



2025 Impact Report



TechTown
DETROIT



Ned Staebler

President and CEO, TechTown Detroit

Over the past year, TechTown has shown what happens when entrepreneurs are surrounded by the right mix of capital, coaching, and community. Behind every number in this report is a founder who took a leap, hired their neighbors, and contributed to Detroit's long-term economic momentum. These wins don't happen by accident, they happen because someone felt supported enough to try.

We're proud of the role TechTown plays as a trusted partner on that journey. Whether it's the founder opening their first storefront, the tech team refining a prototype late into the night, or a business owner navigating the next stage of growth, our work is rooted in walking alongside them with real resources and real relationships.

We are deeply grateful for the funders, partners, and staff who make this possible every day. Your commitment shows up in every milestone our entrepreneurs reach. Thank you for believing in bold ideas, for standing with Detroit's small business community, and for helping us build an ecosystem where innovation and opportunity truly meet.

Together, we're not just supporting businesses, we're strengthening neighborhoods, growing talent, and proving what Detroit can do when we invest in the people who power its future.

TechTown continues to demonstrate the essential role innovation plays in advancing Wayne State's mission as a public, urban research university. As our entrepreneurship hub, TechTown serves as a critical bridge between academic expertise, emerging talent and the broader economic life of our region. The results highlighted in this report reflect the impact made possible by that strong alignment.

Behind each result is an entrepreneur who chose to build and grow within this ecosystem. Their work strengthens our regional economy, expands opportunity and contributes to the long-term vitality of our city. That momentum reflects the collaborative, inclusive innovation that Wayne State proudly supports.

TechTown's ability to deliver meaningful outcomes is built on strong partnerships. We are grateful to the funders, community organizations and university colleagues whose commitment ensures that entrepreneurs at every stage have access to the resources they need. Their support reinforces Wayne State's broader commitment to economic mobility and advancing the public good.

We remain dedicated to sustaining an environment where research, education, entrepreneurship, and community engagement intersect in powerful ways. Together, we continue to strengthen a platform where ideas move from concept to impact and where Michigan's innovators shape our region's future.



Richard A. Bierschbach

President, Wayne State University

TechTown continues to advance a vision that lies at the heart of our mission: ensuring that every entrepreneur has access to the resources, relationships, and support they need to succeed. The outcomes reflected in this report are a direct result of that commitment.

As a board, we view this work through a long-term lens. We know that equitable economic growth does not happen by chance; it requires intentional investment in people and places that have too often been overlooked. The founders and entrepreneurs represented in these pages are demonstrating what becomes possible when barriers are removed, opportunities are shared, and innovation is made accessible to all.

None of this progress would be possible without the dedication of our funders, partners, and staff. Their belief in equitable access, their willingness to invest in underrepresented entrepreneurs, and their commitment to removing systemic barriers continue to positively shape the future of our region. We are grateful for their partnership and stewardship.

Looking forward, the board remains focused on ensuring that TechTown continues to lead with the values and expertise that it holds dear.



Valencia Stoudamire

Board of Trustees Chair, TechTown Detroit

By the Numbers

TechTown is where Detroit builds businesses, creates jobs, and proves that inclusive entrepreneurship drives innovation.



\$49M

Total TechTown Client Revenue for 2025

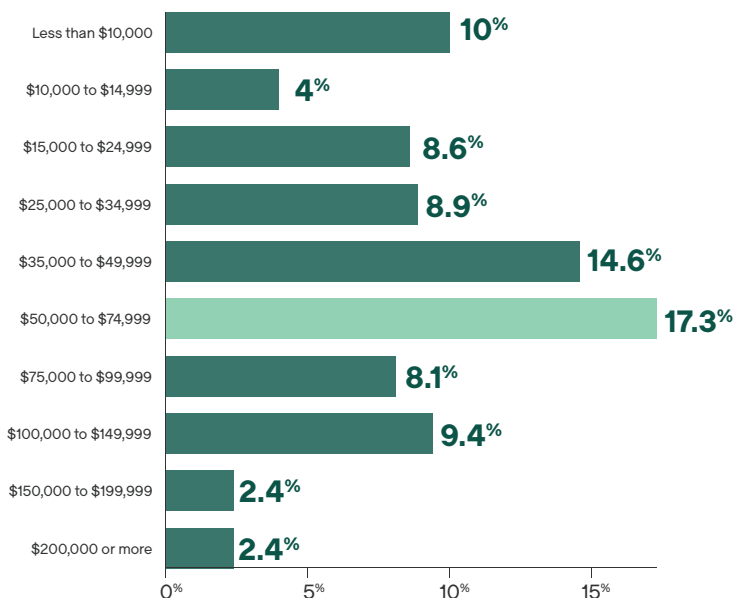
2000+

jobs sustained/created by TechTown-supported businesses

7M

in follow-on funding raised by tech startups (\$6.7M reported + \$1.9M from Venture 313)

Income



1,200

Number of Unique Entrepreneurs Served

\$426K

disbursed through MEDC HUBS Direct Grants to 83 businesses

\$2M

in mobility prototyping grants facilitated through MAIN

By the Numbers

4152

Total Number of Meetings Conducted

\$324,250

in direct funding deployed through Venture 313

65%

Returning Entrepreneurs Supported

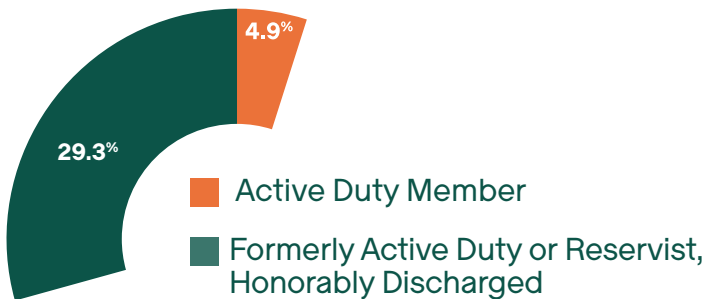
34%

New Entrepreneurs Supported

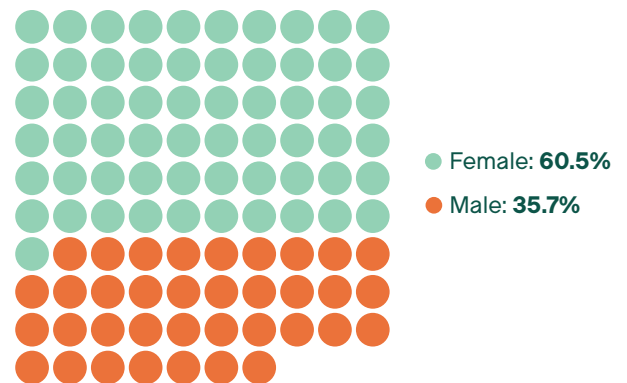


70% of clients served in 2025 were located in Wayne County

Veteran Status



Gender



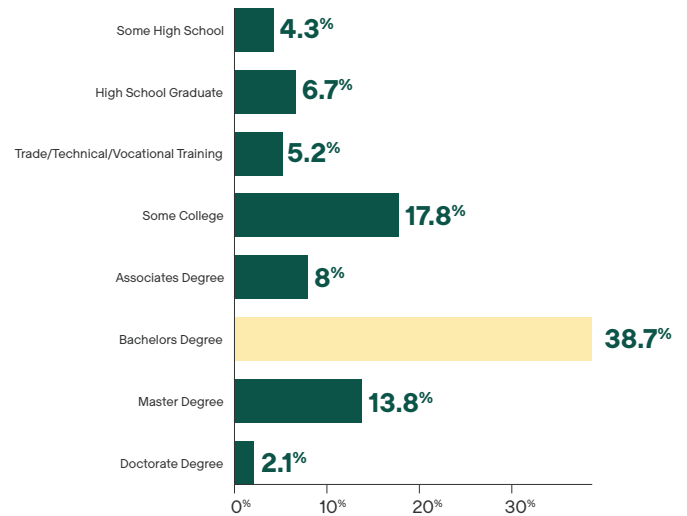
By the Numbers



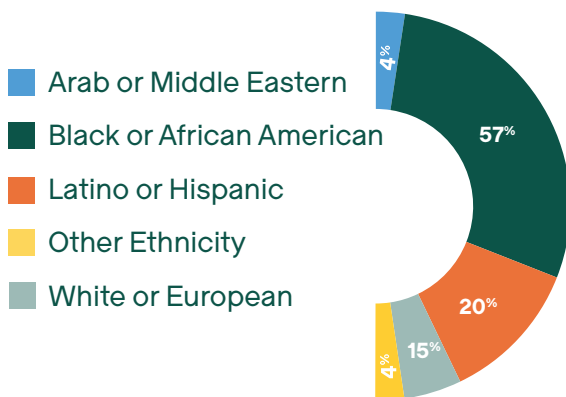
Building Occupancy



Education



Race/Ethnicity



Our Work

Small Business Services



Hatch Detroit

The 2025 Top Four finalists included Halie & Co, Detroit Culture & Clay, Livy's Sweetrolls, and Walter Pat's Bakery Cafe. After a community-driven competition, Walter Pat's Bakery Cafe won the \$100,000 grand prize from Comerica, while the three runner-up businesses each received \$10,000 from the MEDC to support their launch and growth.

Since 2012, the Comerica Hatch Detroit Contest has awarded \$1.5 million+ in funding to Detroit entrepreneurs, helping turn brick-and-mortar dreams into thriving neighborhood businesses. The contest has assisted 60+ businesses in opening and employed 500+ people across these community-anchored enterprises.



Retail Boot Camp

Twenty-six entrepreneurs graduated from two Retail Boot Camp cohorts in 2025, with 12 launching grand openings or expanding to new locations. All participating businesses are located in Wayne County, strengthening neighborhood commercial districts across the region. Together with the broader Small Business Services portfolio, these retail entrepreneurs contribute to the \$30-40 million in annual revenue generated by the 1,014 small businesses TechTown supported in 2025.



The SHOP

The SHOP provides Detroit entrepreneurs with free pop-up vendor space, professional visual merchandising training, and real-time coaching from retail experts. In 2025, 92 vendors participated in The SHOP, with 82 woman-owned businesses (89%) and 82 BIPOC-owned businesses (89%) reflecting the program's deep commitment to supporting underrepresented entrepreneurs. Vendors generated an estimated \$13,056 in self-reported revenue while testing their products, refining their pitches, and gathering invaluable customer feedback in a low-risk, high-support environment.

1,014

Small business owners supported

\$40M

Revenue

15

Grand Openings

26

RBC Graduates



Small Business Services



Industries Served

39.1%

Food & Hospitality

27.3%

Retail

9.1%

Service & Trades

Retail Boot Camp replaced my guesswork with order. I went from running my business on instinct to having clear parameters and mental 'tabs' that help me navigate my operation like a book with a table of contents. The program doesn't just give you information; it asks the right questions so that you become the expert on your own business. I feel stronger, more focused, and ready to execute.

Josmine Evans

Indigo Culinary | RBC Fall 2025

Our Work

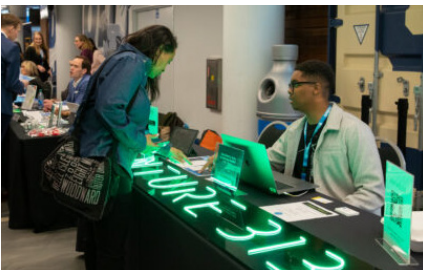
Tech Programs



Start Studio

Start Studio served 213 companies in 2025—including 146 tech-based startups—with 77% led by historically underrepresented founders and over 40% women-owned. The program successfully transitioned from fixed cohorts to milestone-based progression with rolling admissions, allowing founders to enter when ready and exit when they’ve achieved specific outcomes. This redesign created clearer alignment between founder stage, coaching support, and capital readiness—and the results prove it works.

Start Studio alumni raised over \$7 million in follow-on funding in 2025, with standout wins including CircNova’s \$3.3 million seed round and Motmot’s \$1.555 million NSF SBIR grant. Other major milestones include Think Technologies’ partnership with OpenAI, Ultrium’s partnerships with Tesla and Bedrock, Bhadala’s \$500,000 RTA pilot, and Bagzee’s pilot with JFK Airport. From idea validation to investor-ready products, Start Studio builds the foundation for Detroit’s most promising tech companies.



Venture 313

Venture 313 deployed \$111,437 in direct funding to 22 companies in 2025, catalyzing an additional \$1.91 million in follow-on funding raised by portfolio companies—a 17x multiplier demonstrating the program’s role as a capital accelerator for Detroit’s tech ecosystem.

Venture 313 also launched the inaugural “10 Tech Founders to Watch” list, spotlighting high-growth Detroit founders, and supported 12 founders at national conferences to expand their networks and investor access.

Notably, 9 of the 10 recipients of the first round of the Detroit Startup Fund are TechTown clients, underscoring the organization’s role in preparing Detroit founders for competitive funding opportunities.



MAIN

In 2025, TechTown served as the backbone organization for the Mobility Accelerator Innovation Network (MAIN), coordinating a multi-institution coalition spanning universities, investors, design partners, and entrepreneurial support organizations across Southeast Michigan. MAIN partners engaged 295 mobility-related startups—including 44 new companies—and convened more than 2,300 participants through summits, buildathons, workshops, and ecosystem convenings throughout the year.

MAIN-supported founders reached significant milestones in 2025, including Grounded’s release of its G3 modular electric RV, Bhadala’s \$500,000 pilot with the Regional Transit Authority, and Electric Outdoors’ progression from prototype to market-ready product with a 30-unit purchase order and \$250,000 PitchMI Traverse City win.



MedHealth

In 2025, MedHealth evolved from a traditional medtech program into a broader health innovation cluster that elevates community-based, lived-experience, and delivery-focused solutions alongside clinical and digital health technologies. The 2025 MedHealth Summit (April 23) convened 230+ founders, investors, healthcare leaders, and community innovators for a full day focused on advancing community-centered health innovation beyond pilot stages, featuring 83 structured matchmaking sessions that created concrete pathways for partnerships, pilots, and funding.

Building on this momentum, TechTown hosted four Health Cluster Conversations bringing together an average of 30 health innovation stakeholders per session to surface system-level needs and shape the evolution of the regional health innovation ecosystem.

Tech Programs

177

tech startups supported

\$9M

Revenue

77%

historically underrepresented tech founders

2M

in mobility prototyping grants

2,595

attendance at MAIN/MedHealth convenings



TechTown gave me an opportunity to challenge myself in a real builder environment. I came into Prompt to Production night with an idea and a lot of nerves, but I left with a working prototype, SafeConnect: Next to U, and my first tech competition win. More than anything, the experience showed me what is possible when community, creativity, and innovation come together in one room.

Kenya Daniels

Types of Technologies

70.3%

Software Publishers

11%

Navigation & Instrument Manufacturing,
Transportation Equipment, R&D

8.1%

Electrical Equipment Manufacturing

5.4%

Web Search Portals & Information Services

5.4%

Computer Systems Design

Our Work

Business Support



OPS+

OPS+ experienced a 700% increase in clients from 2024, demonstrating explosive demand for professional back-office support tailored to small businesses and startups. In 2025, OPS+ clients collectively employed 64 people on payroll, managed \$33.9 million in total assets, and generated \$22.4 million in combined revenue—proving that the right HR, finance, and operational infrastructure enables businesses to scale with confidence.

With OPS+ support, these businesses raised or secured \$1.2 million in capital and loans, unlocking growth opportunities that would have been difficult to access without clean financials, solid governance, and professional systems in place.



Ask An Expert

The Ask an Expert (AAE) program provides free, specialized support to help local tech startups and neighborhood small businesses reach their next level of growth. In 2025, TechTown delivered 837 strategy sessions totaling 20,925 minutes and 109 Ask an Expert sessions totaling 2,725 minutes—representing nearly 400 hours of free expert guidance that helped entrepreneurs solve critical challenges, navigate complex decisions, and unlock new opportunities. Whether it's a startup founder seeking legal advice on IP protection or a retail owner needing HR guidance for their first hire, Ask an Expert connects Detroit entrepreneurs to the right expertise at exactly the right time.



First Thursdays

In its first full year, First Thursdays established itself as TechTown's signature monthly networking event designed to foster a vibrant community for entrepreneurs, startups, and ecosystem partners. The program hosted 12 gatherings in 2025, bringing together more than 1,660 attendees and featuring over 60 vendors who showcased their businesses, products, and services.

First Thursdays proves that community building is just as important as capital and coaching when it comes to entrepreneurial success, celebrating the spirit of innovation within Detroit's business landscape month after month.

52

OPS+ Clients

109

Ask An Expert

1,266

Coaching Sessions
(Tech and SBS)

837

Strategy Sessions
(Tech and SBS)

In a small organization such as ours, its incredibly helpful to have support like this. Just today during our therapy...I mean HR... session... its very helpful to have the ability to not only bounce ideas off but to help plan for our future. I am not an HR person and my skill set is not really set up to be able to do this part of the work but given where we are that work falls to me. So having Ops+ is pretty invaluable.

Detroit Sound Conservancy
OPS+ Client

Our Work

Office Space and Building Resources



Collaborative Workspace

TechTown’s coworking community thrived in 2025, welcoming 76 new member companies while maintaining an average occupancy rate of 95% throughout the year. By December 2025, the building was home to 924 active members from 49 different industries, creating a diverse ecosystem where tech startups collaborate with retail businesses, nonprofits work alongside creative agencies, and solo founders connect with established companies.

This vibrant community doesn’t just share workspace—it builds relationships. Monthly Happy Hours averaged 81 attendees, providing consistent opportunities for members to unwind, connect across industries, and discover unexpected partnerships.



Event Space

In 2025, 90,809 people walked through TechTown’s doors—representing roughly one in every seven Detroit residents. This extraordinary foot traffic reflects TechTown’s role not just as a workspace, but as Detroit’s premier entrepreneurial gathering place. The building hosted 370 large events with more than 10,000 total attendees, ranging from intimate pitch competitions and workshop series to major ecosystem convenings like the MedHealth Summit, ManuTech Innovation Summit, and AI x Mobility Buildathon.

Beyond major events, TechTown facilitated 22,000 conference room bookings throughout the year, providing flexible, professional spaces for board meetings, strategy sessions, coaching appointments, team offsites, and collaborative work sessions.

177

tech startups supported

\$9M

Revenue

77%

historically underrepresented tech founders

2M

in mobility prototyping grants

2,595

attendance at MAIN/MedHealth convenings



Office Space and Building Resources



We love having our office at TechTown Detroit! The community ambassadors are always friendly and helpful, the space is energizing, and I'm constantly making meaningful connections just by being part of the community. It's a place where collaboration happens naturally.

Global Ties Detroit
TechTown Detroit Tenant

Industries Served

70.3%

Software Publishers

11%

Navigation & Instrument Manufacturing,
Transportation Equipment, R&D

8.1%

Electrical Equipment Manufacturing

5.4%

Web Search Portals & Information Services

5.4%

Computer Systems Design



2025 Funders



2025 Supporters

- | | | |
|--|--|--|
| CIBC | Bank of Ann Arbor | Detroit Development Fund |
| Ernst & Young | Accenture | Detroit Regional Chamber |
| Ballmer Group | T-Mobile | Fifth Third Bank |
| The Kresge Foundation | Charles Stewart Mott Foundation | First Independence Bank |
| Comerica Bank | Fifth Generation Distilled Spirits | Gray Woods Management LLC (Imagine Entertainment) |
| New Economy Initiative | Henry Ford Health Systems | PWC |
| Total Wireless | Ilitch Charities, Inc | Regents of the University of Michigan |
| Bank of America | Invest Detroit | Warner Nocross + Judd |
| Ally Charitable Foundation | Michigan Central | Wayne State University - College of Engineering |
| DTE Energy Foundation | Oakland County | Baker Tilly US |
| Southeast Michigan Grants Coalition -GEM - Detroit Regional Partnership | Varnum Attorneys at Law | Comcast Business, Heartland Region |
| LISC | Wayne State University - Office of Technology Commercialization | Detroit Living |
| The Huntington Foundation | Wayne State University, Government and Community Affairs | Renaissance Venture Capital Fund |
| Wells Fargo | Blue Cross Blue Shield of Michigan | Sentinel Group |
| Michigan SBDC | Community Foundation of Southeast MI | Walker-Miller Energy Services, LLC |
| Orsa Credit Union | | |

2025 Donors

- | | | | |
|----------------------|----------------------------------|----------------------|------------------|
| Glen Nothnagel | Matthew Bower | Norma Jean Zaleski | Lori Rumley |
| Jane Fitzgibbon, PhD | Valencia Stoudamire | Mark Bole | Eric Jirgens |
| Michael Staebler | David Sanders | Bethany Gielczyk | Racheal Allen |
| Jonathan Oberheide | Jason Aeschliman | Ned & Annie Staebler | Phillip Levy, MD |
| Christopher Rizik | Cornelia Butler | Jonathan Rumley | Kevin Johnson |
| Lizabeth Ardisana | WSU Governor Dana Thompson | Jason Tinsley | Colleen Hau |
| Rachel Bendit | President Emeritus Allan Gilmour | Coriel Taylor | Nicholas Gorga |
| Kelly Kozlowski | | Margaret D. Meador | |
| Denise Lewis | | David Meador | |