



# WESTSIDE MAKERSPACE

LEARN . CREATE . COLLABORATE

CO-OP

A creative and collaborative space for community members to explore their passions, learn new skills, and access tools to solve everyday problems.

The Westside Makerspace (WSMS) is a shared workshop space with tools and technology for entrepreneurship, workforce development, and arts. Operating as a cooperative, West Dayton residents share knowledge and skills across generations and create pathways to well-paid careers as employees or owners of local businesses in manufacturing. Together, we are building space where we can design, repair, and fabricate the things we need, rooted in our community.



**Revive** Dayton's spirit of innovation and creativity



**Launch** new manufacturing enterprises



**Diversify** the Maker ecosystem



**Lift** up the West Dayton community

#### Key Objectives:

- To make manufacturing equipment, technology and space more accessible to Black founders and entrepreneurs;
- To create accessible pathways to specialized training for Black workers in Dayton.
- To create a financially sustainable enterprise that is designed, owned, and governed by the workers it serves, and ensure it remains rooted in and accountable to the community.



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## THE NEED

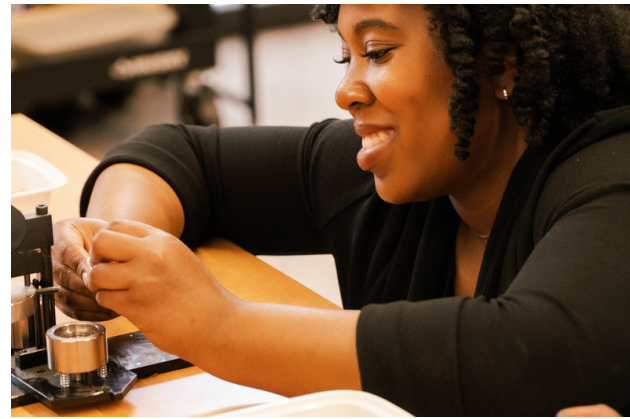
For years, good union manufacturing jobs and a stable core of Black-owned businesses supported a strong Black middle class in West Dayton. However, plant closures and industry changes eliminated jobs and created a generational gap in skills and wealth. With the decline in manufacturing and rise in low-wage service industries, 58% of west Daytonians working full-time earn less than a living wage, and 31% of working-age adults live in poverty. 43% of adults in West Dayton have no education beyond high school, and there are few accessible options for skills-based training. As a result, Black workers are more likely to be stuck in lower-wage, lower-skill, and more physically demanding manufacturing jobs and they face significant barriers to advancement.

In entrepreneurship and business ownership, Black founders and business owners also lag behind. Only about 2.3% of Dayton-area businesses are Black-owned. Black entrepreneurs lack access to critical resources needed to start and sustain their businesses. The Urban Manufacturing Alliance's State of Urban Manufacturing report highlights how disparities in access to capital impact manufacturers of color, including preventing them from accessing equipment and space needed to produce products.

## THE OPPORTUNITY

Manufacturing is still the second most important industry in the Dayton region, employing 19% of working adults. Manufacturing opportunities are projected to increase in the coming years, both for people with advanced skills to enter the workforce and for nimble entrepreneurs and small businesses poised to enter supply chains. This presents an opportunity for skilled Black workers and entrepreneurs to reduce the racial wage and wealth gap. The time is now to address barriers to Black entrepreneurs starting new manufacturing businesses and for workers seeking employment in higher wage sectors of manufacturing. Without access to equipment, production space, or accessible training programs to train workers, Black workers and entrepreneurs will be unable to take advantage of the growing manufacturing industry.

Westside Makerspace will be hub for training, resources and innovation, strategically located to ensure access to the workers and entrepreneurs impacted by these barriers. Although the Makerspace will benefit the entire Dayton community, the key constituents served will be the 91,951 residents of west and northwest Dayton, where the median household income is \$29,917 a year (compared to the Montgomery County area median of \$62,728), and seventy-three percent (73%) of residents are African American.



## TIMELINE

In 2022, WSMS hosted an 8 month public pilot Makerspace in partnership with the Dayton Metro Libraries, conducting community-based market research that engaged over 1000 Daytonians. Through the pilot and participatory visioning sessions, we identified common entrepreneurial and workforce interests in Dayton, especially among West Dayton residents. In 2023, WSMS began operating a temporary Maker-run shared space with functional areas that reflect these interests, including textiles, woodworking, customization, and technology for design and prototyping. WSMS was also proud to be awarded over \$1 million through the City of Dayton's competitive ARPA funding process towards building out our full sized permanent Makerspace. In 2024, WSMS will begin construction, with an anticipated open in 2025.

## FINANCIAL PLAN

Co-op Dayton is a 501(c)3 cooperative incubator that is supporting the development of the WSMS. Co-op Dayton has already raised \$1.4 million of a \$2.7 million capital campaign to support the construction and development of the Makerspace. We are actively developing partnerships with regional higher ed, labor, and manufacturing agencies, and have narrowed to three possible locations for our permanent space, all on major West Dayton business arteries.

The WSMS will become a financially sustainable by following proven Makerspace best practices, building key revenue sources including classes, monthly memberships, and the subleases on space. Much of the operations and maintenance work will be subsidized by volunteers. This is reflected in a cooperative ownership structure that recognize the contribution of maker-members and encourages the community to take "ownership" of the Makerspace.

## ACTIVITIES AND TIMELINE

**2023-2024** Capital Campaign: Raise approximately \$2.7 million for construction, equipment and furnishing in support of launching the permanent space in mid-2025. We have already raised nearly half of this goal.

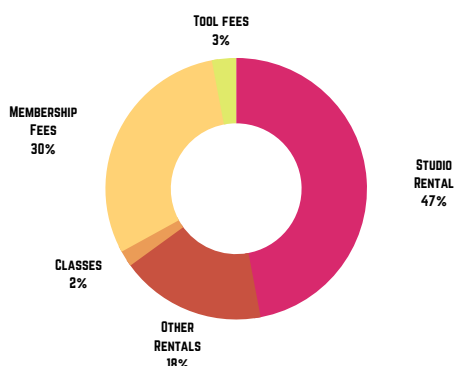
**2023-2025** Build and sustain community support: Continue to recruit, train, and serve Member-owners in the current prototype lab. As of July 2023 we've had over 1000 visits for training, events, and tool usage.

**2023-2025** Build and sustain partnerships with organizations in higher ed, workforce and labor to build awareness and develop collaborative programming for workers, entrepreneurs and youth.

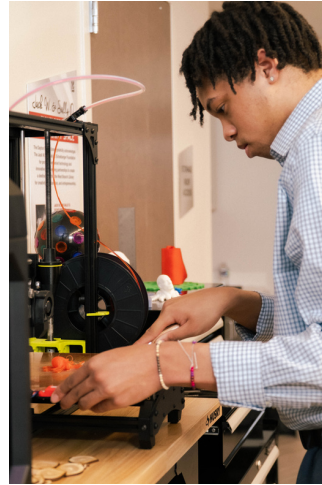
**2024-2025** Build or renovate permanent location.

**2025** Open and operate in full scale Makerspace.

### YEAR 3 REVENUE SOURCES



# WESTSIDE MAKERSPACE



## OUR TEAM

The Westside Makerspace was founded by a passionate and talented team of engineers, entrepreneurs, cooperative enthusiasts, and University of Dayton alumni. As current or former West Dayton residents, they have strong ties to the community and a drive to showcase the skills and talents of local residents. The founding team has partnered with Co-op Dayton, a 501(c)3 non-profit cooperative incubator with a track record of developing innovative and community-led solutions, including a 15,000 square foot community and worker owned grocery store, the Gem City Market, which is now serving Dayton residents formerly impacted by a food desert. The WSMS has also built strategic partnerships with stakeholders like University of Dayton, including the Crotty Center for Entrepreneurship, Greater West Dayton Incubator, Ethos program and the School of Engineering; the Dayton Metro Libraries; Central State University; Montgomery County Educational Services; and Launch Dayton.

As the Dayton region begins to more widely recognize and address wealth and opportunity gaps, investments in Black-led development like the Westside Makerspace are key. The WSMS is also committed to increasing diversity in the maker ecosystem. According to the Nation of Makers 2019 Annual Survey, people of color make up less than 20% of Makerspace members nationwide, with less than 5% identifying as Black or African American. A Black-led Makerspace in West Dayton would create a space for innovation, creativity, and entrepreneurship that centers the surrounding West Dayton community.





October 30, 2023

Lela Klein, Co-Executive Director  
Greater Dayton Union Co-op Initiative  
840 Germantown St.  
Dayton, Ohio 45402

Dear Ms. Klein:

On behalf of the University of Dayton and the Greater West Dayton Incubator, I write to express our support of the Westside Makerspace Cooperative proposal presented by Co-op Dayton to the 2023 PDAC process. The Westside Makerspace Cooperative will offer flexible, affordable, and culturally-relevant opportunities for West Dayton residents of all ages to gain skills in technical industries such as manufacturing, construction, and information technologies. The Makerspace will also offer resources, including space, equipment, and marketing services, to reduce startup costs, launch, and expand minority-owned businesses in those industries.

We strongly support Co-op Dayton's proposal to construct and equip a makerspace cooperative in West Dayton so that we can expand social and economic opportunity in our city. The efforts underway by the Greater West Dayton Incubator are well aligned with Co-op Dayton's Westside Makerspace. We hope to help reduce the systemic gaps Black-owned businesses face by providing space, funding and connections into the entrepreneurial ecosystem for Black entrepreneurs. We are particularly excited about the Westside Makerspace Cooperative because it will provide the equipment and infrastructure to innovate and create products, which complements our efforts to incubate new businesses and expand existing ones in West Dayton.

The University of Dayton strongly encourages this initiative to be provided priority status in the Fall 2023 PDAC process.

Sincerely,

Eric F. Spina  
President



October 30, 2023

Lela Klein  
Greater Dayton Union Co-op Initiative  
840 Germantown St.  
Dayton , Ohio 45402

Dear Ms. Klein,

The office of the Mayor is pleased to submit this letter of support for the Greater Dayton Cooperative Initiative (Co-op Dayton) PDAC application for the Westside Makerspace Cooperative (WSMS).

The Westside Makerspace Cooperative will offer flexible, affordable, and culturally-relevant opportunities for West Dayton neighbors, and other Dayton residents of all ages to gain skills in technical industries such as manufacturing, construction, and information technologies. The Makerspace will also offer resources, including space, equipment, and marketing services, to reduce startup costs, launch, and expand minority-owned businesses in those industries. We strongly support Co-op Dayton's proposal to construct and equip a makerspace cooperative in West Dayton so that we can expand social and economic opportunity in our city.

I am proud to say that the City of Dayton has invested over \$1 million to support your Makerspace Cooperative, and we encourage other public entities including the State of Ohio to do the same. Your work has already impacted our community positively, with a dozen new businesses being run out of your temporary location. In addition, we were impressed to see you run a successful pilot Makerspace at the West Branch Library that engaged over 1000 neighborhood residents in training and STEM activities. In addition to City of Dayton ARPA dollars, you have attracted philanthropic and foundation sources in support of the project. We applaud your progress, and understand you are seeking an additional \$1 million to build your permanent location in an underdeveloped West Dayton neighborhood, where you can be a catalyst for entrepreneurship and workforce development.

The City of Dayton is pleased to support Co-op Dayton's Westside Makerspace Cooperative initiative's request for the 2023 PDAC process and State Capital Budget funding and believe it should be a priority project. We applaud your team's efforts to develop this community asset and look forward to seeing positive impacts on the economic wellbeing of our citizens.

Sincerely,

Jeffrey J. Mims, Jr.,  
Mayor, City of Dayton