

ECDI Headquarters Renovation

Background

ECDI is updating its headquarters – a century-old schoolhouse (1655 Old Leonard Avenue, Columbus) – into a 13,000-square-foot hub of local entrepreneurial innovation. The project involves:

- Interior structural demolition work, flooring rework, framing and drywall, and painting.
- An expanded Business Innovation Center, offering its cohort members co-working space, private meeting rooms, high-speed internet and a business center outfitted with computers, audio-visual technology, marketing services, software and equipment, and printing/copying and scanning technology.
- A professional business environment and industry-specific support services for the emerging entrepreneur to help expand ECDI's incubator accelerator program offerings.

ECDI has pledged to use at least 50% minority contractors on this project, to provide opportunity for small businesses in its [Capital for Construction](#) (CfC) program.

[Turner Construction Company](#) and [Ascension Construction Solutions](#) are leading the transformation of ECDI's current headquarters. Turner has provided counsel and support to Ascension for three years, working on various projects including work at John Glenn Columbus International Airport. Ascension will lead the management of this project, preparing them to grow by taking on bigger projects in the future.

It is ECDI's hope that the project serves as an example for how other companies throughout the state of Ohio can use a mentoring program make a difference for minority-owned construction businesses.

ABOUT ECDI'S CAPITAL FOR CONSTRUCTION PROGRAM

The construction industry has some of the largest barriers to entry of any profession. Challenges include expensive up-front project costs, regulating cash flow, and credit and wealth accumulation.

According to a [2019 City of Columbus Disparity Study](#), "MBE prime contractors and subcontractors represent 19.67% of the city's available construction contractors but received only 6.07% of all construction dollars during the study period."



In response to this demonstrated need, ECDI implemented the Capital for Construction (CfC) pilot program in 2017 with the support of funding from Wells Fargo Diverse Community Capital program and JPMorgan Chase. In consultation with experts in construction industry diversity and inclusion and peer organizations, ECDI developed the program to incorporate industry-specific training, one-on-one technical assistance, access to markets, and access to working capital through ECDI's innovative Mobilization Loan product.

HOW THE PROGRAM WORKS

Contractors have access to funds needed to complete up-front work on contracts through low-interest, short-term loans. The low-barrier loan is paid off when they receive payment for their work.

- **Coaching:** ECDI's team will help assess what prospective applicants need to do to grow their business, and then assist with those steps, whether it's business planning, financial training, MBE/WBE certification, etc.
- **Contract:** Once an applicant has taken the steps to be loan ready, they provide a signed copy of their contract and ECDI will work with them and the company they're contracting with to sign a joint payment agreement.
- **Capital:** Applicants complete a standard application process to borrow \$5,000 to \$350,000 for payroll, materials and project costs. No collateral outside of their contract is required.
- **Connections:** After clients have a first successful loan, ECDI's team helps continue their growth trajectory with procurement opportunities, ongoing training, mentor matching and more.

During the first three and a half years of the CfC program, ECDI staff provided over 3,000 hours of one-on-one technical assistance to 260 CfC clients and disbursed more than \$4.3 million in loan capital for more than 103 Mobilization Loans. Over 1,000 hours of training were provided on industry-specific topics such as estimating, bidding, business accounting and bookkeeping, OSHA certification, and MBE/WBE certification.

ABOUT ECDI

ECDI is a nonprofit organization, dedicated to assuring underserved and underbanked entrepreneurs – regardless of where they came from, where they live, their gender or their race – have access to funding and a range of business incubation services they need to succeed. Based in Columbus, with offices in Cleveland, Cincinnati, Akron and Toledo, we are a one-stop resource center, serving small businesses in Ohio, Kentucky and Indiana. As a leading SBA microloan intermediary, a certified Community Development Corporation, and



Investing in the growth
of small business

Treasury-designated Community Development Financial Institution, we are proud to have assisted more than 284 ,000 individuals, disbursed over \$85.1 million through nearly 3,723 loans, and created and retained more than 11,763 jobs since 2004. Learn more at www.ecdi.org.

FOR YOUR REFERENCE

Media Contact: Audrey Adair, Irvin PR, audrey@irvinpr.com or 614.570.0111.