



Business Resource Guide



OUR GREAT STREETS VISION

Enhance, grow, and connect our Neighborhood Business Districts while empowering the unique, local culture that makes all of our streets **Great Streets.**

ABOUT THIS RESOURCE GUIDE

This guide has been created to provide a starting point for business and property owners to navigate city, county, and state resources, especially as they apply to business development. *Note: Other resources may be available that are not listed here.*

Although this guide was created for the Great Streets project, many of these resources are available throughout Akron.

AREAS COVERED IN THE GUIDE INCLUDE:

- civic engagement
- business funding
- technical assistance
- workforce assistance
- business district programming
- infrastructure improvements.

Please contact the Office of Integrated Development with further questions.

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Photo Credit:

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DANIEL HARRIGAN, MAYOR

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CIVIC ENGAGEMENT

Better Block

betterblock.org/blog/tag/akron

Better Block Foundation is a nonprofit that educates, equips, and empowers communities and their leaders to reshape and reactivate built environments to promote the growth of healthy and vibrant neighborhoods.

Neighborhood Development Organizations

[akronohio.gov/NeighborhoodDevelopment
Organizations](https://akronohio.gov/NeighborhoodDevelopmentOrganizations)

These organizations are designed to provide programs and offer services that promote community development. *Check out the website for a list of organizations in Akron.*

Greater Akron Chamber

greaterakronchamber.org

The mission of the Greater Akron Chamber is to drive economic development and prosperity for the people of the Greater Akron Region.

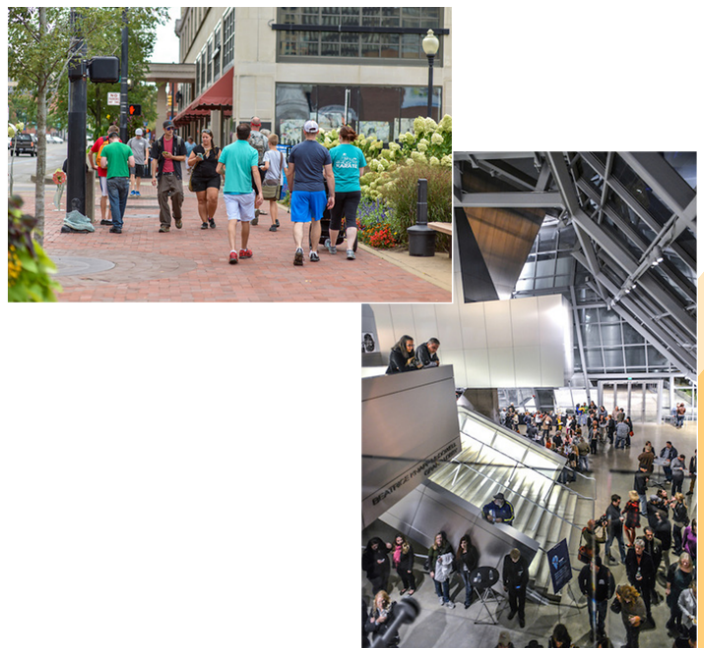
Open Streets

These free events are designed to engage the community by bringing civic groups, businesses, residents, and visitors together for a fun, unique and inspiring day of outdoor recreation and community building.

Summit Coalition for Community Health Improvement

scph.org/scchi

SCCHI is an inter-agency collaborative committed to identifying key health priorities in Summit County and coordinating action to improve population health and promote health equity for all.



BUSINESS FUNDING

Small Business Loans - ECDI

ecd.org/invest/loan-program

ECDI assists Ohio's entrepreneurs through their one-stop-shop business services model, suited to meet the needs of all entrepreneurs.

Façade Improvement Matching Grant

greatstreetsakron.com/businesses

**This funding opportunity is only available for parcels located in eligible Great Streets areas. Great Street status is verified in the application process.*

Grants may be available for exterior improvements and/or site improvements. Grant amount must be matched by private funds. The eligibility to receive funding is linked to standards prescribed by the Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) program. Not all areas within Akron qualify.

Revitalization Program - JobsOhio

jobs-ohio.com/why-ohio/incentives/jobsohio-loan-and-grant-programs/jobsohio-revitalization-program

The JobsOhio Revitalization Program provides Loans and Grants where the cost of the redevelopment and remediation is more than the value of the land and a site cannot be competitively developed in the current marketplace.

PACE Energy Loan - Summit County DFA

developmentfinanceauthority.org/services/pace/

The Property Assessed Clean Energy (PACE) program provides financing that allows property owners to make significant building upgrades resulting in better indoor air quality, improved tenant comfort and reduced energy costs for owners and their tenants.

Real Estate Development Gap Financing

New commercial construction projects in these areas can be eligible for some gap financing.

SBA-guaranteed Loan

sba.gov/funding-programs/loans

The Small Business Administration sets guidelines for loans made by its partnering lenders, community development organizations, and micro-lending institutions.

Revolving Loan Fund - Summit County

co.summitoh.net/index.php/departments/community-a-economic-development/economic-development/revolving-loan-fund

Summit County issues loans to start-up and existing businesses to help create or employees.

TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE

Akron Small Business Development Center

akronsbdc.org

The mission of the SBDC is to accelerate Ohio's economy by helping people start, sustain and grow their businesses. The SBDC provides no-cost business consulting and low-cost training to new and existing businesses.

Board of Trade Council

akronbotc.com

The Board of Trade Council organizes the four regional Boards that cover the Akron area. These Boards form a business network to further their combined interests.

Business Licensing

business.ohio.gov/licensing

Businesses are required to register with the Ohio Secretary of State to legally conduct business.

Crafty Mart Maker Sessions

craftymart.org/the-maker-sessions

Crafty Mart hosts a bi-annual multi-venue craft show that showcases the best handmade makers regionally. Maker Sessions provide practical and usable tools to help you protect, produce, and thrive.

ECDI Business Workshops

ecdi.org/educate/training

ECDI's Business Innovation Center (BIC) provides general micro-enterprise development training courses during which entrepreneurs are given the tools needed to start, expand, and successfully manage a business.

Market Profiles

greatstreetsakron.com

These marketing pieces are designed to give potential business owners looking to invest in the Great Streets an understanding of the neighborhood culture.

Microbusiness Center

akronlibrary.org/locations/main-library/microbusiness-center

Providing accessible business training, educational resources and individualized direction to established business owners, entrepreneurs and students. Doors to the Microbusiness Center will be open during regular library hours and may open as early as 8:00 am for classes and workshops or by appointment.

Minority Business Assistance Center

akronurbanleague.org/minority-business-assistance-center

As part of the Akron Urban League, the Minority Business Assistance Center works to improve the quality of life of the citizens of Summit County, particularly African Americans, through economic self-reliance and social empowerment.

TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE (CONTINUED)

Procurement Technical Assistance Center

ptac.ohio.edu

PTAC assists Ohio businesses to sell goods and services to local, state, and federal government. PTAC offers help in every aspect of the government contracting process, from getting started to post-award assistance.

SCORE

score.org

SCORE fosters vibrant small business communities through mentoring and education.

Security Camera Registration

By registering your camera, you will be assisting in the crime prevention efforts in your neighborhood. There is no cost for registering and you will not be contacted unless your footage is needed.

State of Ohio 1st Stop Business Connection

business.ohio.gov/starting

Provides free state-level information needed to get started or continue on your entrepreneurial journey.

TechZone@Main - Akron-Summit County Public Library

akronlibrary.org/locations/main-library/techzone-main

Located on the first floor of the Main Library, the TechZone@Main houses a large collection of public computers, printers (varying sizes and materials), scanners, fax machines, copiers, and free wifi.



WORKFORCE ASSISTANCE

The EX[L] Center

uakron.edu/exl

The goal of the EX[L] Center at the University of Akron is to enable students to emerge as civically engaged, skilled and adaptable leaders, ready to take on real-world challenges. This is done by offering internship partners, research and fellowship programs, community engagement opportunities, and more.

NEO Talent Exchange

noche.org/301

The Northeastern Ohio (NEO) Talent Exchange offers individual consulting to assess your needs and design a custom program that supplements your talent acquisition and development strategies. NEO helps with exposure and establishes relationships with career services professionals and faculty members in a variety of disciplines.

Subsidized Employment Program (SEP)

summitomj.org/assets/uploads/2016/11/SEP-Fact-Sheet-07-17.pdf

Summit County Department of Job and Family Services reimburses local employers for hiring and retaining employees who meet certain eligibility requirements.

Work Experience Program (WEP)

summitomj.org/assets/uploads/2016/11/WEP-Fact-Sheet-11-16.pdf

Clients receiving Ohio Works First (OWF) cash assistance must participate in a work activity in for their benefits. The Work Experience Program (WEP) allows these clients to gain work experience at local business, factories, hospitals, and non-profit organizations.

Innovation Ohio

innovationohio.org

Innovation Ohio blends progressive public policy analysis and hard-hitting research with a single-minded determination to drive this information into the hands of the media, policymakers, and our allies to help influence policy decisions and shape public opinion.

On-the-Job Training Fact Sheet Summit County

summitomj.org/assets/uploads/2018/01/OJT-Fact-Sheet-Flyer-SummitCountyOMJ.pdf

New employees often require training to learn about your specific processes and products; this program can help offset the cost of training.

INFRASTRUCTURE IMPROVEMENTS

Infrastructure improvements are implemented and managed by the City of Akron. There are no formal applications for this type of improvement; funds are allocated based on community feedback, city evaluation, and availability of resources.

Examples of infrastructure improvements include:

- Street Lighting
- Traffic Speed
- Resurfacing
- Parking
- Bike Lanes
- Pedestrian Crossing
- Street Trees
- Blight Eradication

Smart City Project

This project gives business districts an opportunity to utilize technology to address citizen/ business needs. The City has limited grant funds available to deploy technology within the street in order to improve the overall district.



GREAT STREETS PROGRAMMING

Great Street Business District (GSBD) Programming involves events and commercial activities outside the downtown Akron area that meet the needs of the particular neighborhood. Programming fosters neighborhood business relationships through group efforts to bring events to the communities they serve.

Check out what downtownakron.com has going on.

Below are a few examples of programming ideas implemented around Akron.

Popup Entertainment
Farmer's Market

Reading Stations
Halloween Trick or Treat

Shop Small
Sidewalk Sales

Safety Program (Highland Square Model) – A cooperative group of business and agencies in Highland Square have organized to secure increased police presence during high business traffic hours.

