 2018. Entrepreneurship is Like a Rollercoaster: Spotify. https://open.spotify.com/episode/5KqmzoEGopgcK7EEYsJM5n

[125] Levesque R. 2019. Choose The Single Most Important Decision Before Starting Your Business. Hay House Businesses.

[126] Daily , M. (2021). "Bank of America Supports Creation of a New Center for Black Entrepreneurship at Spelman College and Morehouse College." Spelman College. https://www.spelman.edu/about-us/news-and-events/news-releases/2021/02/22/bank-of-america-supports-creation-of-new-center-for-black-entrepreneurship-at-spelman-college-and-morehouse-college

[127] Akana, Anna. 2019). How to Develop a Business Idea: Crash Course Business - Entrepreneurship #2. YouTube. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iywvlUk2Wfg

[128] My Own Business Institute. 2022. Session 1: Deciding on a Business. https://www.scu.edu/mobi/business-courses/starting-a-business/session-1-deciding-on-a-business/. Levesque, Ryan. 2019. Choose: The single most important decision before starting your business. Hay House Business

[129] Akana, Anna. 2019. How to Develop a Business Idea: Crash Course Business - Entrepreneurship #2. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iywvlUk2Wfg

[130] Kramis, Luca. 2019. The Pre-Entrepreneurial Journey: Part 1. Hochschule Luzern. https://blog.hslu.ch/majorobm/2019/03/05/idealuca-pre-entrepreneurial-journey-part-one/

[131] Gibbons, Sarah. 2016. Design Thinking 101. Nielsen Norman Group. https://www.nngroup.com/articles/design-thinking/

you talk with enough people you will have a better understanding of potential users' needs–the *define* stage. The next step is to *ideate*, or create a range of ideas to serve the potential users' needs. And you then create one or more working *prototypes* of your idea and *test* them with potential users, refining the prototype as you go.[132] Researchers at the University of Montana see the pre-entrepreneurial process similarly. For them, the process begins with having an idea, and then seeking out information to determine if the idea is any good and if you could succeed as an entrepreneur. If and when the answers to those two question is yes, the person begins to "dabble" or seek out support and resources to put the idea into action. The next step is gather the resources to create a working product model and business model, leading to an actual launch.[133]

Pre-Entrepreneurship Toward Business Development

There are a variety of sources that try to list out the necessary pre-entrepreneurial activities that follow the design-thinking process. Sameeksha Desai and Travis Howe[134] created a master list of pre-entrepreneurial activities that includes:

- Discussed the idea with a friend, work colleague, or acquaintance
- Research the market or consulted how other firms might respond to the business
- Learning about financing options outside of personal sources
- Learned about or applied for patents, copyrights, or trademarks to protect your business idea
- Found a first customer or customers
- Made a sale or provided the product/ service on a pilot basis
- Registered the business for a tax ID
- Created a website for the business
- Sought out professional advice like a lawyer, accountant, or another professional related to the operation of a business
- Consulted an expert on the business idea or market
- Talked to personal sources about financing
- Quit your job to work on the proposed business
- Made a prototype, or tested the market, or collected feedback from customers
- Created summary documents like spreadsheets, financial models, or other numerical analysis to determine feasibility
- Applied to a support program for new businesses
- Hired an employee (non-cofounder)
- Applied for financing outside of personal sources

The U.S. Small Business Administration (SBA) lists five tips for success that can apply to proto-businesses:

- Find a great business mentor

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[132] Also see Kramis, Luca. 2019. The Pre-Entrepreneurial Journey: Part 2. Hochschule Luzern. https://blog.hslu.ch/majorobm/2019/03/06/idealuca-pre-entrepreneurial-journey-part-two/

[133] The University of Montana Bureau of Business and Economic Research Blackstone Launchpad. 2016. Understanding Women's Participation in Pre-Entrepreneurial Activities: Evidence from a Blackstone Launchpad. http://www.bber.umt.edu/pubs/survey/Women%20pre-entrepreneurs.pdf.

[134] Desai, Sameeksha, and Travis Howe. 2020. Who Doesn't Start a Business in America. Ewing Marion Kauffman Foundation. https://www.kauffman.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/12/Who-Doesnt-Start-A-Business-in-America-November-2020.pdf

- Have a healthy view of competition
- Record everything you do
- Sacrifice to ensure quality
- Seek SBA assistance to see if you qualify for business certifications.

They also provide information on how to find local Small Business Development Centers (SBDC), which offer counseling and low cost training.[135]

Then there are models that move closer to preparing full entrepreneurs, but still mostly apply to pre-entrepreneurs as well[136].

Richard Harroch lists some preconditions for success, including coming up with the initial idea, having a plan and vision, getting the money needed, and keeping up your energy and spirit. He advises forming a limited liability corporation and following all the legal and bookkeeping rules,[137] using written rather than oral agreements (including with any partners). In addition, he advises having a good business name and a good product, practicing careful hiring including reference checks, and protecting intellectual property rights.[138]

Martinez White, a DJ entrepreneur, lists seven steps to "spin poverty into prosperity," using DJing as a metaphor.[139] Those steps are:

- "Pick a Tempo"-- deciding what your entrepreneurial vision is and shaping it.
- "Drop your first record"--taking the risk and acting on the vision, having faith in the outcome.
- "Feel the beat"--connecting with others who are trying to do what you are.
- "Ride the wave"–acting on self-trust and working through anxiety and fear
- "Keep spinning hits"--developing a routine and acting with consistency
- "Feel the dance floor"--expanding and bringing others into your work
- "Rock the party"--expanding your success to leave a legacy

For those looking to pursue a social entrepreneurship or especially nonprofit route, Candid offers a set of steps that are a bit different from the typical business startup process.[140]

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[135] Small Business Administration: https://www.sba.gov/sites/default/files/files/resourceguide_3158.pdf. The Madison SBDC is Madison #145, website: madison.score.org. Its headquarters is the MG&E Innovation Center, 505 S. Rosa Road, suite 37. The chair is Mike George and they meet at the Dream Bank at 1 N. Pinckney St. in Madison. There is also one specific to UW Madison, UW-Madison SBDC, 975 University Ave., room 3260 (608) 263-2221
Director Michelle Somes-Booher: michelle.somesbooher@wisc.edu, https://wisconsinsbdc.org/madison

[136] Erin On Demand. 2019. 8 Things You MUST Do BEFORE Launching Your Business | Admin Tasks to Start Strong. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uioU0l1HuGw. Indiana Black Expo. 2020. One Page Business Plan. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mX8b60y6UuU

[137] Harroch, Richard. 2018. "The Complete 35-Step Guide for Entrepreneurs Starting a Business." Forbes. https://www.forbes.com/sites/allbusiness/2018/07/15/35-step-guide-entrepreneurs-starting-a-business/?sh=5f4b4323184b. These rules include using the corporate name, proper signatures, separating business and personal funds and taxes

[138] Harroch, Richard. 2018. "The Complete 35-Step Guide for Entrepreneurs Starting a Business." Forbes. https://www.forbes.com/sites/allbusiness/2018/07/15/35-step-guide-entrepreneurs-starting-a-business/?sh=5f4b4323184b.

[139] White, Martinez . 2020. Think Like a DJ. Intuition Productions.

[140] Candid. 2022. How Do I Start a Nonprofit Organization. https://learning.candid.org/resources/knowledge-base/starting-a-nonprofit/

- Step 1: Do Your Homework
    - Conduct a needs analysis
    - Is a nonprofit right for you?
    - Know the alternatives
- Step 2: Build a Solid Foundation
    - Draft your mission statement
    - Write a business plan
    - Develop your board
- Step 3: Incorporate Your Nonprofit
- Step 4: File for 501(c)(3) Tax-Exempt Status
- Step 5: Ongoing Compliance
    - Register with your state's agency
    - Prepare for annual reporting requirements
    - Follow the rules

In some ways starting a nonprofit as a path to income can be harder than starting a business because a nonprofit must wait for grants or donors to provide funding, and that means waiting for the state and national government nonprofit applications to be approved. It is possible to access funding more quickly with a fiscal sponsor–an existing nonprofit what will allow you to temporarily work under their auspices–but that also comes with complications

Trying to start a full-fledged business also brings a set of challenges. In the book *Black Entrepreneur Survival Guide: the complete guide to becoming a successful African American Entrepreneur*, Dunneille D. Anderson covers eight principles that can help an entrepreneur's business, and specifically a Black entrepreneur's business, survive its first year[141]. These principles are:

- Develop the right team that will ensure success
- Properly use social media to grow your business
- Attract the right clients/ customers
- Run your business professionally
- Brand your business
- Form a legal entity right for your business
- Efficiently market and sell your product or service
- Network to grow your business

Principles such as these, even from a Black entrepreneur, are probably too far down the path of success to be useful for the proto-business entrepreneur. For those at the pre-entrepreneur stage, having access to a network, accessing legal services, developing a marketing strategy, etc. requires resources that simply are not yet available. How one gets from pre-entrepreneurship to the point of starting a full-fledged business with all these attributes is the gap we have not yet filled.

Perhaps one way to fill that gap, that is not included in most what-to-do lists, is to find out what it's like to run a business like the one you are considering–what equipment and space and personnel are needed? What are the hours like? What are the returns like?[142] Understanding

[141] Anderson, Dunneille D. 2018. Black Entrepreneur Survival Guide: the complete guide to becoming a successful african american entrepreneur. CreateSpace Independent Publishing Platform.
[142] Allen, Kenneth. 2020. Launch Your Own Business. Indiana Black Expo. YouTube. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dpJ8UB1-P6Q

what goes into developing, organizing, and running a business before active steps are taken is just as important as physically executing a business plan. Being realistic about the sustainability of supporting a new business and understanding the intricacies that go into business planning before getting started allows for realistic objectives and outcomes that will provide for a stable foundation for the new business. It is also important to note that there is no perfect template that works for every business when it comes to its creation and success so having familiarity in what steps, processes, and/or strategizing need to be taking place will only be beneficial.

In the absence of resources and networks, and in the presence of continuing structural racism, the most important strategy for the aspiring Black entrepreneur may be community, which we cover in the next section.

The Importance of Entrepreneurs Connecting With Others

When we think about entrepreneurship, our minds usually create an image of the lone wolf inventor struggling alone against the naysayers and skeptics. The media propels us to think of Richard Branson, Bill Gates, Steve Jobs, Jeff Bezos, and Mark Zuckerberg (all white guys, you might notice). But the U.S. capitalist cult of individualism is also now bringing Black people into the fold. Investopedia's list of Black entrepreneurs includes names most of us know, like Oprah Winfrey, Michael Jordan, and Jay-Z, along with others we may not know–Janice Bryant Howroyd, or Robert L. and Sheila Johnson.[143] But all of these cases have been distorted by the mythology of the individual entrepreneur. The reality is quite different. There is no such thing as the individual entrepreneur. Each of those individuals got the credit for a lot of work by a lot of people, whether those were mentors, collaborators, partners, employees, end users, family members, or any myriad of others.

You may have noticed throughout this report, and especially in this section on paths to success, that so much of the advice is about connecting with others, not going it alone. Whether it is about testing out your idea, filling out the legal forms, doing the books, or just doing the work, the best advice is to seek out others. Overcoming opportunity hesitancy to do that connecting is one of the biggest and perhaps most unrecognized challenges facing the entrepreneur. Soulaima Gourani interviews Martin Ekechukwu, who explains that Black entrepreneurs or pre-entrepreneurs tend not to share their ideas, because they don't feel like they have support. Ekechukwu explains that for Black entrepreneurs to be successful, they should talk about their aspirations and support others.[144] Perhaps one way to overcome that challenge is to reframe the behavior of connecting with others from help-seeking to power-building. Every relationship is a potential added resource, or sale, or new idea or ally in the struggle.

One of the best time-honored ways of developing connections among people is by sharing stories. It's a method used by community organizers–those people who are expert at

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[143] Taylor, Kiara, 2022. "Legendary Black Entrepreneurs." Investopedia. https://www.investopedia.com/legendary-black-entrepreneurs-5112876

[144] Gourani, Soulaima. February 6, 2020. "6 Tips For Overcoming Adversities As A Black Entrepreneur." Forbes. https://www.forbes.com/sites/soulaimagourani/2020/02/26/6-tips-for-overcoming-adversities-as-a-black-entrepreneur/?sh=36860e9f3ca4

connecting people into communities of resistance, resilience, and restoration. Community builds connections that can benefit the entrepreneur and their community.

Black women entrepreneurs frequently emphasize community building through stories. As Shanicia Boswell states "one of the best things an entrepreneur can do is tell her story. When a creator vocalizes how she has turned lemons into lemonade, it will invigorate another to keep going."[145] Minda Harts relates how the stories of white women in business didn't resonate with her, compelling her to tell her own story.[146] Furthermore, Black entrepreneurs' voices not only hold inspiration for future generations of entrepreneurs, but they also hold the knowledge of the historic and current challenges of being Black and an entrepreneur. When entrepreneurs share their stories of the impacts of inequalities in the distribution of resources—specifically in the Madison area in regards to housing—along with the adverse impacts of intersectionality, it allows for the passing down of intellectual capital, the inside scoop.[147]

Creating a community to openly discuss barriers Black entrepreneurs face also for a space to also share solutions to help balance the playing field.[148] Because as the same interviewee shared "there are beautiful things about the Black community, but business resources and financial knowledge is not really passed down…you can palpably feel the lack of brain trust for BIPOC and women, especially in the Madison and Dane County area." This is where each personal story helps elaborate and expand the definition of personal success, it can be whatever you want it to be.

How does one connect with others? The *Voices* section of this report contains stories of how Black entrepreneurs connect in Madison. And the *Resources* section of this report contains listings of organizations and programs that people can access to make those connections. Some of which include getting certified as a minority-owned business, "which typically means your business is owned by an individual who is at least 25% Asian-Indian, Asian-Pacific, Black, Hispanic, Native American, or a woman-owned business." This certification can provide additional access to unique employment, training, development, funding and other business opportunities through groups like the SBA Women-Owned Small Business (WOSB) Program Certification and Women's Business Enterprise National Council (WBENC) Certification.[149]

The Importance of Others Connecting with Entrepreneurs

We shouldn't limit the question of connection to only what aspiring entrepreneurs can do. We've discussed throughout this report how thriving Black community-based economies in this country have been destroyed by mob violence and government policy. Supporting the

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[145] Boswell, Shanicia. 2020. My Piece of the Pie: A Collection Of Stories From Black Women Entrepreneurs. Independently published.
[146] Harts, Minda . 2019. The Memo: What Women of Color Need to Know to Secure a Seat at the Table. Seal Press.
[147] Adams, Katrina M. 2021. Own the Arena: Getting Ahead, Making a Difference, and Succeeding as the Only One. Amistad.
[148] Harper-Anderson, Elsie. 2017. Contemporary Black Entrepreneurship in the Professional Service Sector of Chicago: Intersections of Race, Entrepreneurship, and Economic Transformation. Urban Affairs Review 55 (3) 800-831. https://doi.org/10.1177/1078087417712035
[149] Laukner, Sally. 2020. How to Start a Minority-Owned Business. NerdWallet. https://www.nerdwallet.com/article/small-business/how-to-start-a-minority-owned-business.

development of Black entrepreneurs is also about supporting the development of Black communities. As US congresswoman of Ohio's 3rd congressional district Joyce Beatty stated during the ConnectUS Small Business Conference and Expo "if you give us an opportunity to be included then you can one… be in the pipeline for small businesses out there if you are engaged and mentored… then you go from a small business and move up".[150] So it's also important to include what the rest of us can do to connect with Black and other racially marginalized entrepreneurs.

The host of the Uzziah Show and The Generational Wealth Podcast has some fairly stringent criteria for supporting and investing in Black business. First, the goal is to support Black businesses in a way that "elevates the entire community" and that means supporting the Black business owners who are delivering to the community. Second, that means supporting Black businesses with solid plans and goals. Third is promoting those businesses who do measure up. Fourth is to invest in Black businesses prudently, understanding the risks of failure for even well-run businesses. And fifth is to build a local business ecosystem that continuously cycles money through the community. [151]

In contrast, however, Tyia Lashe notes that people seem far quicker to bash small up and coming Black businesses rather than trying to help the owner understand and fix problems, which is what will truly benefit them. Leaving a negative review or sharing a negative experience rather than first bringing it to the owner's attention can harm small businesses far more than it would large corporations. Lashe states these negative impacts are especially harmful for Black businesses because most of the time they are starting from scratch, they may be the first in their family to ever attempt something like this, and there isn't a lot of business knowledge available, necessitating learning by making mistakes.[152] Bringing concerns directly to the owner allows them the opportunity to listen and improve.

Of course, to support Black businesses you must first find them. One resource that has been created is the Official Black Wallstreet, which is a digital platform that acts as a business directory solely dedicated to connecting people with local Black entrepreneurs. Founder and CEO of Official Black Wall Street, Mandy Bowman, has also recently launched an app format to support online Black businesses and brick-and-mortar Black owned businesses. Furthermore, this app is one of the first created that alerts the user when they are located close to a Black-owned business all across the country and across the world. As Bowman explains in the podcast Black to Business, this digital platform and app, along with other similar resources are critical in assisting in the recycling of money in communities. They also eliminate consumers' excuses of "not knowing any Black-owned businesses to support" or "not knowing if the quality will be as good."[153]

Similar resources specifically for finding Black owned and run businesses in the Madison, WI area can be found on the Black Chamber of Commerce website

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[150] City of Columbus. 2019. ConnectUS Small Business Conference and Expo. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=P1wDSmxzHO0

[151] The Generational Wealth Podcast. 2021. How To Support A Black Owned Business (The Right Way). https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cTwpC2KGnAo

[152] Lashe, Tyia. 2020. Supporting Black Business. https://open.spotify.com/episode/5wcw6AZ0AuKLNCTWRvWDGE

[153]

(https://www.madisonblackchamber.com/), or you can follow them on facebook (@Madison Black Chamber of Commerce) and Instagram (@madisonbbc).[154]

And what about white allies? Diana Hammer and colleagues found that communication technology, internet, social media and online-based national networks of peers helped their interviewees learn about business. In addition, weak bridging and bonding social capital among Black entrepreneurs plagues Black entrepreneurs, and argue that white allyship could generate bridging social capital.[155] As Mandy Bowman founder and CEO of Official Black Wall Street–a site that makes Black-owned businesses easier to find–states "there's always this uptick when something horrible happens in the media and through those things we've been there, we've been there promoting the buying Black and using our money to protest different things, I hate to say that, that helps but that has been something I've noticed when it comes to growing".[156] The Madison Black Chamber of Commerce maintains a directory of businesses in the Madison area.[157]

[154] Madison Black Chamber of Commerce. 2020. https://www.madisonblackchamber.com
[155] Hammer, Diana , Joseph Malual, Angie Allen, & Christian Schmieder. 2021. How African American business owners navigate startup in northeastern Wisconsin: Challenges and opportunities. Unpublished manuscript.
[156] Black to Business. 2018. 14: The Power of Black-Owned Businesses x Mandy Bowman of Official Black Wall Street. Spotify. https://open.spotify.com/episode/7mGQi8eWEgvtWiKukR1I82
[157] Madison Black Chamber of Commerce. 2018. Black Business Directory. https://www.madisonblackchamber.com/directory

Voices of Black Entrepreneurs

Introduction

As part of this project we were able to interview eight Black entrepreneurs. All had a number of years of entrepreneurial experience. Some were comfortably successful, and some were still struggling. Many had shifted from struggling to successful to struggling and back again more than once. Half were men and half were women, and we did not collect demographic data beyond that. The interviews ranged in length from about half an hour to an hour and a half, averaging about an hour. We had some guiding questions, but in most cases the interviews became conversational. All interviews were recorded but one, where the recording failed but the interviewers took detailed notes with some quotes.

One of the things we learned was just how time-stressed all of our interview participants were and. We had hoped for four more interviews, but the participants just couldn't leverage the time as they were too busy with the combination of paying the bills and serving the cause. So we express our most heartfelt gratitude to those who made significant time sacrifices so we could tell you about their stories. We will explore these entrepreneurs' motivations, mindsets, internal obstacles (including opportunity hesitancy), external obstacles (including structural racism), significant parts of their paths, the good and bad advice they received, the role of community in their journey, the role of networks, their advice to others, their perceptions of what is needed to support Black entrepreneurs in Madison and the resources they recommend to beginning entrepreneurs.

Motivations

What motivated people to risk an entrepreneurial journey? It would be easy to assume that entrepreneurs would also be motivated to make money while pursuing a dream. And of course money was a factor. But it wasn't about picking up a little cash for extras. These were not people who took all the courses and did all the step-by-step preparation. Their needs were much more concrete and immediate:

> "I had no idea what I was doing. I didn't know at that point I was even going to be called or considered an entrepreneur. It stemmed from me working…and not being able to pay my bills. So I was like 'hmmm, I'm pretty good at this, why don't I turn it into a business.' "

> "I didn't become an entrepreneur because I thought it would be dandy and I had family to support me and there was a little bit of money to support or I could go get a loan when I had a business plan. I became an entrepreneur because I was dealing with things like paying rent and also having money for groceries and gas to get to work and also being the mother of multiple kids not being gone all the time or sleeping for work."

A couple of our interviewees attributed childhood experiences and hardships–sometimes race-based and sometimes class-based–as influencing their entrepreneurial journeys. In a few cases parents or even grandparents were entrepreneurs and the experience resonated with our interview participants.

> "my maternal grandparents were entrepreneurs, so before I had any ideas about anything I was being exposed to entrepreneurial ideas and so my mind naturally went to entrepreneurship".

In other cases, however, the influences were less positive, even if they ended up leading to self-reliance and independence:

> "I've always beat to my own drum…. [because of family background] when you don't fit in you're not doing what everybody else does…. I was always uncomfortable and sitting in discomfort because I didn't know how to fit in. And this is really how my journey began. I'd get teased, I'd get talked about, I'd have slurs about me or my mom or my dad, or whatever, growing up. So just trying to hold that was really tough. So it really got me on the path of wanting to be someone who was a bridge builder."

The experience of economic stress in childhood became a motivator for one interview participant. But again, their entrepreneurship wasn't just about making money. This interview participant also expresses a foundational belief system that linked their life experience with their entrepreneurial focus:

> "I just needed something to focus my energy, growing up in poverty, and I picked up music, just making beats. [The business name] came from me thinking about like what does my company really mean,... and this belief that I could achieve my dream, that I could get out of poverty. That I could be the kid that bought my mom a house, the first house in our family, or my first generation college student so I could break the cycle and be the first kid in my family to lead a neighborhood…. My mission and my goal, my way of working...that's all coming out of trying to inspire those...other young boys and Black girls and young people, LGBTQ community--all the underserved communities that's seeing this huge stratification in history right now and it's creating depression, anxiety, opioid crisis, all this stuff."

Serving the community is an important part of the work that motivates most of these entrepreneurs. Part of their dream is to lift up others:

> "as an entrepreneur, I want to bring the best to my community." "I want to turn [small business] into a business where I can give people jobs."

> "[when thinking about expanding the business] I think about man, how many different people would have jobs here."

These deeper motivations also lead us to think about the kinds of mindsets our entrepreneurs have.

Mindset

When we asked interview participants to choose from the list of headings organized in this report, mindset was the standout favorite. All but one interview participant chose it as the most crucial aspect of entrepreneurship, and the one who didn't listed it as one of the top two aspects. As we have seen, there are many facets to the idea of mindset. Our interviewees spoke to passion and risk-taking.

Passion is a primary mindset characteristic that our interviewees focused on. For one interviewee "passion is what will fuel you." Another portrays passion as "What is it that gets you really motivated, really excited... and that you won't mind the hard work part." And that's important because, as another entrepreneur describes "The tedious things it takes to run a business, bogs me down. It's all the analytical work that makes my head want to explode, that doesn't allow me to be creative. But at the same time who's gonna do it?"

But passion is not always very specific, and some of our entrepreneurs found their journey shifting as they discovered their passion shifting:

> "Like most people you're searching for what you want to do…. What I found was that I really loved to MC a show…. But I loved the business aspect of music even more. I loved booking shows, I loved understanding and breaking down contracts, and once I realized that business game was no different than the business I grew up doing, it was really easy to make things happen. [But later] I was sick of dealing with labels, I was sick of dealing with artists, I was sick of dealing with the people I had to deal with every day.... And my passion for [a different business] was growing more and more.

It takes another aspect of mindset, extra self-work, to turn passion into reality:

> "the abstract dream that I had could become reality through the power of desire. So I read a lot of self-help books and a lot of materials around manifestation and the law of attraction and all that stuff…. It's gonna be hard to bring it from the abstract realm to the concrete realm."

Part of that self-work, and perhaps the most difficult part for some of our interviewees, is that as an entrepreneur "you have to be willing to take risks." And taking risks means, ultimately, risking failure. Our entrepreneurs talked about becoming comfortable with risk:

> "I've always heard that 'everything you want is on the underside of fear.' So things you don't go for it's because of fear. We're afraid of failing, we're afraid because we don't know how to start, we're afraid we're gonna start and then stop. I think people are afraid of stumbling and making mistakes. I've found a mentor who's like 'I want you to go out and fall on your face.' Like she's excited about making mistakes. There are two acronyms for fear. One is forget everything and run and the other is face everything and rise. It's your choice what you want that fear acronym to stand for."

Our entrepreneurs have made mistakes and experienced failure. And they have all bounced back from it, partly by overcoming their own internal obstacles.

Internal Obstacles

Another aspect of mindset is the “internal obstacles”--the thoughts inside one’s head, that impact how people approach entrepreneurship. Our interview participants listed a number of clear internal obstacles that show the rigors of entrepreneurship, and we highlight them in their own section here.

Dealing with fear of failure is part of the entrepreneurial mindset that can be a potential obstacle if one does not recognize and handle the fear well. Importantly for one interview participant, however, the task is not getting rid of fear, but to use it:

"I've learned to breathe and move through fear."

There is a flip side to the fear of failure challenge, and that is the lack of self-recognition for success. One individual “forgot to celebrate victories because I was so focused on not failing.” For another, it’s only in reflection that entrepreneur can take a pause to recognize their own success:

> “I've owned this [business] since 2018 and it wasn't until this year where I looked at it like I'm the actual ... owner. That is a weird mind frame to have because I never gave myself the credit that I deserved, because I thought, if I did that, I would lose the hunger. I realized that, giving myself the credit of the hard work I've done, makes me want to work harder to go get more."

Entrepreneurship can also be intense intellectual work, not so much in the sense of needing a college degree, but needing to be able to build systems and solve problems. And the challenge is to find one’s own style of learning, or the right training to do that intellectual work:

> “There were some things man, I'd have to sit up and bust my brain, and go over it and over it and over it until I got it. "I'm the type of person who needs someone to show me, one time, how it's done, and after that I got it."

> “I didn’t have classes or expertise in music to be able to navigate the situation better than I did. [I was] so focused on product or service, it’s hard to continuously get out and see what others are doing. Not belonging to a group that can share expertise, pull you into a circle that can help with business initiatives. I never had training especially in taxes, I wish someone would have taught that.”

Having one’s own business also requires developing time management skills. Our interviewees who were using it as their primary income, talked about how all-consuming it can be, leaving little time for other things. Time management takes on special meaning in such circumstances:

> “My obstacles were myself with time management or *time optimism*…. Oh, I can take care of that, that will only take me an hour to do and five hours later I'm still in the middle of it."

And there is one special internal obstacle that we asked our interview participants to speak specifically about, and which we discussed earlier in this report–opportunity hesitancy–so here we give it a special section.

Opportunity Hesitancy

We asked our interview participants whether they hesitated to take advantage of any opportunities offered by others to support their entrepreneurial journey. This includes support resources available for beginning and experienced entrepreneurs, both locally in Madison and across the Internet. They include readings, trainings, webinars, podcasts, and many other resources. Many of them are free.

In some cases people hesitated because they didn't think the opportunity was a good fit. For others, the hesitancy was because of a sense of discomfort. One challenge is that finding and approaching opportunities can be difficult:

> "I have not had a mentor per say, I think there's two ways to look at it. Going to some schools, there was a possibility to be mentored but I had never been approached/or approached someone else to get a mentor. I moved around a lot, and often relied on myself to do things like that…. But I'm always looking for mentorship, because I found myself many times trying to constantly try to figure things out alone, and if there was someone who could help guide me, i would be very receptive to that."

Another challenge is self-confidence:

> "I sometimes don't have confidence in myself so if I hesitated...it might be because well, I don't know if I'll be successful at that…. I told him [mentor] that I wanted to start my business and I was afraid to do it and he said 'just do it, you're gonna be great, I'm here to help you' and I remember that I didn't have a website and I put it out on Facebook and finally I was so nervous, I was so nervous to tell people I was doing this and I finally hit 'publish' on my Facebook page... and [mentor] was the first person to comment on it and he was like 'you did it! I'm so proud of you!'

And the self-confidence challenge can affect both the young and the old, and both men and women.

> "I always heard about that stuff. I just didn't think I had the capacity to finish it. I thought I was too old, or the time had passed me by."

> "As a young person I had lots of ideas and thoughts, but I was really scared. I felt very quiet. I felt quiet as a person of color and I felt quiet as a woman…. As I started getting more confident in myself and I started seeing more people living their dream, I started asking myself, why can't I?...I think the biggest challenge I had to overcome was my own insecurity…. obstacles and challenges that we have to overcome as entrepreneurs is how to ask for help, how to not think that asking for help is somehow makes you inadequate, not smart enough, not intelligent enough, not bright enough. It just means you've run into a dead end and you're looking for some other brains that can help see the problem or the obstacle differently than you…. My hesitation was sometimes that I was being the smarty pants and felt like I knew more than I really knew.... [sometimes] I didn't know if it was really gonna help me.... sometimes I felt like people can take

> advantage...I was worried about the other person's intentions.... [or] maybe it was expensive or it wasn't at the right time."

In the quote above, the speaker refers to being both not confident enough and over confident, which can be two sides of the same issue, as also expressed by this interview participant.

> “I didn't take advantage of those entrepreneurial groups in the city and I wish I would have…. In my twenties I had a really hard time asking for help. And I remember one specific moment where I was coaching actually…it wasn't going well and I needed support and I had a friend and former coach who I could have reached out to for help and my pride got in the way."

And it’s not just a lack of confidence in one’s self that can produce hesitancy. A number of our interviewees talked about their lack of fit with programs offered by people who lacked relevant class, race, and gender life experience. Trying out such programs can require extra effort.

> "you have to go through a certain amount of bravery those first couple of events when you're not sure…. If we don't see ourselves or we don't feel that there'll be an understanding or support without a lot of having to explain where we're different from the cookie-cutter type of support, then...people tend to pull away from it or they see it as an incomplete resource."

This interview participant begins to direct our attention to some of the external obstacles faced by entrepreneurs. That is where we will turn next.

External Obstacles

The largest external obstacles faced by our entrepreneurs comes from systems of exclusion. They all have either explicit or implicit racial characteristics, and they all intersect with other identities and structural characteristics of our interview participants.

Part of the problem was simply finding useful support and resources in the sea of information facing entrepreneurs. The entrepreneurs who had experienced failures attributed them mostly to a lack of financing. It was common for our entrepreneurs to be denied bank loans, even with a “45 page business plan with graphs and everything”. And some were not aware of grants that may have helped their businesses. One interviewee notes “Even to be part of the Black Chamber of Commerce, you gotta pay.... What if you can't pay?”

Finding support that would accept and support the person for who they were, and allow them to lead in the support process, was an additional important challenge. Some support resources felt disrespectful.

> "I think for the folks who are marginalized in other ways, entrepreneurship can be such a great solution. So I think about someone who's formerly incarcerated;... Trying to find people that we could trust was an obstacle, that would again, not try to change us and tell us what to do, but rather meet us where we're at--this is what we're trying to do, so what we want is for you to tell us how to do it, not tell us why we shouldn't do it this way."

> They don't want to give us money to fix the situation, but when they give us money, they want to control the shit…. My thing is this--give me the money, I know what I'm doing in my community, and if I don't do the shit then don't give me no more."
>
> "there's an investment that's required to operate any business. I didn't have a service like braiding that I could do without an initial investment. So it was coming up with the money, being able to research for myself…. Risk liability, tax planning, things that have to do with having wealth and not coming from a survival economic standpoint. So when you're familiar with wealth building tactics you bring that to business [but] we're dealing with a population that doesn't have renters insurance or life insurance or car insurance, so insurance for a business seems extra, especially coming from a place where I'm doing this because I need more money to survive.

These experiences suggest the underlying problem of structural racism. Next we will turn to more explicit discussions of that issue.

Structural Racism

Racism appears in these entrepreneurs' lives in broader ways than just specific obstacles. Nearly every interview participant had a story of how racism has impacted their journey. And the one person who didn't experience direct overt racism attributed it to their light skin, but even they weren't sure if some work they didn't get was because of racism. And that is part of the issue. Having experienced racism in a myriad of ways over the course of their lives, some of our interviewees still gave the benefit of the doubt about things like not getting a bank loan, knowing that they were engaged in a risky business venture and thinking maybe the denial was because of their risk rather than their race. But even when our interview participants saw their challenges as those faced by all entrepreneurs, they also saw how race shapes those challenges. One interview participant insightfully notes:

> "all of those things [historical oppressions] create barriers and challenges for Black entrepreneurs today, that is just a fact. I read something recently that Black-owned businesses were less likely to kind of successfully navigate through…the pandemic due to a lack of access to financial resources.... there were a lot of conversations and controversies that I was hearing about in terms of how some of those resources were [not] being allocated specifically to Black and Brown business owners. And so seeing some of those inequities play out across the city, that's in real time. "
>
> "Some challenges are the same for everyone. The way you experience them is absolutely different."

This second interviewee goes on to note that the challenges she faces are not limited to her as a Black *entrepreneur*:

> "As a Black woman I was dealing with all of the same barriers that I was dealing with anyway, right? Any disparity in banking, any disparity in access.... plus the stress, right?"

This perspective is echoed by another interview participant, who also bring strategies of dealing with racism into their entrepreneurship:

> "It's really not anything different than what you grew up with. You learn how to be confident within your own skin…. When people have found out what I look like, they've not signed up. I've had racial things said, but that's everyday life…. There's nothing someone could say that would surprise me and/or stop me…. Any time you're a minority in anything, you have to put blinders on.... People aren't gonna accept you and you gotta be OK with that….Successful white people know how to be selfish, especially successful white males…. Being selfish the right way is something that Black people need to learn how to do. Along with, and this one is tough, not being a victim."

This theme of what is today called “resilience” came up frequently in our interviews, even under conditions of painful experiences with discrimination:

> "I had sabotage and things happen to me that I did not expect by overperforming and outperforming and just being myself and…it's caused a lot of pain and strife."
> "I think it was more so in the W2 income employer space where I felt less appreciated and valued and built up.... It ignited a fire in me to create the reality that I desired."

There can also be a partly hidden structural racism that restricts the networks that Black entrepreneurs have access to. One interviewee described “I don’t run in a lot of circles that some of these organizations run in, such as the Madison Chamber of Commerce” where, at meetings, they’d be “one of two people of color and the youngest.” Many events they were not even invited to. They couldn’t say for sure that was due to racism “but it is hard to ignore looking at history.”

The other part of racism at play around entrepreneurship in Madison is the white control over standards and meanings, and the imposition of those standards and meanings in a color-blind way. White perspectives that did not take racism into account and did not create space for Black perspectives did more harm than good.

> “When you can come and say to me 'what do you see wrong in your community' then we can talk. But don't come to me and say 'this is what's wrong in your community. You don't know what's wrong in my community. You can't see what I see in my community."

> "A lot of times, especially as businesses of color, we have people telling us that our ideas need to be changed, that they're not the right ideas, that we don't have the right perspective, we don't have the right view. And so they're trying to change and shape and manipulate what we're doing and that's a problem because it's really a problem with the person giving the advice and not actually the person seeking the advice. So to me, an obstacle and a challenge is finding people who get you, and are not coming from their lens."

One other interviewee, while also sharing the critique of color-blindness and structural racism, also proposes adopting some of the same wealth and information sharing that has benefited white entrepreneurs:

> "Usually it's folks who are white who are looking at people of color and they're applying their white lens on a group of people that they really don't have any experience with and don't understand their journey or don't understand the hurdles…. Color blindness really doesn't help, because the reality is race does matter and race does get in the way of how people get things or don't get things…. Those obstacles [racism] really impacted the amount of money a person can get; they impacted people not even wanting to listen to what your pitch is…. White men have had a long history and a long practice of being able to fail and fail and fail and fail and fail and then they got it right, you know. And they pass on everything to all their friends and family. When you look at women, and you look at people of color, we don't have that same trajectory.... What can be really beautiful about the intersectionality of people who know things connecting with people who don't is giving over some of that intellectual capital, that technical assistance--the shortcut…. The white community has such a network that they have built over time, and experience that they have built over time, that they've passed forward. And there are beautiful things in the Black community that we have also passed over time. But when it comes to money and finance and technical assistance and details, it's hit and miss. Like in Madison and Dane County, not so much."

These interview participants suggest some ways that Black entrepreneurs might succeed. Next we shift to learn more of their entrepreneurial paths.

Paths to Success

The entrepreneurs we interviewed have experienced success and failure but were all, as of this writing, still on the entrepreneurial path–in itself a measure of success. In this section we discuss what has helped keep them on the journey.

Money is, of course, a central part of the path to success, but it may not be as central as one might think. Some entrepreneurs who focused on services didn't have a lot of start-up costs. Other entrepreneurs made all kinds of financial sacrifices to support their efforts. One person sold their house and moved into an apartment to support their business. Another spent their last $1,500 on equipment and then the rest was “a lot of intention, pushin it, pushin it, pushin it." For another “if you get money you have to know what to do with it”--knowing the right equipment to get, how to market yourself, how to manage employees, and so on. Another explains:

> "I learned early on that money wasn't too hard to get if you were willing to grind and go get it…. I would get a lawn mower and go around and mow whatever lawns I could, shovel snow, whatever, whatever jobs I could do…. I didn't start making money in music consistently until like three to five years after I started…. I think people really overall get it confused what it takes to be an entrepreneur--'Oh I get to start my own business, have my own hours.' Well, yeah, if you don't work you don't eat. And that's what destroys a lot of people right off the bat..... An entrepreneur has to be able to adapt. Throw me in the fire, I'll learn how to be flammable in the most positive way possible."

Some of our entrepreneurs, in contrast to the advice in the literature, didn't even have a clear idea of what they wanted to do when they started out and they did learn to be flexible and adaptable:

> "I had a couple of opportunities to work with some folks who had their own businesses and they were looking for my expertise, and so it came really organically. I wasn't even thinking about starting my own side hustle….I think the interesting thing that I learned very quickly...is that you literally do everything…. I've always taken advantage of trainings and workshop opportunities.

> "I didn't know what I wanted to do. So when I started looking behind me and seeing where I always ended up, I kept ending up at the same place. And so 'you might as well do this because you keep ending up in the same place'….I don't think we give people enough space to just practice and get it wrong, until they get it right….I am so iterative. I was exposed to so much stuff that I just do it. The 101 is you're supposed to have a business plan and supposed to write everything out.... What I would say is you have to have some real clear thoughts on what you want to do, how you want to do it, where you want to do it, who you're focused on. But I think, instead of being rigid about a business plan, it's more like a workbook."

Others, starting out, didn't know how to start out, and their paths are consequently not like the textbooks:

> "YouTube University was my friend--I looked up a lot of stuff on that. I did a lot of self-learning. You start researching what you need and you go down the rabbit hole…. And I got the cheapest of the cheapest…because I didn't know to get better stuff…. So I literally googled 'How do I set up a [blank] business.' I found a site that was authored by an attorney turned [blank] and it was like eight steps or something and I followed every one of them. It was really easy to do…. I feel like I stumbled my way through, doing things completely different now than I was then."

> "I was able to get into some entrepreneur support programs. But even in that, what I found…is that even after instruction, you weren't quite sure how to implement or there were some pieces missing, so it was a lot of me googling...and figuring out what resources worked for me.

A number of these entrepreneurs, however, did take the classes, and found them useful. As one interview participant describes:

> "It taught me a lot about business, taught me about building relationships, taught me about taking risks, taught me about communications, taught me about all the things I didn't know that go into business…. That I didn't have in my toolbox.... the encouragement they gave me in that class to excel."

The unique entrepreneurial paths of these individuals also correspond to their favorite forms of advice, which we will cover next.

Good Advice

These entrepreneurs received all kinds of advice along the way. Here we cover their favorite kinds of advice.

Some of the advice our interview participants received mirrors their life experience. In one case, along with telling them that they could be anyone they wanted to be, the advice also came from role modeling:

> “My first entrepreneurial teacher and coach was my mom. Because I seen this lady make a dinner from nothing, having five, six kids, and not really having groceries, and us being full by the end of the night. That's entrepreneurship. That's creating something from nothing."

Another praised their “hero” spouse for supporting them through multiple entrepreneurial endeavors.

Then there are those memorable phrases that stick in one’s memory. For one person, their favorite advice was "don't take advice from people who aren't where you want to be." There are a lot of implications of this particular advice. Some entrepreneurs are just looking for some extra income in addition to their day job. Others are looking to transition fully into self-employment. Then there are all the different industries that an entrepreneur can enter into. In most cases, our interviewees recommended finding mentors who were most like the entrepreneurs themselves.

Another seemingly simple piece of advice with profound implications that was a favorite of another interview participant is "Stop doing stuff for free. Make sure you're getting paid." A number of our interview participants were engaged in what can be called social entrepreneurship, and engaging in a business that has a social mission can mean putting the mission ahead of its income stream. Balancing the mission with getting paid enough to continue the mission can be delicate.

One straightforward entrepreneur had these phrases to offer:

> "shut up and listen.... trust your instincts.... be Ok with being wrong…. Anyone can be an entrepreneur. The issue is do you want the responsibility?"

Strung together, these can sound contradictory. But separated, it is possible to shut up and listen in one moment, and trust your instincts in another. And perhaps anyone can be an entrepreneur–it’s not so much about ability and skill, but about the mindset that is so important to our interviewees, and wanting the responsibility is about mindset.

Another interview participant had a long list of favorite advice. Their favorite mentor said:

> "'I'm here to help your idea happen. I'm not here to tell you that your idea should look like my idea.' She's like 'what do you need, how can I help you, who do I connect you with?' She's like 'start small, and practice, practice, practice, iterate, iterate, iterate.' The other thing she said is 'you're not broken' and 'don't play small’....some good advice that someone [else] gave to me was play to your

> strengths.... play to what you think you can bring into the space.... It has to make sense to you and it has to feel good to you. Because you literally eat, sleep, and drink your business 24/7.... You have to work really hard to tune out the business voice…. Another piece of advice I got was just say yes.... I actually had some really cool stuff happen by just saying yes that I really learned from. And by just saying yes I also freed myself up from critiquing myself on trying things that feel uncomfortable."

But our interviewees have also gotten as much bad advice as good, which we will explore next

Bad Advice

The bad advice that our interviewees remember stems mostly from its lack of fit with their non-linear entrepreneurial paths. One person was told:

> "You have to have this very precise, sharp as a pencil, very corporate, very dry, very linear approach to your ideas, and that's not how it works."

And from an entrepreneur who was living their passion, comes a rejection of the work-life dichotomy:

> "find balance.... I love my job, I don't want to do anything else."

And much of this unhelpful advice again invokes the influence of racism. Such advice shows the depth of the differences we still need to overcome.

> "A lot of advice was coming from white folks and the shit didn't make sense to me."

For others, the challenge came from both racism and classism, as even some of the recommendations from successful Black business leaders didn't resonate for some entrepreneurs:

> "probably a billion different statements that are coming from a place of not understanding or not seeking to understand. So somebody who tells me that the way to get financial stability is to put three months of my bills into a savings account and I'll be set and you're talking to someone who's having a hard time getting through month one and definitely doesn't have anything left over, right?. So when I listen sometimes, when I go to different entrepreneur webinars, the identity is someone who is white, and comes from middle class or upper class, is usually in a spousal situation with multiple incomes, their journey does look very different even though we need to fill the same gaps…. Even in some of our entrepreneur supports that are by other racial identities, so other Black-led, Black-serving organizations, also we've seen some of that kind of class or economic access, education access, kind of bias or just not complete equity in delivery…. I did not have immediate access to business mentors that I felt understood and aligned with me. I showed up in spaces and it was very much cookie-cutter advice.... And it didn't take into account who I was and how I was

> showing up and what I had access to. If you go to SCORE, you're dealing with retired professionals who'd be white males. So while they might have empathy with my situation I don't know that they fully understand. "

So finding good advice was in some ways more difficult than finding bad advice. What many of these entrepreneurs had going for them, however, was connection to a community.

The Role of Community

We asked our interview participants to talk about the mentors they had along the way. A number of them did mention having individual mentors. But they were mostly specialized mentors–people in the same field as the entrepreneur who could help with the technical aspects of that field. But when interviewees discussed mentoring more generally, they were always referring more to a community than to an individual. Our entrepreneurs used the word *community* to refer both to broader Black communities and to what we might call communities of practice that gathered together like-minded entrepreneurs. This entrepreneur refers to the first definition of Black community:

> "I have a good relationship with the community. I do a lot of things with people in the community.... so a lot of people know me...so when I bring them something they know I'm bringing it to them because I care about my community."

Two entrepreneurs found their mentors in communities of practice:

> "I found mentors in my peers who were going through the same and commiserating about it. Mentors within the professional scope, especially within Black led, didn't happen until I was already on my path."

> "the way that I connected to [mentors] was through events that I attended and I asked them to coffee…. Just putting myself out there, which can be really uncomfortable, and just asking for coffee." I actually have a lot of folks in my friend group and my circle who are entrepreneurs and so I'm constantly being mentored by them, even just informally, and so I think building a circle of people who in those spaces that you are either interested in. We teach each other all the time, and its not a formal sit-down but just through conversations about challenges that we are having. We learn a lot from one another. I've had a lot of access to mentors in a formal way and an informal way and they've literally been game-changers for me…. The informal education, so speaking with my friends who are in the entrepreneurial space, getting an opportunity to shadow folks, not just inside the organizations within which I've worked but also outside of my organization so asking people to coffee, asking more about what they do."

Another had the benefit of both kinds of community, and as a consequence expands the idea of mentoring beyond a credentialed professional to cover a wider of people with various life and technical experience, suggesting that it may be possible to overcome some of the historical obstacles of racism:

> "I think that education is good if that's what you think you need. I don't think it's required. I think it's more about do you have access to people who can help your

> idea come true…. My business is successful because I have such strong roots in this community…. Business ideas come to fruition because there are relationship people in your space…who help you shape and form what it is you want to do. They give you the structure, they give you the content, they give you the financing, they give you the technical assistance…. I had formal and informal mentors…. Not seeing a mentor as only someone who's older than me but recognizing that anyone can be a mentor. It's really more about what's the problem or what kind of solution are you seeking…. We always talk about, you know, there should be people who can culturally identify with that person, and I do think that's important. I do think what also is important is someone just recognizing that if a person has a different culture, or identity, or experience than you, to really step out of yourself to really listen."

Those community spaces have been important to Black entrepreneurs in Madison. But society is connected both by "strong ties" of community and "weak ties" of networks,[158] and our interview participants found networks to be helpful also

The Role of Networks

It's not just close-knit community that matters to entrepreneurs. Broader networks are also important. Along with all the personal fortitude required, there are very practical needs–space, supplies, equipment. Two entrepreneurs cited the slogan "Your network is your net worth." But some of those network connections were more than just professional acquaintances. The generosity of friends and associates has mattered mightily to some of our interview participants, as they received donated space, supplies, and friends who stepped up as clients or consumers.

> "[a building owner] said 'I hear what you're trying to do for the Black community in Madison, and I have some space."

One entrepreneur took over their business from their mentor and then bought it. Another had a mentor who invited them along to learn how to do their craft and could answer questions, who then connected them to others:

> "slowly I learned oh, I should be going to networking events, what are those?... From there it was mostly word of mouth…. I joined some [topical] groups just to be a peeper…. I've always been someone who gets along with everybody. I can go into this group, that group, it doesn't matter."

Entrepreneurs do recommend participating in a variety of networks. And they recognize it's not easy to participate in such networks:

> "Being part of a Chamber or a particular type of person-centered group that's in business... are really important. And I think it's maybe important to be in more than one so you can get a different point of view about what that looks like… There are these very structured opportunities, you know, that happen for business owners, and it's very traditional, you know come to a dinner or come to

[158] Mark Granovetter. The Strength of Weak Ties.American Journal of Sociology. Vol. 78, No. 6 (May, 1973), pp. 1360-1380

> this meeting and a lot of entrepreneurs are like, they don't even know how to see themselves like away from their current daily problem. And so trying to pull them away to go do something like that I think is really tough."

Interviewees recognized that such business-focused networks may not be for everyone. So one person also recommended a network that would appeal to those looking for a cultural space more than a business space:

> “One of my favorites is Culture Community. It's not entrepreneur-centered but they're so dope…. There are so many entrepreneurs in the room."

The ultimate reason for building and participating in networks is to help the business succeed. But success, for our entrepreneurs, isn’t about a simple economic calculation. So it is worth exploring what success means to the people we interviewed.

The Meaning of Success

When we asked these entrepreneurs to define success, what they all said was some version of “I think every Black entrepreneur has to define success for themselves.” And, after that, came the definitions that went way beyond what we might expect. For some, success is mostly about the person:

> "At the base of success for me is peace of mind….. Next for me is clarity of vision…. And at the top…is self actualization."

> "Is success being able to have time freedom?... Is success owning something or is success having an emergency savings account or is success moving up to the East Side.... I want to feel happy and fulfilled in my heart with what I'm putting out in the world and then what I'm getting back. At some point it's gonna have a dollar amount. I think my next level of success is being able to leave my full-time job and we all know it's gonna happen; it's just a matter of when."

> “Are you happy? Do you feel you've arrived? Did you do the damn thing?... You might not be where you drew the line, but you did arrive. And are you happy with where you showed up?"

> "I am the only person who can define success and happiness and joy and freedom for me. And where I got stuck and where I found myself in a box was where I was trying to align myself with other people's view of success and I wasn't happy." "Financial freedom, in this capitalist world, is so helpful and so liberating."

For others, success included broader and deeper societal-level goals:

> “I'm part of a generation… that view things not from an assimilation or a proving that I'm ‘as good as’ space, but from being proud to be unique…. And then you have leadership that comes from a space of like success meant having the equivalent of your white counterparts and being seen as powerful or as valuable or able…. A lot of what I see in [the] entrepreneur spirit, in the Black woman

> especially, is that heart to give...there's always a deeper meaning. If you talk to a lot of our entrepreneurs about the name of their business, it'll be rooted in something that's pretty deep or some philosophy or idea. Each entrepreneur needs to define success for themselves…. For me success has felt like getting things that have been in my brain out in the world and having them have an impact similar to what I imagined.... and beginning to see traction behind getting those ideas into action.... And then baseline is obviously bringing in enough revenue to support yourself--to be whatever level of entrepreneur you're seeking to be. "
>
> "I never want to work for someone else again, if I don't have to. And it's because, in my mind, if I'm passionate about something, I should be able to make some money from it. Whether I can make a living from it, that's a whole other story…. Where you reach a level of success where people no longer look at you as a Black entrepreneur."

These entrepreneurs have some ideas on how others can engage in the entrepreneurial journey toward these various definitions of success, and we next look at their advice.

Advice From Our Entrepreneurs

We asked our interview participants to share the advice they would give to others. They had a lot to offer. And because so many had such a wide variety of advice, here we will present the advice in sub themes rather than breaking it up by individuals. The sub themes include mindset, connecting with others, and learning

Mindset

We start with mindset advice. For two of our entrepreneurs, the advice focused on personal happiness:

> "Go where it feels good and if it doesn't feel good get the heck out of there, man."
>
> "You have to do what makes you happy, and it sounds selfish because it is."

Part of the reason for focusing on happiness is because entrepreneurship can be hard, and three entrepreneurs offer a reality check on what it's actually like:

> "Are you capable of blocking everything out, and lock in on what you are trying to do."
>
> "Making sure I followed up with a client even if it was a friend of mine. I feel like when you start out you treat your friends a little different and they're going to give you a little slack or let you slide and they're the ones you should be serving really hard."
>
> "At the end of the day, no one is going to love your business as much as you…. you can't just have days off."

Accomplishing that also means becoming comfortable with one's self, and four entrepreneurs offered advice to that end:

> "I'm not broken and I don't need to be fixed."
>
> "Don't strive for perfect."
>
> "Don't wait for the water to be the perfect temperature because you might miss out."
>
> "You have to be comfortable with who you are and never ever want to stand in place."

And that means becoming comfortable with asking for help, as three entrepreneurs noted:

> "I started saying 'look, don't get stuck on saying I don't know what to do, why don't you get stuck on 'how do I figure out how to make this work?'"
>
> "Don't feel like it's bad to ask for advice."
>
> "It's not a weak thing or a bad thing to ask for help. It is definitely a humbling thing but it's also one of the best things you can do for yourself because that's the only way that you learn."

The hardest part of achieving this mindset is perhaps the prospect of failing, and our entrepreneurs offer three pieces of advice for that.

> "I would be so afraid to fail, i would have stomach pain because of trying to over analyze everything so that everything happens the way it is supposed to happen…. Fail, and fail hard."
>
> "I try to encourage people to be entrepreneurs when you're younger, but don't be discouraged if you're not successful until you're older."
>
> "Being very introspective, I believe an entrepreneur should be, because you have to be OK with messing up. I don't agree with people when they talk about failure. I look at failure as something very man-made."

Connecting with Others

Thankfully, as our entrepreneurs remind us, entrepreneurs don't need to accomplish this mindset, and their business, alone. They all highly recommend getting connected to others:

> "First of all, I would take them to somebody that was in the field that they was trying to start their business in"
>
> "Find a mentor that speaks to you, that has your same core values and beliefs and maybe sit down and figure out what your core beliefs and values are."

"The worst thing about entrepreneurs is we are like a one band show. And I think we have to let that go. We have to be willing to trust, be vulnerable to bringing other people in."

"Definitely take advantage of any local groups and local gatherings. There are so many."

"Shoring yourself up with mentors, and with Entrepreneurial networks."

"One of my mentors said…'even if you're happy in your current role, even if you're not looking for an opportunity, if someone asks you to coffee because maybe they have an opportunity or they want to learn more about you, take it, because you never know what will happen. Even if it's something you end up declining, it's always great to have connections and to network with people. And it's not just about what they can do for you but what can you also do for them so how do you look at it in that reciprocal way…. Ask people if you can buy them coffee, ask if you can buy them lunch, ask if you can meet up with them, for a walk, whatever you're comfortable with, but put yourself out there, ask the question. Most people are incredible and will say 'absolutely, I would love to connect.'"

"And you never want to say anything to discourage anybody."

Learning

Finally, they all emphasize learning, though the kind of learning they recommend varies widely:

"The formal education was super helpful."

"If you want to be an entrepreneur, don't worry about a degree. Take classes, but don't worry about a degree. Because you're gonna be your own boss....someone can tell you how to do something, but it may not work, because you're not them."

"I would say be thoughtful about what you're doing, try to pull in as many resources as possible to support you that's only going to help with the experience and help with the learning curve of being an entrepreneur."

"Someone's already done whatever you've done [so learn from them]."

"Google--literally look up the people you want to start a business in.... and find the people who resonate to you." "Research as much as possible what you want to create."

"My biggest advice is to prototype."

"Do your own research. If it's out there, go experience it, really try to understand what you are getting into. Do respectful informational interviews. Go into programming...check it out...to see if this is for you."

> I would tell that person to jump in. which is crazy because I wouldn't have told myself to jump back in at 25. There are certain skills that you cannot read about or train for per say without being in that moment and learning how to handle it as it comes. Something to be said about actual experience rather than theory.

What's Needed

Two interviewees thoughtfully considered the Black entrepreneurial scene in Madison, considering the resources that existed and might be missing. One person was concerned that some types of Black businesses, like customization or lashes, might be getting oversaturated while other types of businesses might be missing altogether. This person could not meet all their daily needs while "shopping Black." We discussed the possibility of research to better understand the Black business ecosystem.

In thinking about the Black entrepreneur support ecosystem, this interview participant also expressed concern that there may be more supports for women than for men. A second interview participant suggested that there may be enough courses. For them, "what the big barrier has been is having space for BIPOC and women to freely and openly say 'I want to start a business' and that, instead of people questioning them ten ways to Sunday, say 'that's great! So, how do you want to do this?' And you support them however they need to be supported." They suggest a need for connector programs to help people figure out what they need and then find specialized mentors, special customized training and support, financial and other resources. They also see a hotline as being valuable. This suggests another potential project to better understand the support ecosystem.

Recommended Resources

The list below includes all the resources recommended by at least one interview participant. They have not been vetted in any way, and may not be recommended by others. Local organizations whose mission is to support entrepreneurs and/or Black communities are starred and described in more detail in the *Resources* section later in the report.

Asset Builders of America, https://www.assetbuilders.org/.*

Audible, https://www.audible.com/.

Collaboration for Good, https://collab4good.org/.*

Culture Community, https://www.culture.community/.*

Doyenne Group, https://doyennegroup.org/.*

Sandy Eichel, http://www.sandyeichel.com/.

Gener8or (The Accelerator program), https://www.gener8tor.com/gbeta/madison.*

Google, https://www.google.com/.

Greater Madison Chamber of Commerce, https://madisonbiz.com/.*

Tim Grover, https://timgrover.com/.

LinkedIn Learning Center, https://www.linkedin.com/learning/.

Madison Black Chamber of Commerce, https://www.madisonblackchamber.com/.*

Nehemiah Center for Urban Leadership Development, https://nehemiah.org/.*

Progress Center for Black Women, https://www.centerforblackwomen.org/.*

Starting Block Madison, https://www.startingblockmadison.org/.*

Ujamaa Business Network, https://www.facebook.com/UjamaaBusinessNetwork/.*

Upstart, https://www.warf.org/programs-events/innovators-investors-and-researchers/upstart/.*

Urban League of Greater Madison, https://ulgm.org/.*

University of Wisconsin Odyssey Project, https://odyssey.wisc.edu/.*

Wisconsin Small Business Development Center, https://wisconsinsbdc.org/centers/madison/.*

Wisconsin Department of Financial Institutions, https://www.wdfi.org/.

Wisconsin Women's Business Initiative Corporation, https://www.wwbic.com/.*

Resources for Black Entrepreneurs

Coaching/Consulting, Classes, Lawyers, Funding/Finance, Networks/Social Capital

Introduction/Methods

This section lists available resources to entrepreneurs and pre-entrepreneurs in Madison.The focus is on local resources, but national and regional resources are included where appropriate. Additionally, this list focuses on resources for new entrepreneurs rather than specialty industries like technology-based businesses, government contractors, or resource extraction businesses.

This section is divided into coaching/consulting, classes, networks, legal advice, tech support, and funding. The sources have not been evaluated, but include groups recommended by our interviewees.

Organizations that offer mentorship programs tend to have a confidentiality agreement or liability agreement in place.[159]

Coaching/Consulting

Doyenne Group is a coaching/mentorship resource in Madison that focuses on female entrepreneurs.[160] There is a membership program - at the $25/month level you get three coaching sessions with law, marketing, etc professionals/year.[161] The mentorship program may be available to members and non-members for free.[162]

Gener8or (The Accelerator program) provides investment support and coaching for select startups.[163]

Madison Entrepreneur Resource, Learning and Innovation Network (MERLIN) offers mentors who prefer to work with individuals who have a business plan or a business underway.[164] There is an online application, approved entrepreneurs are invited to give a presentation, and once the mentee is approved and mentor/mentee relationship is established, the mentor/mentee sets the format and frequency of meetings. They list on

[159] See for example the. MERLIN Mentoring Service: Rules for Participating Entrepreneurs. https://merlinmentors.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/02/merlin_rules.pdf
[160] Doyenne Group. n.d. Madison: City in Wisconsin. https://doyennegroup.org/cities/madison
[161] Doyenne Group. n.d. Doyenne Membership. https://doyennegroup.org/why_join_doyenne
[162] Doyenne Group. n.d. Coaching. https://doyennegroup.org/programs/coaching
[163] Gener8or, https://www.gener8tor.com/gbeta/madison
[164] Merlin Mentors. 2014. Are You Ready to Take Your Business to the Next Level? https://merlinmentors.org/entrepreneurs/

their website that a minimum commitment from entrepreneurs of the equivalent of one day a month is expected.[165] MERLIN was "developed with the support and cooperation of various entities related to the University of Wisconsin-Madison."[166]

Senior Corp of Retired Executives (SCORE) offers mentoring. It is partially funded by the U.S. SBA.[167] SCORE has a Resource Library available online.[168] SCORE recognizes unique challenges faced by Black Entrepreneurs (Score for Black Entrepreneurs), including difficulty getting access to capital and government programs and confronting racism and bias.[169]

Small Business Administration (SBA) is a federally funded initiative. Their website has a Business Guide section[170] with the topics: "Plan your business," "launch your business," "manage your business" and "grow your business." Included is a free small business data and trends tool available for market research and competitive analysis.[171]

Wisconsin Economic Development Corporation (WEDC) offers free online comparison tools, such as for cost of doing business (between states)[172] and business location (in Wisconsin).[173]

Wisconsin Small Business Development Centers (SBDCs) is part of the University of Wisconsin-Madison Institute for Business & Entrepreneurship and is partially funded by the U.S. SBA.[174] At the Wisconsin SBDC at UW-Madison, no-cost, confidential consulting is available. Consulting topics include: starting, financing, growing, marketing, improving, protecting (including cybersecurity), and selling a business a business. [175] They offer interactive resources, tip sheets and video resources[176] as well as trainings such as webinars, which are available to Wisconsin residents.[177] Another initiative available through the Wisconsin SBDC network is the Digital Marketing Clinic at UW-Oshkosh.[178] There is a free Wisconsin Business AnswerLine available for

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[165] Merlin Mentors. 2014. The Application Process for Prospective Entrepreneurs. https://merlinmentors.org/entrepreneurs/the-application-process/
[166] Merlin Mentors. 2014. About Us" https://merlinmentors.org/about-us/
[167] SCORE Association. 2021. Find a Mentor. https://madison.score.org/find-mentor-73
[168] SCORE Association. 2021. Looking for more information? https://madison.score.org/node/9704
[169] SCORE Association. 2021. SCORE for Black Entrepreneurs. https://madison.score.org/black-entrepreneurs
[170] U.S. Small Business Administration. n.d. Business Guide. https://www.sba.gov/business-guide
[171] U.S. Small Business Administration. n.d."Market research and competitive analysis. https://www.sba.gov/business-guide/plan-your-business/market-research-competitive-analysis
[172] Wisconsin Economic Development Corporation. 2021. Cost of Doing Business. https://wedc.org/business-development/cost-of-doing-business/
[173] Wisconsin Economic Development Corporation. 2021. Locate in Wisconsin. https://inwisconsin.com/doing-business-in-wisconsin/available-sites/locate-in-wisconsin/
[174] Board of Regents - University of Wisconsin System. 2021. About - Wisconsin SBDC Network. https://wisconsinsbdc.org/about/
[175] Board of Regents - University of Wisconsin System. 2021. Consulting. https://wisconsinsbdc.org/services/consulting/
[176] Small Business Big Threat. 2021. Resources to Protect Your Small Business. https://smallbusinessbigthreat.com/access-resources/
[177] Small Business Big Threat. 2021. In-Depth Training. https://smallbusinessbigthreat.com/attend-training/
[178] Board of Regents - University of Wisconsin System. 2021. Digital Marketing Clinic. https://wisconsinsbdc.org/initiatives/digitalmarketing/

established, new and aspiring business owners[179] and the FDIC Small Business Resource Toll-Free Hotline.[180]

Wisconsin Women's Business Initiative (WWBIC) offers that their office can be called for resources.[181]

Classes

There are different types of classes available: on-demand versus scheduled. There are also in-person (local) classes and online classes.

Asset Builders[182] focuses on educational programming around financial capability and economic empowerment.

Collaboration for Good[183] offers educational programs for nonprofits and entrepreneurs, including technology training.

Doyenne Group (for women entrepreneurs) offers on-demand learning (I believe it is available to nonmembers) through their Learning Lab. Prices range from $0-10 and there are a lot of Lady Business Podcast episodes.[184] They also offer two twelve week programs: Investor Accelerator and Triple Threat Venture Training. Investor Accelerator is designed to equip women to invest in startups.[185] Triple Threat Venture Training is designed to help entrepreneurs "develop a strong strategic foundation for their ventures." It is $1,500 for members and $3,000 for non-members. Topics including how to "overcome self-doubt and prevent burnout,"create your actionable growth plan," and "tell your story and ask for help.""[186]

Food Finance Institute, a UW-System program, offers Food Business Scenario Planning, a three-day workshop to help food and beverage companies. They also offer a "Food Business Boot Camp: starting or growing food business."[187]

Inmates to Entrepreneurs offers free entrepreneurship classes to people experiencing incarceration, online and in-person.[188]

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[179] Board of Regents - University of Wisconsin System. 2021. Business AnswerLine. https://wisconsinsbdc.org/services/resources/bal/
[180] County of Dane. 2021. Starting a Business. https://www.dane-econdev.org/tools/starting-a-business
[181] Wisconsin Women's Business Initiative Corporation. 2021. Contact Us. https://www.wwbic.com/contact/
[182] Asset Builders, https://www.assetbuilders.org/
[183] Collaboration for Good. https://collab4good.org/
[184] Doyenne Group. n.d. Learning Lab: Ongoing Learning at the Click of a Button. https://www.doyennegroup.org/courses
[185] Doyenne Group. n.d. Investor Accelerator: Women Funding Women. https://www.doyennegroup.org/programs/investor-accelerator
[186] Doyenne Group. n.d. Triple Threat Venture Training. https://doyennegroup.org/programs/triplethreatventuretraining
[187] Food Finance Institute. https://foodfinanceinstitute.org/
[188] Inmates to Entrepreneurs. https://inmatestoentrepreneurs.org/

Kauffman Foundation, in Kansas City, offers a number of educational resources.

- Kauffman Founders School/Learning Paths includes a video series.[189]
- Kauffman FastTrac is self-paced and virtual or can be classroom-based. As of the time of writing, I'm not seeing in-person courses available in Wisconsin.
- There is a base level course, also called Kauffman FastTrac. It is free. Course topics includes:
    - "Ideate: Get started making your idea a reality and exploring the entrepreneurial life"
    - "Position: Position your idea in the market, understand your customers, and solidify your business model"
    - "Commit: Commit to reaching your market, making a sale, and protecting your business"
    - "Refine: Refine your strategy before launch and make sure your finances are in order"
    - "Launch: Plan for launching, leading, and growing your business"[190]

Nehemiah Center for Urban Leadership Development offers a wide range of programming in the areas of leadership development, economic development, youth education and leadership, criminal justice and reentry, and family and community wellness[191] and are developing an entrepreneur support program. Nehemiah is cited by our interviewees as an important community resource overall.

Pathway to Enterprise for Returning Citizens (PERC) is a Chicago Illinois program that offers both in-custody and community-based training for people experiencing incarceration.[192]

Progress Center for Black Women[193] offers education in financial health, Black women's leadership, and entrepreneurship.[194]

SCORE Madison offers The Startup Roadmap, a 12 chapter course.[195] They offer courses on demand. I believe they are free.

Small Business Administration (SBA) Learning Center appears to be free. Course topics include: "Plan," "Launch," "Manage," "Market," "Grow," and "SBA Mentor-Protégé Program Tutorial."[196] Ascent is another learning platform offered by the SBA. It is free and for women entrepreneurs. The "Journeys" are: "Disaster & Economic Recovery," "Strategic Marketing," "Your People," "Your Business Financial Strategy," and "Access to Capital."[197]

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[189] Ewing Marion Kauffman Foundation. 2021. Kauffman Founders School: Learning Paths. https://www.entrepreneurship.org/learning-paths
[190] Ewing Marion Kauffman Foundation. 2021. Kauffman FastTrac. https://www.fasttrac.org/
[191] Nehemiah Center for Urban Leadership Development. 2022. https://nehemiah.org/
[192] Pathway to Enterprise for Returning Citizens. n.d. http://www.percempowers.org
[193] Progress Center for Black Women. 2022. https://www.centerforblackwomen.org/
[194] Progress Center for Black Women. 2022. https://www.centerforblackwomen.org/education/
[195] SCORE. 2021. The Startup Roadmap: Your Guide to Successfully Starting a Business. https://www.score.org/startup-roadmap
[196] U.S. Small Business Administration. n.d. Courses. https://learn.sba.gov/dashboard
[197] U.S. Small Business Administration. n.d. Ascent Dashboard. https://ascent.sba.gov/dashboard

University of Wisconsin Odyssey Project[198] offers a humanities education for people facing barriers to college. It does not teach entrepreneurship but is cited by Black entrepreneurs as important to their entrepreneurial journey.

Upstart is a free, local entrepreneurship development program by the Wisconsin Alumni Research Foundation for women and people of color. Attendees work on establishing strategic goals and identifying next steps. Topics include marketing, accounting, finance, legal and pitches to the rest of the class. It is suitable for pre-entrepreneurs: in a program promotional video one of the program coordinators says "I think this program is perfect for someone who has an inkling of an idea" (4:10 - 4:14) and "it's a safe place to think about what would it look like if I wanted to start this business?" (4:25 - 4:30). In the same program promotional video, an attendee talks about taking their experience in the program to help them find and establish a relationship with their banker. The information they learned in the program helped garner respect for them from their banker (3:32 - 4:10) (the video is on the Upstart home page in attached footnote).[199]

The Urban League offers programs for businesses such as how to do a sales pitch and other technical assistance. They are part of the Madison Black Business Hub effort.[200]

Wisconsin Small Business Development Center (SBDC) offers a number of programs:

- its *First Steps* program is available online (on demand) and may be available in person at centers (the local center is at UW-Madison). It is a 60-90 minute course that includes downloadable worksheets and videos. The four sections are "Entrepreneurial Mindset," "Business Idea," "Financial Readiness" and "Next Steps." As they state, "Each section includes an interactive lesson, short video stories featuring real entrepreneurs and a self-assessment."[201]
- The SBDC also offers classes through different UW-System universities (including UW-Madison). They are currently offered online and range in price from $0-500. Classes that have been offered include "First Steps to Starting a Business," "First Steps to Starting a Food Product Business," "Superior Visions - Integrating a Healthy Balance Between Work and Personal Life," and "Superior Visions - First Steps to Starting a Small Business."[202]
- They also offer the Entrepreneurial Training Program (ETP) at select UW campuses. It is an 8-10 week course that costs $1,000. The Wisconsin Economic Development Council (WEDC) offers qualified applicants grants that will cover 75% of this fee (grant recipients have follow-up requirements). To take the course in the first place, a grant application must be submitted. The ETP consists of instruction, guest speakers and coaching. They "...follow the "Lean Startup Framework" to cover topics such as how to find out if people will buy a product or service, how to appeal to customers, how to develop a business plan, and how to better use time and money.[203]

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[198] UW Odyssey Project. 2022. https://odyssey.wisc.edu/
[199] Wisconsin Alumni Research Foundation. 2021. Upstart. https://www.warf.org/programs-events/innovators-investors-and-researchers/upstart/
[200] Black Business Hub, Urban League of Greater Madison. n.d. https://ulgm.org/black-business-hub/
[201] Board of Regents of the University of Wisconsin System. 2021. Welcome to the First Steps Program. https://firststeps.sbdc.wisc.edu/
[202] Board of Regents - University of Wisconsin System. 2021. Events. https://business.wisconsin.edu/about/events/
[203] Board of Regents - University of Wisconsin System. 2021. Entrepreneurial Training Program. https://wisconsinsbdc.org/services/education/etp/

Wisconsin Women's Business Initiative (WWBIC) offers free/nominal charge (scholarships available) classes online as webinars & in person in Madison and other Wisconsin Locations. You can request On-Demand classes. They also offer personal money management courses.[204]

Networks/Social Capital

We define social capital as the trust and networks that allow for collaboration and exchange of different resources/ideas. We define bonding social capital as being among groups with shared characteristics. We define bridging social capital as connecting people from varying backgrounds and characteristics. This section lists opportunities for people to connect with each other to build such social capital.

Events & Meetups

Collaboration for Good[205] organizes networking events, including for nonprofits.

Culture Community[206] connects people for personal and professional development through monthly meetings that include speakers. While not focused specifically on entrepreneurship, Culture Community is cited as important by our interviewees.

Doyenne Group hosts Connect Conversation events, where all are welcome (not just women)[207]

One Million Cups, organized by the Ewing Marion Kauffman Foundation, is a weekly gathering where entrepreneurs can present their business idea or new business to community members.[208]

Wisconsin Technology Council[209] hosts a variety of events for tech entrepreneurs and established tech businesses.[210] May require membership.

Wisconsin Women's Business Initiative Corporation (WWBIC) hosts the Strong Women Strong Coffee free networking event for women[211]

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[204] Wisconsin Women's Business Initiative Corporation. 2021. WWBIC Classes. https://www.wwbic.com/classes/
[205] Collaboration for Good. n.d. https://collab4good.org/
[206] Culture Community. 2020. https://www.culture.community/
[207] Doyenne Group. n.d. "Connect." https://doyennegroup.org/programs/connect
[208] Ewing Marion Kauffman Foundation. 2021. 1 Million Cups (1MC) Madison, WI. https://www.1millioncups.com/madison
[209] Wisconsin Technology Council. n.d. https://wisconsintechnologycouncil.com
[210] Wisconsin Technology Council. n.d. About the Wisconsin Technology Council. https://wisconsintechnologycouncil.com/about/
[211] Wisconsin Women's Business Initiative Corporation. 2021. Strong Women Strong Coffee. https://www.wwbic.com/news-events/strong-women-strong-coffee/

Local Membership Organizations

Capital Entrepreneurs is an organization of entrepreneurs who have founded startups in Madison. They organize events and a Slack group.[212]

Greater Madison Chamber of Commerce[213] sponsors a wide range of events.[214]

Madison Black Chamber of Commerce[215] connects Black entrepreneurs and business owners, and maintains a directory of Black-owned businesses in Madison.[216]

Progress Center for Black Women[217] offers community, workspace, education programs, events, and other benefits to members.[218]

Starting Block Madison[219] offers a variety of services for entrepreneurs and workspace.

Tech Council Innovation Network,[220] part of the Wisconsin Technology Council, provides services and networking opportunities for its members.

Ujamaa Business Network organizes events and gatherings supporting entrepreneurs in disenfranchised communities of color.[221]

National Membership Organizations

Black Career Women's Network (BCWN)[222]

National Black Chamber of Commerce (NBCC)[223]

National Council of Negro Women (NCNW)[224] which has a Milwaukee section[225]

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[212] Capital Entrepreneurs. n.d. About Us. https://capitalentrepreneurs.com/about/
[213] Greater Madison Chamber of Commerce. 2019. https://madisonbiz.com
[214] Greater Madison Chamber of Commerce. 2022. "Chamber Events Calendar.' https://members.madisonbiz.com/events/calendarcatgid/6
[215] Madison Black Chamber of Commerce.2020. https://www.madisonblackchamber.com/
[216] Madison Black Chamber of Commerce.2018. Black Business Directory. https://www.madisonblackchamber.com/directory
[217] Progress Center for Black Women. n.d. https://www.centerforblackwomen.org
[218] Progress Center for Black Women. n.d. Membership. https://www.centerforblackwomen.org/membership/
[219] Starting Block Madison. 2020. https://www.startingblockmadison.org/
[220] Wisconsin Technology Council. n.d. Membership. https://wisconsintechnologycouncil.com/innovation/membership/
[221] Ujamaa Business Network. 2022. https://www.facebook.com/UjamaaBusinessNetwork/
[222] Black Career Women's Network. 2021. About Us. https://bcwnetwork.com/about/
[223] National Black Chamber of Commerce. 2021. About Us. https://www.nationalbcc.org/about-us
[224] National Council of Negro Women, Inc. 2018. Our Mission. https://ncnw.org/ncnw/mission
[225] National Council of Negro Women, Inc. 2018. Find a Section. https://ncnw.org/storelocator

Legal advice

Public Health Madison and Dane County provides information on specific legal requirements for businesses with public health implications, such as food establishments,[226] farmer's markets,[227] mobile food establishments,[228] and temporary food and farmers market vendors.[229]

U. S. Small Business Administration provides information about business structures,[230] federal and state licenses and permits,[231] and legal ways to register a business name.[232]

University of Wisconsin-Madison Law & Entrepreneurship Clinic has law students provide free legal services to new entrepreneurs and early stage companies. They provide legal advice on intellectual property, online presence, privacy, service agreements, employees, contractors, and filing legal documents.[233] They provide a Law Series (YouTube videos) hosted on the Wisconsin SBDC Network channel.[234]

Tech Support

Berkeley Extension Free Small Business Toolkit provides over 60 Resources & Digital Marketing Tips for Black Entrepreneurs[235]

Collaboration for Good offers technology training and support for nonprofits and entrepreneurs.[236]

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[226] Public Health Madison & Dane County. 2021. Retail Food Establishment Licensing. https://www.publichealthmdc.com/documents/information_for_prospective_food_operators.pdf
[227] Public Health Madison & Dane County. 2021. Farmers' Markets. https://www.publichealthmdc.com/environmental-health/licensing-permits/retail-food-establishment-licensing/farmers-markets
[228] Public Health Madison & Dane County. 2021. Mobile Food Establishments. https://www.publichealthmdc.com/environmental-health/licensing-permits/retail-food-establishment-licensing/mobile-food
[229] Public Health Madison & Dane County. 2021. Temporary Food and Farmers' Market Vendors. https://www.publichealthmdc.com/environmental-health/licensing-permits/retail-food-establishment-licensing/temporary-food-and
[230] U.S. Small Business Association. n.d. Choose a business structure. https://www.sba.gov/business-guide/launch-your-business/choose-business-structure
[231] U.S. Small Business Association. n.d. Apply for licenses and permits. https://www.sba.gov/business-guide/launch-your-business/apply-licenses-permits
[232] U.S. Small Business Association. n.d. Choose your business name. https://www.sba.gov/business-guide/launch-your-business/choose-your-business-name
[233] The University of Wisconsin Board of Regents. 2021. Law & Entrepreneurship Clinic. https://law.wisc.edu/uwle/
[234] Wisconsin SBDC Network. n.d. YouTube Channel. https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCnsyY4yIAN7_SyI-Sozhaeg/featured
[235] Small Business Toolkit for Black Entrepreneurs. 2021. Berkeley Boot Camps. https://bootcamp.berkeley.edu/blog/small-business-toolkit-for-black-entrepreneurs/
[236] Collaboration for Good. n.d. https://collab4good.org/

Sector67 offers access to technologies at a different scale and is located in the Atwood Street neighborhood. It brands itself as a Community Workspace/Hackerspace/Makerspace/Collaborative Environment. For $100/month members have access to space, tools, equipment and training to use equipment like welders, mills, lathes, 3D printers and more.[237]

Wisconsin Alumni Research Foundation (WARF) licenses UW-Madison technology to entrepreneurs and other organizations.[238] There are more than 1,900 WARF patented technologies.[239]

Funding/Finance

Here the focus will be on local sources of support for funding. There is also a subsection that links to lists of funding sources already compiled.

Local Funding Sources

Doyenne Group has a biannual pitch contest. A Wisconsin registered venture that "is scalable to a regional, national, or international market" and is majority women owned may apply. Winners receive peer coaching practices and compete for a $5,000 grant.[240]

Gener8or (The Accelerator program) provides investment support and coaching for select startups.[241]

Wisconsin Women's Business Initiative Corporation (WWBIC) offers 72-month $1,000 to $100,000 loans to small and microbusinesses.[242] Loans typically range from but I believe they can go up to $250,000. Applicants need a written business plan and in some cases a guarantor or collateral. Loans may be used for machinery, equipment, furniture, fixtures, leasehold improvements, inventory, supplies and working capital. Ineligible uses include the purchase of real estate or refinancing existing debt.[243]

Lists of Funding and Other Resources

Business Grants.org lists grants for small businesses.[244]

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[237] Sector67. n.d. About. https://www.sector67.org/blog/about/
[238] Wisconsin Alumni Research Foundation. 2021. Commercialize. https://www.warf.org/commercialize/
[239] Wisconsin Alumni Research Foundation. 2021. WARF Technologies. https://www.warf.org/commercialize/technologies/
[240] Doyenne Group. n.d. 5x5x5. https://doyennegroup.org/programs/5x5x5
[241] Gener8or. 2021. https://www.gener8tor.com/gbeta/madison
[242] Wisconsin Women's Business Initiative Corporation. 2021. Finance Your Business https://www.wwbic.com/business-lending/
[243] Wisconsin Women's Business Initiative Corporation. 2021. FAQ. https://www.wwbic.com/about-wwbic/faq/#loansfaq
[244]Business Grants.org. 2022. 2022 Small Business Grants For Entrepreneurs. https://www.businessgrants.org/

Capital Entrepreneurs has a list of resources that includes events, peer networking and mentor groups, workspaces, accelerators, competitions, bootcamps, legal services, and more.[245]

Grant $ for Women lists grants, scholarships and other funding for women pursuing a business career.[246]

Madison Region Economic Partnership has a Madison Region Business Ecosystem map. The categories on this map are: Prototyping/Technology Center, Co-Working Space, Hacker/Makerspace, Commercial Kitchen, Incubator, Accelerator and Other.[247]

Small Business Toolkit lists funding and support services for Black-owned businesses.[248]

The Ultimate Guide to Starting a Minority-Owned Business lists funding and support services for Black-owned businesses.[249]

U.S. Small Business Administration lists a variety of funding resources.[250]

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[245] Capital Entrepreneurs. n.d. Madison Entrepreneurial Resources. https://capitalentrepreneurs.com/resources/
[246] Grants for Women. 2022. 2022 Grants, Scholarships and Funding For Women. https://www.grantsforwomen.org
[247] Madison Region Economic Partnership. 2021. Start Your Business. http://madisonregion.org/start-locate-expand/start-your-business-2/
[248] Make it Black. 2020. Small business toolkit: 9 resources for Black-owned businesses. Make It. CNBC. https://www.cnbc.com/2020/08/10/small-business-toolkit-resources-for-black-owned-businesses.html
[249] Graham, Michelai A. 2021. The Ultimate Guide to Starting a Minority-Owned Business [+ Expert Tips] https://blog.hubspot.com/marketing/start-minority-owned-business
[250]U.S. Small business Administration. n.d. Funding Programs. https://www.sba.gov/funding-programs

Resources for Business Development

There are innumerable guides for starting and managing businesses. Below are lists of resources that we found accessible and potentially useful for people considering the journey of entrepreneurship.

They are organized by the topics of operations and logistics, management and leadership, and marketing.

Operations and Logistics

22, J. J. (2020, October 5). *All about small business production (everyting step by step)*. Bank of Information. Retrieved December 21, 2021, from https://bankofinfo.com/all-about-small-business-production/

CitiGroup Inc. (2011). *Guide 6: Basic business operations - citigroup*. CitiBank Resources for Your Business. Retrieved December 13, 2021, from https://www.citigroup.com/citi/citizen/community/data/guide6_eng.pdf.

Department of Revenue . (2021). *Starting a business*. DOR Starting a Business. Retrieved December 13, 2021, from https://www.revenue.wi.gov/Pages/Businesses/New-Business-home.aspx.

Grow your business in Eastern Pennsylvania. Small Business Association. (2019). Retrieved December 21, 2021, from https://www.sba.gov/sites/default/files/files/resourceguide_3141.pdf

How to find a manufacturing facility. Business News Daily. (n.d.). Retrieved December 21, 2021, from https://www.businessnewsdaily.com/8820-how-to-find-factory.html

Markgraf, B. (2016, October 26). *How important is effective purchasing to a small business?* Small Business - Chron.com. Retrieved December 21, 2021, from https://smallbusiness.chron.com/important-effective-purchasing-small-business-73266.html

Murray, M. (2019, August 8). *Small business guide to manufacturing*. The Balance Small Business. Retrieved December 21, 2021, from https://www.thebalancesmb.com/small-business-guide-to-manufacturing-2221064

Product development in a small business. Finish Line Product Development. (2019, May 23). Retrieved December 21, 2021, from https://www.finishlinepds.com/library/product-development-in-a-small-company/

Operations, 3 T. O. B. (n.d.). *The 3 major types of business operations*. The Best Business Management Software and Apps. Retrieved December 21, 2021, from https://altametrics.com/en/business-operations/3-types-of-business-operations.htm

Talia , C. (2021, May 4). *How small businesses can get the IT support they need*. Technology Solutions That Drive Business. Retrieved December 21, 2021, from https://biztechmagazine.com/article/2020/03/how-small-businesses-can-get-it-support-they-need

Management and Leadership

Employee Taxes for Small Businesses. (n.d.). Howtostartanllc.Com. Retrieved December 13, 2021, from https://howtostartanllc.com/taxes/llc-taxes/employee-taxes-for-small-businesses

Harroch, R. (2016, February 4). *Key Issues with Confidentiality and Invention Assignment Agreements With Consultants*. AllBusiness.Com. https://www.allbusiness.com/confidentiality-and-invention-assignment-agreements-consultants-103468-1.html

Harroch, R. (2018, July 15). *The Complete 35-Step Guide For Entrepreneurs Starting A Business*. Forbes.Com. https://www.forbes.com/sites/allbusiness/2018/07/15/35-step-guide-entrepreneurs-starting-a-business/?sh=195b4907184b

Home—Wisconsin New Hire Reporting Center. (n.d.). Retrieved December 13, 2021, from https://wi-newhire.com/

How to Start a Business in Wisconsin. (n.d.). Howtostartanllc.Com. Retrieved December 13, 2021, from https://howtostartanllc.com/start-a-business-in-wisconsin

Pb166.pdf. (n.d.). Retrieved December 13, 2021, from https://www.revenue.wi.gov/DOR%20Publications/pb166.pdf

Reiniger, C. (2020, January 17). *5 Leadership Strategies to Improve Team Performance and Grow Your Small Business*. Entrepreneur.Com. https://www.entrepreneur.com/article/343436

Rodgers, M. (2021, June 11). Wisconsin Background Check: A Complete Guide [2021]. *Iprospectcheck*. https://staging.iprospectcheck.com/wisconsin-background-check/

Silva, P. (2020, June 3). *How To Be A Leader For Your Small Business*. Forbes.Com. https://www.forbes.com/sites/piasilva/2020/06/03/how-to-be-a-leader-for-your-small-business/?sh=3df21b535deb

The 6 Best Payroll Services for Small Business in 2021. (n.d.). Howtostartanllc.Com. Retrieved December 13, 2021, from https://howtostartanllc.com/reviews/best-payroll-services-for-small-business

Wisconsin Unemployment Insurance Handbook for Employers, Publication UCB-201-P. (n.d.). Retrieved December 13, 2021, from https://dwd.wisconsin.gov/ui201/

Marketing

For Employers | Urban League of Greater Madison. (n.d.). Retrieved December 13, 2021, from https://ulgm.org/employment-programs/for-employers/

Harroch, R. (2018, July 15). *The Complete 35-Step Guide For Entrepreneurs Starting A Business*. Forbes.Com. https://www.forbes.com/sites/allbusiness/2018/07/15/35-step-guide-entrepreneurs-starting-a-business/?sh=195b4907184b

How to Start a Business in Wisconsin. (n.d.). Howtostartanllc.Com. Retrieved December 13, 2021, from https://howtostartanllc.com/start-a-business-in-wisconsin

How to Use Google My Business. (n.d.). Howtostartanllc.Com. Retrieved December 13, 2021, from https://howtostartanllc.com/how-to-build-a-website/google-my-business

Lake, L. (2019, October 20). *Tips for Getting Started With Small Business Marketing*. The Balance Small Business. https://www.thebalancesmb.com/marketing-basics-for-the-small-business-2295409

Quick Start Entrepreneur—My Own Business Institute—Learn How To Start a Business. (n.d.). Retrieved December 13, 2021, from https://www.scu.edu/mobi/business-courses/quick-start-entrepreneur/

YouTube Marketing Tips and Tricks. (2013, November 16). Tech Talk Ameria. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qbSGpTvYkSg&list=PLdAB2_LWUp3qskTl6O5iRyhaSBhnLS7Mj&index=55

Resources by, about, and for Black Entrepreneurs

Here is a list of resources used in this report that are focused on Black Entrepreneurs, used for this report. Most are written or produced by people who self-identify as Black. Others may provide photos of themselves without explicitly indicating their racial/ethnic identification. So we do not presume anything in those cases. These resources are divided into Research, Advice, and Organizations.

Research

Alexander, Michelle . 2020.The New Jim Crow: Mass Incarceration in the Age of Colorblindness. Anniversary Edition. New Press.

Allen, Reniqua . 2019. It Was All a Dream: A New Generation Confronts the Broken Promise to Black America. Bold Type Books.

Anderson, E. (2015). “The white space.” Sociology of Race and Ethnicity, 1(1), 10–21. https://doi.org/10.1177/2332649214561306

Archer. Deborah N. 2021.Transportation Policy and the Underdevelopment of Black Communities. Iowa Law Review 106:2125

Armstrong, Joslyn, Fiorella L. Carlos Chavez, Julia H. Jones, Shar’Dane Harris, and Gregory J. Harris. 2019. “A Dream Deferred”: How Discrimination Impacts the American Dream Achievement for African Americans. Journal of Black Studies, 50(3) 227–250, https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/pdf/10.1177/0021934719833330

Bates, Timothy. 1989. The Changing Nature of Minority Business: A Comparative Analysis of Asian, nonminority, and Black-owned businesses. The Review of Black Political Economy 18:25-42.

Bates, Timothy. 1997. Unequal Access: Financial institution lending to Black- and White-owned small business startups. Journal of Urban Affairs, 19 (4), 487-495.

Blanchard, Lloyd, Bo Zhao, and John Yinger. 2008. Do lenders discriminate against minority and woman entrepreneurs? Journal of Urban Economics 63:467-497.

Blanchard, Lloyd, Bo Zhao, and John Yinger. 2008. Do lenders discriminate against minority and woman entrepreneurs? Journal of Urban Economics 63:467-497.

Bonilla-Silva Eduardo. 1997. Rethinking Racism: Towards a Structural Interpretation. American Sociological Review 62:465-480.

Bradford, William D. 2003. The Wealth Dynamics of Entrepreneurship for Black and White Families in the U.S. Review of Income and Wealth Series 49, Number 1.

CNBC. 2021. Why Black-Owned Businesses Don't Survive. YouTube. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MV4Nq1GaIAA

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