

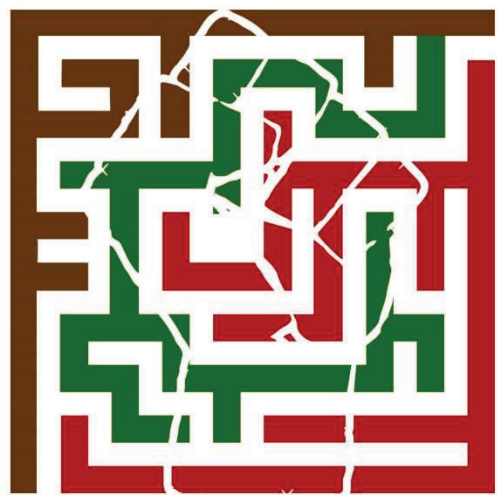


THE
AFRICAN AMERICAN
COLLABORATIVE

Igniting a Thriving African American Community

*“The only way lasting change happens is through **cooperative** planning, intelligent study, and group action.”*

- W.K. Kellogg



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Igniting a Thriving African American Community

PREFACE

The vision of the African American Collaborative is to realize an African American community thriving in the classroom, in business, in economic welfare, and in social welfare.

The mission of the African American Collaborative is to support aggressive social innovation and rapid transformation in the African American community by building an Afro-centered system of leadership in Battle Creek.

The Five E's of the African American Collaborative are:

- 1) Education, 2) Engagement, 3) Entrepreneurship, 4) Equity, and 5) Economics.

The Urgency of Now – A 21st Century Challenge

- 1) Increase kindergarten to third grade readiness by 50% over the next seven to ten years in the African American community in Battle Creek.
- 2) Increase 9th - 12th grade retention, positive academic outcomes, and graduation rates in the African American community by 50% over the next seven to ten years.
- 3) Support a cohort of at least 50 African American leaders who engage at the systems level in Battle Creek across sectors.
- 4) Build a network of African American entrepreneurs that support, cross pollinate, and learn together to increase sales from African American Black business. Build a

platform that allows black owned businesses to sell to / increase sales to broader markets.

- 5) Build, nurture, and sustain an advocacy plan that places African Americans at the helm of our advancement.
- 6) Increase home ownership within the African American community by 70 percent over the next ten years.
- 7) Increase the percentage of African American citizens living above the poverty line by 70 percent over the next 10 years.
- 8) Increase post-secondary certifications within the African American community by 50 percent over the next 10 years.
- 9) Increase the average pay grade within the African American community by 35 percent over the next 5 years.
- 10) Increase executive leadership career roles within the African American community by 3- percent over the next 7 years.





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Igniting a Thriving African American Community

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OVERVIEW

The African American Collaborative (The AAC) is the holding cell for the system responsible for igniting a thriving African American community. The main objective is to help ensure that the dots--the success and transformation points within the system--are connected and are aligned to the extent that African Americans get the most from the system.

Organizers show up and participate because they value a system of transformation rather than stand-alone, isolated programming. Participants recognize that their organization or program is only one touchpoint within a broader ecosystem, and that alignment among programs increases impact. Southwestern Michigan Urban League serves as administrative support for the development of The African American Collaborative.

The members of the AAC met several times over the period of fall 2019 and winter 2020 and outlined the agenda and priority of the African American Collaborative for the coming years. The collaborative decided that it would be best to focus their energy on building a system of change agents that could advocate on behalf of the AAC.

The collaborative also decided to prioritize stability within the African American community by identifying specific indicators and activating social innovation within the arena of those indicators to both stabilize the African American community and move the needle forward, positively. What you see below are the specific goals outlined by our community of leaders and the objectives that bring those goals to life. In the coming pages you will encounter specific strategies, at a 10,000-foot view, that have been identified to further secure realization of our goals.



BACKGROUND

Launched in April of 2017, The AAC is a collective of African American leaders--both formal and informal--who are concerned with the current state and future of the African American community in Battle Creek.

The AAC is an evolution of the Renewing the Village Framework. The AAC is a culturally authentic and organic initiative strategically aligning programming, activities, and missions within the African American community.

Rather than a traditional leadership model that formulates leaders within a specific paradigm, The AAC partners with leaders to enhance their personal, authentic leadership style and approach to transformation.

Through six months of strategic planning, African American community members generated values that would drive the long-term work. Four overarching objectives, four priority areas, and a model for working together to move the agenda forward were created.

The AAC Objectives:

- 1) **Collectively advocate** for the African American Community,
- 2) **Develop a plan/set of priorities** for the African American community for the next three years,
- 3) **Mobilize and support leadership** development in the African American community (using the Renewing the Village Framework), and
- 4) **Increase the amount of support** for The AAC to continue building momentum and enhance programming assets for the African American community in Battle Creek.

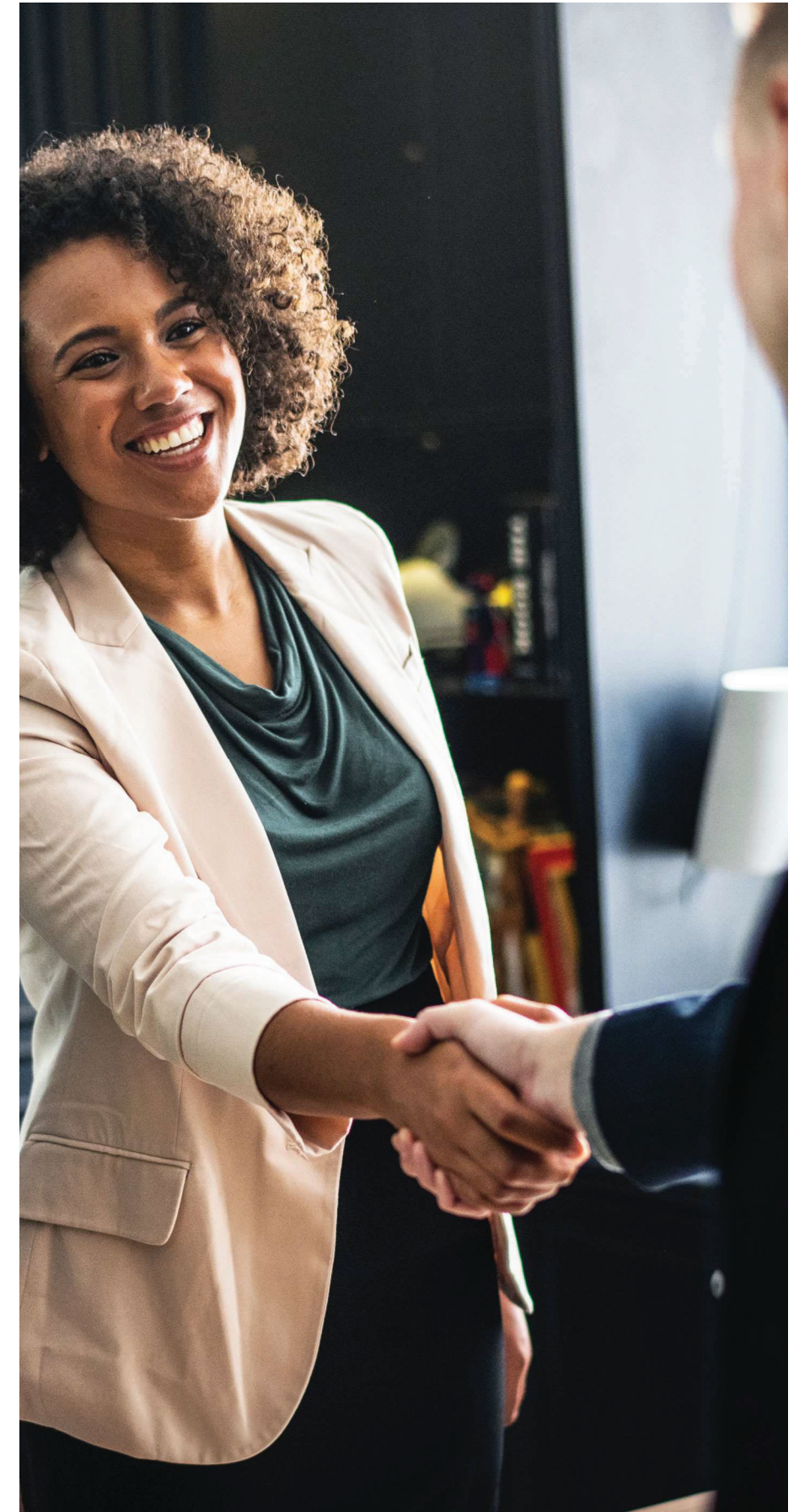
The AAC Priority Areas:

- 1) Values
- 2) Family, Children, and Education
- 3) Economics, and
- 4) Systems

The AAC further intends to better facilitate its support to increase access and retention in systems and support leading to family economic stability and other focus areas, for example: 1) Career Pathways, 2) Small Business Growth via Supplier Diversity Programs, 3) Shared Services Model, and 4) Access to Capital).

The AAC realizes that racial and economic inequities continue to plague communities of color in Battle Creek and plays out in the entrepreneurial eco-system and workforce efforts, not only within the African American community, but other communities of color as well.

Part of the work of The AAC is to build capacity within specific underserved communities to better connect those communities to mainstream systems.



OBJECTIVE A

Collectively Advocate for the African American Community

- 1) The AAC continues to communicate with the African American community about programs, events and services and ways to get involved.
 - a. The Urban League hosts a community navigator that is available for the African American community to contact to access services,
 - b. The AAC hires a communication partner to aid in communicating programs, events, services, and ways to get involved,
 - c. Develop a research project to understand the types of media African American community members use, and
 - d. Create a social media strategy for the AAC.
- 2) The AAC works with institutions on appropriate engagement strategies and removing systemic bias
 - a. Continue the community conversations with the City of Battle Creek,
 - b. Engage in conversations with the banking consortium,
 - c. Annual meeting with philanthropic collaborative,
 - d. Engage with school boards, superintendents, and school leaders, and
 - e. Develop partnership with Kellogg CC.
- 3) The AAC uses workgroups to advocate on behalf of the African American community.
 - a. Systems workgroup has clear goals and meets regularly to build a cohort of leaders operating at the systems level advocating for the African American community,

- b. Stability workgroup has clear goals and meets regularly (Coalition of the Family Children & Education, Economics, and Systems Priority teams working together) to ensure there is a vibrant system within the African American community implementing innovations and interventions, and
- c. The working groups leads meet monthly to coordinate activities and deliverables.

OBJECTIVE B

Develop A Plan and Priorities

- 1) The AAC develops and refines a common agenda for the African American community.
 - a. Survey the AA community for input to the agenda,
 - b. Share the agenda across Battle Creek, and
 - c. Ongoing engagement with the "adaptive" agenda.
- 2) The AAC addresses key priorities for the African American community, including but not limited to:
 - a. Develop community wellness responsiveness for the African American community,
 - b. Facilitate homeownership opportunities, specifically for the African American community,
 - c. Assist in the launch and growth of African American businesses, and
 - d. Support cradle to career initiatives, including the Youth Village in Washington Heights.

OBJECTIVE C

Leadership Advancement

- 1) The AAC hosts events and trainings for African American leaders interested in being more involved.
 - a. Convenes and brings together working groups and rising leaders for training in specific methodologies for creating systems change.
- 2) The AAC engages with leadership development organizations to provide coaching on leadership enhancement.

OBJECTIVE D

Increase Funding to The AAC and Other African-America Led Organizations

- 1) The AAC hosts events and trainings to aid in proposal development and fundraising strategies.
 - a. Works with consultants to develop funding and plans for African American led organizations,
 - b. Works with local partners, including philanthropy, to improve the overall financial stability of African American led organizations,
 - c. Engages consultants to work with African American organizations and businesses on fiscal stability, and
 - d. Engages partners or develops programs to help African American businesses market their services
- 2) The AAC works with local partners on the best way to organize and evaluate success of programs
 - a. Engages professional evaluator to support the development of metrics for continuous improvement, and
 - b. Utilizes collective impact model for shared accountability and leveraged results.

SYSTEMS

Poverty, inequality, and discrimination continue to deny individuals in our communities' access to safe, healthy, and inclusive environments. The AAC is focused on overarching, strategic, and systematic organization of the community assets and outside resources available to close equity gaps. The AAC convenes collaborators who would need to work together to design and deliver system interventions to address the challenges and achieve the desired goals.

System changes include:

- 1) The supporting of a cohort of at least 50 African American leaders who engage at the systems level in Battle Creek across sectors.
- 2) The building of a network of African American entrepreneurs that support, cross pollinate, and learn together to increase sales from African American Black business. Build a platform that specifically allows African American Black businesses to sell/increase sales to a broader scope.
- 3) The building, nurturing, and sustaining of an advocacy plan that places African Americans at the helm of our advancement (narrative change, racial healing, value setting, reparations, reparative justice, etc.).

A New Approach to Developing Career Connections

By building career pathways into high-demand, high-growth sectors and rigorously addressing the gaps and inefficiencies within our job placement continuum, while at the same time empowering individuals to leverage their greatest talents and competencies, we are advancing economic growth and building financial stability for families.

A New Approach to Small Biz Growth and Sustainability

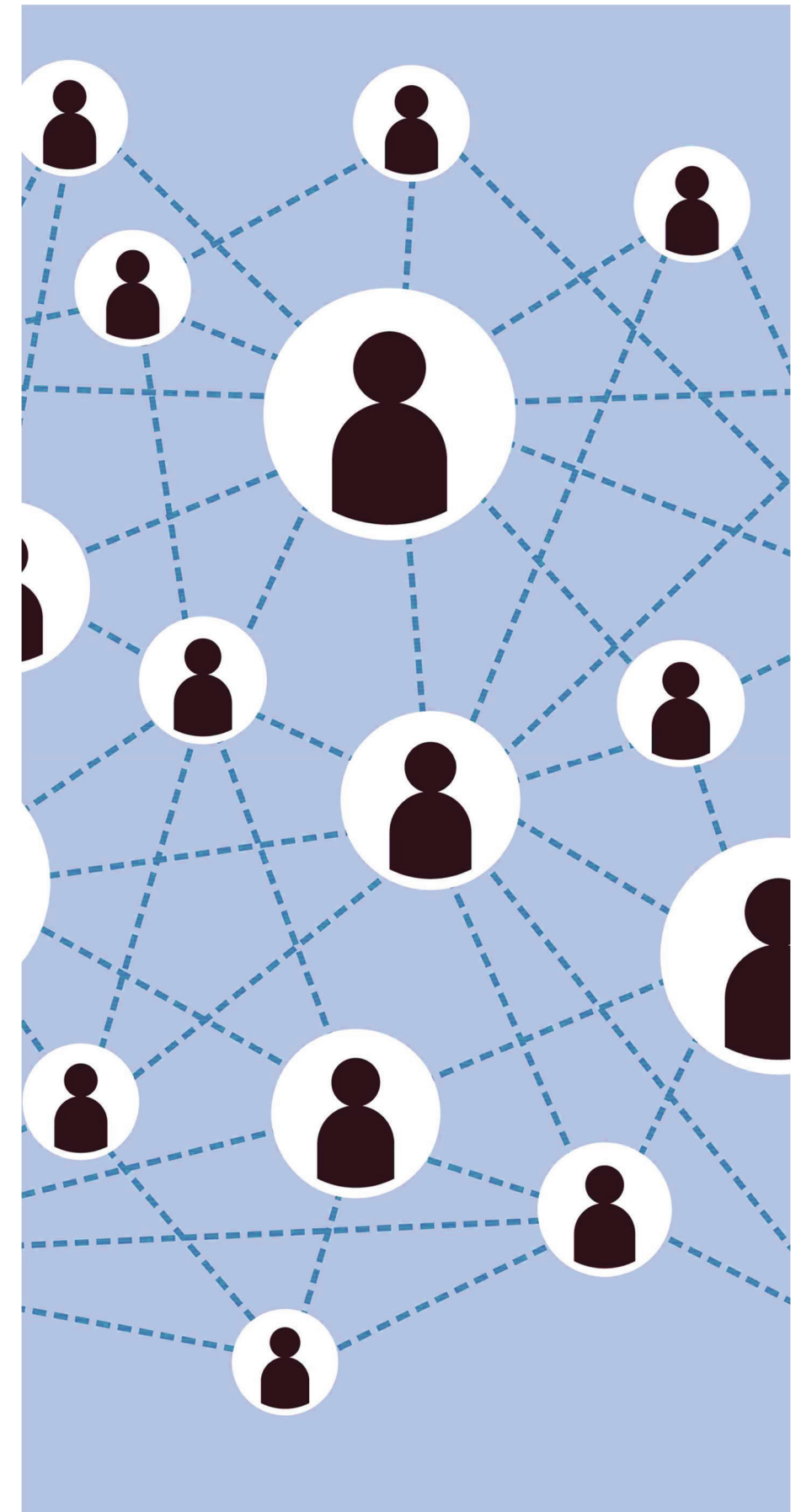
Support for small businesses must go beyond the initial investment into an innovative idea; the truth is, the growth and sustainability of small business is largely dependent on access to patient capital, mentorship, primary customers, and broader business networks.

Data confirms that minority business professionals who are interested in entrepreneurship are less likely to make the leap due to risk aversion and the inability to take on the debt often required for funding. Diverse small to mid-size business owners face added challenges due to the impact of institutionalized biases ranging from often-limited business networks, access to capital/funding, a lack of contract opportunities, and a lack of strong mentorship.

Consequently, our initiative targets these critical resources for small business growth in the African American community. Further, we intentionally focus on seeding, growing, and sustaining small businesses that support and revitalize the targeted neighborhoods.

Integrated Community-Based Access and Navigation

Community-based organizations have earned the trust of residents through years of relationship building and culturally responsive service. They are well-positioned for authentic, grassroots outreach to the target population to encourage access to education, training, career, and small business opportunities. They serve as trusted intermediaries for residents and systems, to support and navigate residents through system structures, by addressing barriers and connecting to opportunities. This is accomplished through systematic, coordinated entry, assessment, and planning – with multiple, community-based points of entry and “no wrong door.”



Statistics show that our targeted geography has the greatest needs; there are significant numbers of low-income individuals, with low educational attainment and high unemployment). There is great opportunity here to connect this population to locally high-demand, high-growth sectors to support family economic stability. By understanding the needs of the target population (education and career training for high-demand sectors, providing a clear path with multiple career entry options and room for growth leading to financial security, while holistically addressing family needs (childcare, transportation)), we are customizing our systems change model to ensure equitable opportunities for our most marginalized residents.

Leveraging the Accountability Partners

While Battle Creek is home to several networks advancing health, education, housing, youth development, workforce development and small business growth, The AAC has formed a collaborative accountability structure that seeks to coordinate and connect aligned activities, while also ensuring that The AAC goals and outcomes are met. The integration of this structure into our systems change initiative promotes overall cohesive strategy and continuous improvement and progress toward inclusive economic growth. Our leadership needs support to work together as a system and across systems. External partners guide us on evaluation, collective impacts, strategic doing, and other matters of importance.



ENGAGEMENT

It is the citizens of a community who make it great and

The AAC recognizes this. To this end, the organization is committed to active and consistent engagement with the African American community, including the NAACP and A. Phillip Randolph Institute. In addition to implementing a healthy strategy of engagement, the organization is an advocate for the prioritization of listening and responding, being ready to act upon the concerns of a demographic of people who have been historically marginalized.

This proposal explores a new approach to civic engagement and strategic collaboration in open networks, the type of networks that drive sustainable development.

The AAC uses this methodology process to:

- 1) Systematically grow the relational network capacity of neighborhoods to address connected challenges and act on opportunities,
- 2) Connect neighborhood relational networks to a regional strategy framework. Integrating problems and solutions into comprehensive small-scale actions that reflect a regional strategy,
- 3) Provide guidance for civic conversations that define opportunities and align resource networks. Aligning resources to overcome fragmentation among physical and programmatic assets, governmental agencies, private sector investors, local small business capacity, civic leadership, and political agendas,
- 4) Grow capacity and resiliency of communities not only to address problems, but also to innovate, develop community uniqueness, nurture entrepreneurial behavior, and grow relational network productivity,
- 5) Reach for outcomes that reflect community values and

describing the specific characteristics of those outcomes in measurable terms, and

- 6) Developing a simple, flexible repeatable discipline to build open networks capable of linking and leveraging resources to achieve measurable outcomes.



ECONOMICS

The AAC believes home ownership and entrepreneurship are two of the keys to powering a viable and financially sustainable model for community development. Revenue generating enterprises provide jobs, catalyze economic growth, and add to the sales tax base of a region, which helps public service stability for local communities.

By aligning economic development incentives with policies that encourage local ownership, new and expanding businesses owned by African Americans in the city would have more opportunities to do business with each other, strengthening these networks and their impact on economic revitalization.

As local entrepreneurs build their capacity, they can be more successful at capturing business outside the region. Local ownership grows wealth, initiates local reinvestment, and has a virtuous cycle of economic revitalization.

The following programs, as an example, would provide a powerful platform to support black businesses. At the core, our economies are people, communities, and networks our approach is driven by a commitment to being interconnected, inclusive, and impactful in all our actions and initiatives.

At the AAC, we are dedicated to being an honest broker among service providers. We prefer to build coalitions to support initiatives and seek the support and mentorship of companies, startups, service organizations, and capital providers throughout Battle Creek. We work to create a diverse and inclusive network of founders and investors, focusing recruitment efforts and selections on underrepresented founders to increase locally owned businesses and wealth creation among the African American Community.

A set of small business development and growth services may include: 1) Providing business coaching and consulting services, 2) Promoting access to patient capital and financial

equity programs, and 3) Corporate and anchor engagement for diverse suppliers.

Business Consulting / Marketing

A major obstacle to growth for aspiring and existing entrepreneurs is the lack of understanding around how to build a strategic marketing plan as a subset or in support of an overall business plan. This skill is essential to scaling businesses. The idea here is to offer a suite of services and resources that are customizable to each participant given where they currently exist in the growth cycle.

Program services could be based on:

- 1) **Proposed Performance Metrics** - Number of marketing plans completed, number of businesses served, and number of diverse marketing mentors.
- 2) **Target Participants** - Side businesses and startups in focus neighborhoods
- 3) **Suggested Framework** - Contract with multiple local marketing experts vetted by and experienced in working with black and brown entrepreneurs.



Revolving Loans

Another major barrier for entrepreneurs of color is access to patient capital. Neighborhood entrepreneurs with modest revenues may be able to expand their business with a

quick infusion of capital to take advantage of an immediate contract for goods or services with a quick and easy loan approval process. The goal of such revolving loan programs is to ensure that an entrepreneur can purchase the goods or equipment needed to land a contract for which they otherwise would have to decline. Loans may range from \$500 - \$10K perhaps through an automated loan application that does not require credit underwriting but rather relies on character-based underwriting similar to KIVA.



This program could be based on the number of specific deals and dollars invested. Additionally, each micro revolving loan partner could set their own parameters for minimum loan amount, minimum credit score hurdle, and interest rate.

Program services could be based on:

- 1) **Proposed Performance Metrics** - Dollars invested, number of lenders participating, number of businesses with access to loans, and improved credit scores.
- 2) **Target Participants** - Side businesses with revenue up to \$100K seeking loans of \$500 - \$10K.

Neighborhood Business Competitions

In the early stages of its lifecycle, a startup business often needs a relatively small amount of money to achieve a milestone or to surmount an obstacle. For example, money may be needed to hire a website designer. That money is difficult to come by for many businesses.



Battle Creek is no exception. For example, grants could be made through an application process, juried by community organizations (for community-based businesses), CDFIs, and other partners. Criteria for the grants could include importance of the business to the community or the city, probability of business success, willingness to participate in business support activities, likelihood of follow-on funding, etc.

- 1) **Proposed Performance Metrics** - Number of applicants, number of neighborhood business starts, and amount of dollars invested and leveraged.
- 2) **Target Population** - Neighborhood based micro

enterprises / businesses, potential entrepreneurs, and local innovators.

Corporate and Anchor Engagement

Startup companies are missing the opportunity to receive critical customer discovery when denied access to end-users, while private sector partners miss opportunities to review and assess potentially disruptive innovations in advance of their movement to market.



Corporate Engagement programs seek to overcome those issues by bringing together both sides. Workshops, forums (such as Buy Local Initiatives), and targeted interactions give startup companies essential feedback and insights about emerging industry needs, as well as the specific requirements for customer acquisition.

- 1) Proposed Metrics for Success** - These metrics are based on:
- Providing training and support for at least 50 minority enterprises in advancing their skills and business ideas toward operational businesses that create economic opportunity for them and their

peers, especially during COVID-19,

- Assisting entrepreneurs in raising at least \$100K in working and growth capital for their businesses, and
 - Providing sourcing access for minority businesses.
- 2) Target Population** – Female and minority suppliers, and /or other minority businesses who fit the proper profile, after they have gone through readiness training.

Home Ownership in Battle Creek

Residential segregation still seems to plague the African American community more than fifty years after passage of the 1968 Fair Housing Act. Additionally, those with a criminal history were many times marginalized when it came to seeking housing. For example, a recent Battle Creek Fair Housing Report 2015 - 2019 reveled the following:

- Comparatively qualified black and white prospective tenants with criminal backgrounds would receive a difference of treatment and different access to available rental housing in the City of Battle Creek Black prospective tenants would receive fewer housing options and would be more likely to acquire a unit at a housing complex, whereas White prospective tenants would receive more housing choice.
- When it comes to homeowner's insurance, questions, service, and treatment vary case-by-case with the existence of agent interaction. The agents with the greatest amount of difference in treatment for testers in black vs. white neighborhoods were those who work for smaller, independent agencies.



Furthermore, an analysis of U.S. Census Data from 2013–17 found that the “dissimilarity index” between blacks and non-Hispanic whites for metropolitan areas was 0.526 for the median area—meaning that 52.6 percent of African Americans or whites would have to move for the area to be fully integrated.

To tackle these and other systematic problems that exist in housing, The AAC partners with a local Battle Creek CDC to foster community housing development. By partnering with a proven, grassroots CDC, The AAC participates in initiatives that can strengthen home ownership in 1) Affordable Housing, 2) Workforce Housing, and 3) Market Rate Housing.

The AAC also works to foster the development of LMI housing with developers and housing organizations who have the knowledge and expertise to design and build according to the needs of the people of Battle Creek.

Additionally, we work with economic development agencies to create the kind of workforce housing that is attractive to employers and job creators seeking to locate to the region.

Finally, we work towards producing the right mix of affordable market rate housing that can be woven into the LMI and workforce mix, to create a mixed-income housing scenario that allows for those across a broad spectrum of income levels. This approach ensures that segregation is reversed.

Program services are based on:

- 1) Proposed Metrics for Success** – Transitioning existing renters into first time home buyers, reduce the rate of mortgage foreclosures, diversify the housing mix to reverse the effects of segregation, and promote new city ordinances for density, ADU's, etc., that bring Battle Creek into the 21st century.
- 2) Target Population** – Prospective African American renters and homeowners who have been marginalized by the findings in the 2015 – 2019 BC Fair Housing Report.



CRADLE TO CAREER

The AAC promotes the institution of education; it is the catalyst of career pathways for black youth and adults, as well as mentors and interns. As a foundational platform, the AAC promotes the advancement of serving the urban youth and families of Battle Creek.

In partnership with a number of key agencies, The AAC aims to ensure that every child and young adult succeeds, cradle to career, through shared purpose, alignment, and accountability among community partners.

We cannot expect children to succeed academically if they are on an unstable foundation. Every child deserves to have access to the resources they need to be successful in school. By working together and engaging the entire community, we are able to inform our networks of the needs of our entire community and invest beyond the existing programs, schools, and child-based initiatives.

Our desired outcomes include:

- 1) Increase graduation and retention in the African American community,
- 2) Increase kindergarten readiness and 3rd grade proficiency, and
- 3) Increase postsecondary education, certification, and professional development.

We are committed to ensuring that high school graduates, have multiple education and career pathways, including post-secondary certifications, 4-year college, skill trades and apprenticeship opportunities.



Apprenticeship Opportunities

This program model includes quality paid apprenticeship training and employment, mentorship and career navigation, and support services to address barriers such as reliable transportation and childcare subsidies.

The long-term outcomes of the project include the ability to: 1) Increase the diversity of workers in the construction trades, 2) Increase the demand side for workers by linking workforce development with redevelopment activities, and 3) Raise the bar on the construction pre-apprenticeship pathway to allow participants to meet the entry level requirements for registered apprenticeship programs in various trades and other building trades employment options.

Program services are based on:

- 1) Proposed Performance Metrics** - Number of students in apprenticeship programs, completion rate for education and training programs, placement rate in local jobs, job retention after 6 months, and increased wages over 6 months.
- 2) Objective** - Our approach to workforce development is to utilize our redevelopment projects and land assets as opportunities to increase the number of jobs and revitalize the neighborhood.
- 3) Target Population** - This would accelerate the number of disconnected young adults, those not working or attending school, 18-24 years of age, and underemployed adults who are not only on a path to a family supporting wage career but who also possess the skills to work on neighborhood and regional redevelopment projects.

WELLNESS

African Americans are 20% more likely to report serious psychological distress than white Americans, yet they are less likely to use mental health services. African Americans are routinely mis and over diagnosed. Adult and teen African Americans are more likely to attempt suicide than are white teenagers (8.3 percent v. 6.2 percent). According to American Psychological Association (APA), despite needs, only one in three African American adults who need mental health care receive it.

The market for counseling and behavioral health services is extremely healthy. This is especially true for communities of color that have historically not had access to preventative care. Less than 2 percent of American Psychological Association members are African American, and too few mental health care practitioners are culturally competent enough to treat their specific issues. Stigma and judgment often prevent African Americans from seeking treatment for mental illnesses.

Community Wellness Responsiveness

Culturally responsive and sustaining mental health and social emotional supports are provided in the neighborhood. The AAC focuses its energy on ensuring that African Americans can show up in the community as themselves.

The mental health services offered to African Americans would not strip them of their identity, is not culturally pervasive, but serves to build ethnic resilience. This approach to mental wellness meets community members where they are, employs their language and uses their current realities to authentically support therapeutic empowerment.

The wellness programming provides an array of quality mental health and behavioral health services to individuals,



couples, and families. Services could include: 1) Psychiatry, 2) Individual psychotherapy, 3) Substance abuse programs, and 4) Family and group counseling, brought by a multidisciplinary staff.

The programs provided are one-on-one sessions in a comfortable and confidential setting. For the benefit of entire families, group therapy is available as a whole or with peers. Additionally, planned home-based interventions are part of the community wellness approach.

Program services are based on:

- 1) Proposed Performance Metrics** – Number of individuals and families with access to quality mental health services, number of individuals and families with access to affordable mental health services, and number of alternative payment models.
- 2) Objective** - The AAC invests funding to develop a neighborhood, non-clinical setting for the delivery of mental healthcare responsiveness. The responsive approach is a multidisciplinary behavioral health care philosophy that offers culturally relevant and responsive mental health services to the community of BC. The focus is on cost-effective, quality treatment that empowers the lives of clients by honoring their experiences and educating them to navigate life in a positive, effective manner.
- 3) Target Population** - African Americans of all ages are more likely to be victims of serious violent crime than are non-Hispanic whites, making them higher risk to meet the diagnostic criteria for post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD). African Americans are also twice as likely as non-Hispanic whites to go un-diagnosed



SUSTAINABILITY

The AAC develops a sustainable fundraising plan to balance grants and gifts with other funding sources while being careful to maintain a diverse donor base. In addition to fundraising, the AAC develops new sources of revenue generation via its business initiatives. It stands ready to shift its attention to opportunities that bring in new revenue.

To appeal to a broad spectrum of donors, the AAC creates bridges of opportunity to include crowdfunding, giving circles or special events. An added benefit to its creative fundraising is in expanding its stakeholder network, i.e. mobilizing people who have not been part of the AAC

The AAC engages corporate sponsorships from companies who share our vision, want to support our entrepreneurs, and/or benefit from promoting themselves through our activities. Other potential sources are: 1) State and Federal grants to expand specific elements of programming, 2) Corporate foundations and private gifts, 3) Real estate revenue from coworking or event spaces.

The AAC understands that its image in the region is of extreme importance. Its branding and marketing approach brings clarity and consistency of its mission. The mission of the AAC is its motivating agent, both for the work of the organization, but also for the involvement of supporters and beneficiaries. The AAC raises its brand profile by tapping into social networks and reaching out to key influencers.

The ACC collaborates with similar organizations, like CCG (Catalyzing Community Giving) to eliminate competition and prevent duplication of its mission. Whether unofficial or more formalized, alliances are key in building capacity and scaling efforts within and across communities.



COMMUNICATIONS

The AAC teams with multiple media partners to capture the stories of Battle Creek residents and entrepreneurs, to begin the promotion of the “new faces” of Battle Creek’s local economy. In partnering with local media groups, the AAC makes a profound statement in identifying people of color, and the Battle Creek-based residents and entrepreneurs who represent stories of hope, for long neglected communities.

To create new narratives, the AAC:

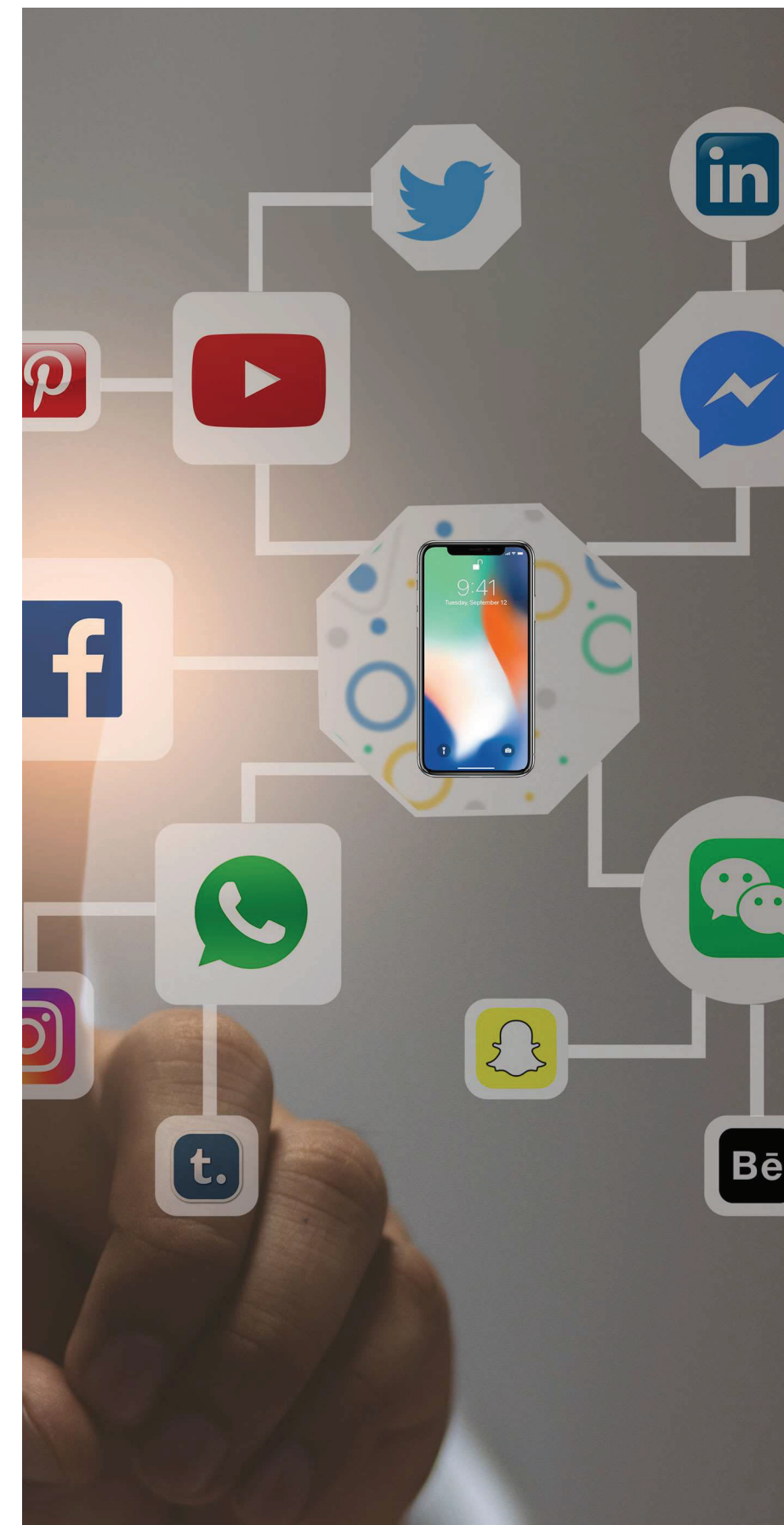
- 1) Looks for opportunities to add video clips, podcasts, and other media tools to the “Village Loop” website and “cross-pollinate” content between media companies.
- 2) Conducts small research projects to help The AAC and others better understand the information resources (traditional media, grassroots, social media, and community networks) that communities of color use locally to gather information and news.
- 3) Designs and implements social media and traditional marketing programs that leverage emerging and existing information networks of neighborhood residents, as well as those of organizations and influencers with a commitment to workforce equity and entrepreneurship among women and minorities.

Program services are based on:

- 1) **Proposed Performance Metrics** – Media features and mentions in mainstream media, written profiles of historically significant African American innovators in AAC media channels, number of digital engagements via social media channels,
- 2) **Objective** – To immortalize the history, accomplishments, and improvement of the lives of

African American people in Battle Creek, that causes future generations to understand the journey of people who rose above their conditions in life, to achieve their rightful positions in society.

- 3) **Target Population** – The goal is to not keep the stories within the African American community, but rather to expand the base of who sees and hears their stories. To this end, we endeavor to reach a broad demographic audience and appeal to the larger sector of media consumers.



CONTRIBUTORS

The Accountability Partners of the AAC would like to acknowledge the many leaders from the African American community in Battle Creek who collaborated and made grave contributions to the content of this document over the past four years—giving of their time, their experience, and both their intellectual and social capital.

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Melvin Evans	Tracy Small
James Graham	Warren Sokolnicki
Necie Hart	Daisey Snow
Rochelle Hatcher	Larry Sumner
Deborah Johnson	Ron Sweet
James Kelley	Lillie Watson
Lorenzo Mallard	

12 December 2017 Focus Group

Pastor William Bell, Ph.D.	Reverend Louis Nelson
Pastor Maurice Harley	Missionary Patty Pointer
Pastor Joe Hooper	Pastor J.C. Oliver
Pastor Bobby Holly	Minister Dawn Smith
Evangelist Lavonne Kemp	Apostle Jean Smith

1 February 2018 General Planning Discussion

Marcus Austin	Jaymes Pollard
Tiffany Blackman	Bettie Robertson
Joanne Cribbs	Terris Todd
Damon Brown	Barb Travis
Joe Hooper	Carla Reynolds
Lynn Ward Gray	JR Reynolds
Marcelle heath	Austin Simons
Elishae Johnson, Phd.	Deboraha Sallee
L.E. Johnson	Victor Sallee
Hazel Le mon	Shawnette Spicer
Matt Lynn	Felicia Thomas
Brenda Mayaka	Brent Wilson
Linnea Mobley	

22 March 2018 General Planning Discussion

Kelly Dillman	Robin “Che” Parker
LaShawn Erby	Deboraha Sallee
Lynn Ward Gray	Victor Sallee
Brendel Hatley	Maxine Small
Joe Hooper	Ann Smith
L.E. Johnson	Barb Travis
Leola Johnson	Carey Whitfield
Brenda Mayaka	William Wyne
Sharon Miller	Chandra Youngblood
Arlene Montgomery	

19 April 2018 General Planning Discussion

Marcus Austin	Linda Mathews
Kelly Dillman	Carala Reynolds
Lynn Ward Gray	JR Reynolds
Marcelle Heath	Yvonne Warrior
Joe Hooper	Robin “Che” Parker

Hazel Le Mon	Cassandra Portes
Keith Mathews	Alana White
L.E. Johnson	Kyra Wallace
Marie Johnson	Carey Whitfield
Felicia Thomas	Tracie Woodford

12 December 2018 Economics Dev Brainstorming Session

Carlotta Crape	Arneice Montgomery
Jason Crape	Benjamin Young
Marie Johnson	Rena Watson
L.E. Johnson	Darika Williams

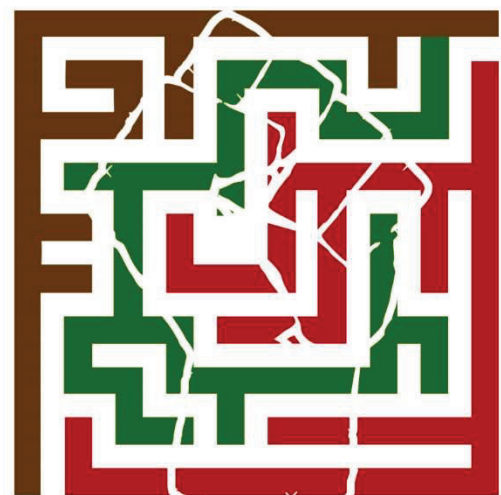
21 January 2019 State of The AAC Address Table Meeting

Alexis Ballard	Brendel Hatley
Carolyn Ballard	Elishae Johnson, Ph.D.
Franklin Ballard	L.E. Johnson
Charmaine Bell	Linda Lane
William Bell, Ph.D.	Harrison Le Mon
Tiffany Blackman	Hazel Le Mon
Rebecca Bolden	Chris McCoy
Walter Campbell	Denise Mc Coy
Devon Clark	Tawana Mc Nutt
Tamera Cribbs	Doug Nettleton
Niaka Dunbar	Gavin Pollard
Javon Dibbs	Denise Rucker
Wanda Drain	Roderick Simmons
Tim Drain	Felcia Thomas
David Harper	Terris Todd
Marcelle Heath	Shirley Tuggle
Sandra Graham	Carl Turner
Lynn Ward Gray	Deboraha Sallee
Patty Poole-Gray	Victor Sallee
Sam Gray	William Wyne
Vania Word	Arlene Wyrick

21 October 2019 Strategic Planning Session

Tiffany Blackman	JR Reynolds
Jacquitta Gibbs	Deboraha Sallee
Brendel Hatley	Victor Sallee
Boonikka Herring	Shawnette Spicer
Preston Hicks	Natasha Thornton
Loraine Hunter	Terris Todd
Elishae Johnson, PhD	Kyra Wallace
Hazel Le Mon	Carey Whitfield
Dennis McKinley	





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Igniting a Thriving African American Community

CONTACT

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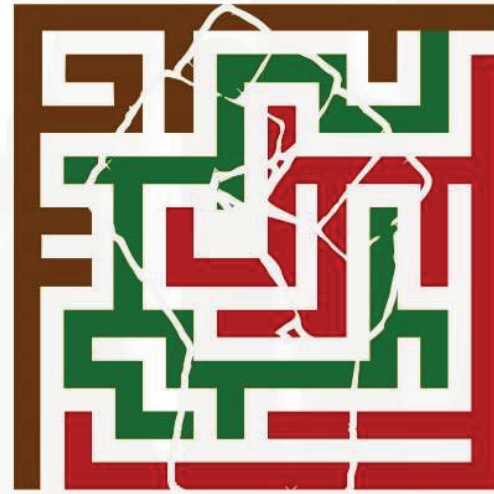
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*“Education is the most **powerful** weapon which
you can use to change the world.”*

- Nelson Mandela



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