



Agenda

Committee of the Whole Meeting

City of Kalamazoo

Monday, August 18, 2025

5:00 PM

City Commission Chambers – 241 West South Street

- A. CALL TO ORDER/ROLL CALL**
- B. COMMUNICATIONS**
- C. PUBLIC COMMENTS**
- D. SPECIAL AGENDA ITEMS**
- E. COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE**
- F. WORK SESSION**
 - 1. Can Do Kalamazoo Presentation
 - 2. Kalamazoo County Health & Community Services Presentation
- G. COMMISSIONER COMMENTS**
- H. ADJOURNMENT**

City Manager Search Process

The Kalamazoo City Commission is inviting community members to complete a brief survey to help define the qualities, values, and priorities they would like to see in the next City Manager. The survey is available online at www.kalamazoo-city.org/CityManagerSearch, along with a timeline of the search process, updates, frequently asked questions, and other resources. Paper copies of the survey can be found at City Offices. The survey will be open through August 24.

All materials, updates, and opportunities for community involvement are available at www.kalamazoo-city.org/CityManagerSearch. The City Commission will also continue to provide updates at each City Commission meeting.



You can use the camera on your phone or mobile device to scan this QR Code, which will take you to the City Manager search webpage and community survey.

Can-Do Kalamazoo Annual Impact

At Can-Do Kalamazoo, we offer resources, guidance, and spaces to turn your idea into something great. Whether you're just starting out or scaling up, we're here for you as a business support at any stage in your journey through inclusive programs, workshops, and commercial spaces right here in Kalamazoo.



Support for entrepreneurs, by
entrepreneurs.



**A MESSAGE
FROM OUR
FOUNDER**

2024 was a defining year for Can-Do Kalamazoo. Even while renovating and relocating, we never paused our commitment to entrepreneurs - we expanded it. This year, we awarded grants to small businesses and updated our brand and website to include entrepreneur courses. We also launched a workshop series, offered ServSafe classes, enhanced one-on-one business support, and made sure support met people where they were. Thank you for believing in our work and in Kalamazoo's small business dreamers!

Impact Report

**WHAT MAKES
CAN-DO'S
SUPPORT
UNIQUE**

At Can-Do Kalamazoo, support goes beyond just programming - it's personal, practical, and powerful.

Our programs, commercial spaces, networks, guidance, and tools are designed to transform ideas into something **great!**

We offer pathways to funding, one-on-one guidance, coaching in multiple languages, flexible payment plans, and below-market service rates to help all founders not just launch — but thrive.

CDK IMPACT SNAPSHOT

136

Entrepreneurs supported in any Can-Do program

66⁺

Additional businesses supported via MEDC partner programs

234^K

Of program fees were alleviated for entrepreneurs

Can-Do Kalamazoo Organization *Overview*

MISSION STATEMENT

Activating inclusive programs, resources, and physical spaces to support our community's diverse entrepreneurs and small business owners

ENDS STATEMENT

Our north star is for all entrepreneurs have a pathway toward business success that is clear, equitable and attainable.



Outcome Summary

"Starting a business can feel so overwhelming, but I really felt supported during this process and wouldn't be where I'm at now if I hadn't learned so much at Can-Do Camp!"



192

Individuals reached out for support

108

Attended our free Can-Do info session

63

Continued on to deeper programming

Can-Do Camp

47 participants attended the Can-Do Camp.

Participants demonstrated a **100%** increase in food licensing knowledge

94% of participants showed improvement in branding and financial skills

Kitchen Impact

4,930 hours of kitchen space were rented

4 graduates successfully launched their businesses from the kitchen

\$142,000 operating gap filled by CDK to keep pricing affordable

Business Boost

22 free boost sessions were offered to participants

\$1,100 worth of complimentary sessions were provided during the camp

Our team successfully conducted **50** paid boost sessions.

Removing Barriers to Access

Can-Do Kalamazoo's commitment to equity is reflected in everything we do - from offering zero-interest payment plans to ensuring interpretation is always available.

In 2024, we deepened our partnerships for language access, addressed financial barriers through scholarships and subsidies, and awarded multiple grants to support small businesses.

Natalia Taylor /
Mamafava

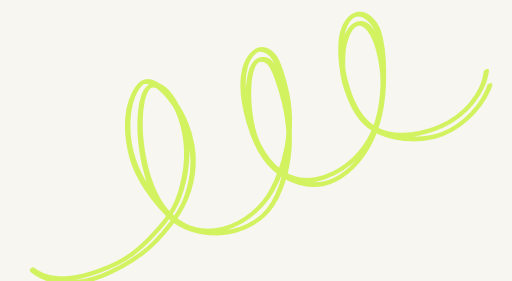


Language Accessibility

- We supported **Ukrainian Homemade Foods, LLC** for two years, providing translation and business coaching to help them join our kitchen in 2024.
- Our partnership with **El Concilio** provides Spanish-language translation and has led to the creation of a Spanish-language Can-Do Guide. We also worked closely with El Concilio's interpreters to offer real-time language support. This allows our staff to confidently communicate with entrepreneurs and provide immediate, accessible business guidance.
- Through **Urban Alliance**, Momentum participants now access our Business Boost program with live translation support.

Financial Accessibility

- **Our kitchen** offers below-market rental rates with built-in business support. In 2024, we covered a \$142,000 cost gap and provided additional kitchen scholarships to keep it affordable.
- We filled the operating gap with over \$91,900 in **Can-Do Camp** costs. Three participants received scholarships, and our fall cohort was free.
- We offer **zero-interest payment plans** for entrepreneurs who need flexible payment options for Camp or Business Boost services.
- CDK-endorsed **Kiva campaigns** raised \$27,500 in 2024, providing zero-interest capital to three local businesses.



Purposeful Partnerships

In 2024, Can-Do Kalamazoo was designated one of Michigan's 27 Small Business Support Hubs. We are proud to collaborate with organizations that share our vision for a more inclusive business community. Through partnerships with groups like Room 35, BETA, Startup Zoo, and South Haven Regional Business Hub, we have supported over 66 additional entrepreneurs across the region.

Additionally, key economic positions from the City of Kalamazoo's Community Planning and Economic Development (CPED) department hold regular office hours at our new building.

\$364K

regranted through our MEDC grant

66+

businesses served through partner orgs

67%

are owned by People of Color

47%

are woman-owned businesses



"We are forever grateful for the Can-Do staff's support, resources and encouragement."

Ongoing Program Partners



Can-Do Camp Evaluations

Can-Do Camp is one of our flagship programs, supporting two cohorts per year for the past seven years.

To better understand its impact, we partnered with the **WMU Evaluation Lab** to conduct retrospective surveys, weekly assessments, and 6-month follow-up interviews. The results were clear: participants **gained significant** knowledge across key business areas and consistently found the peer-to-peer connections invaluable.

The greatest knowledge increases were in **Business Model Canvas, Value Proposition, and Food Product Packaging**. Analysis showed a statistically significant improvement between pre- and post-camp knowledge ratings, demonstrating meaningful growth.

More than half of participants also reported a **stronger understanding** of core business concepts like marketing and finance.

Ch

"The Can-Do Kitchen helped me learn how to operate in a commercial kitchen. They introduced me to other business professionals. I felt privileged to be under the tutelage of such an experienced team"



Meka Phillips / Dessert First



Participant Results

96%

Advanced beyond beginner knowledge levels.

100%

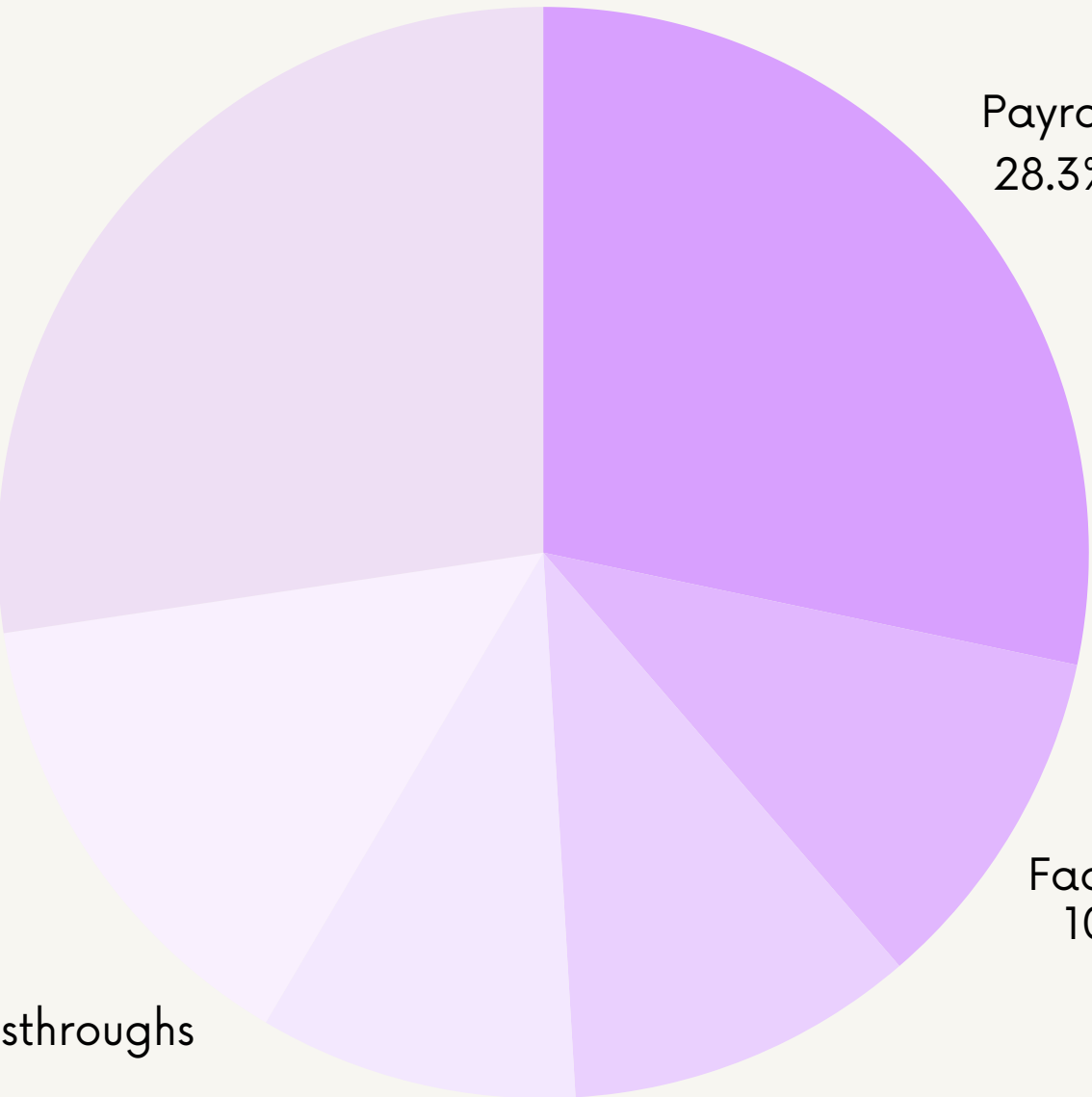
Rated branding and food licensing sessions were helpful or extremely helpful

94%

Improved their knowledge in branding and financial management

Financial Data

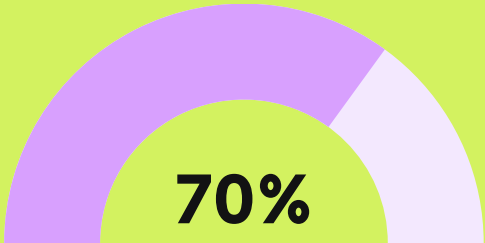
MEDC Subawards & Direct to Business Grants
27.4%



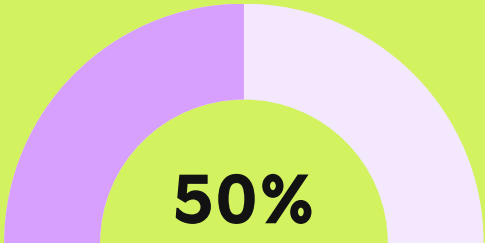
Isa Clark / Clark's Specialty Kitchen



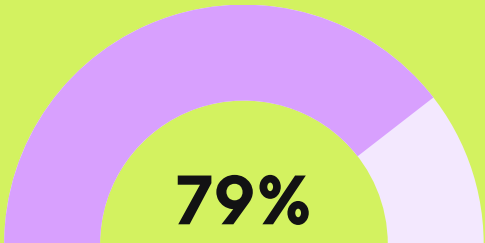
Additional Data



Staff time directly supports entrepreneurs.



Completed on new Hub construction



Gap filled with grant and donation support

Can-Do Kalamazoo Partnership

Starting a business can be a hectic journey, especially when you're also juggling a full-time job. That's why our hub at 519 S. Park is such an accessible space for entrepreneurs.

We bring together a variety of real services and resources under one roof, including our incubator kitchen, consulting services, and even coworking spaces, making it easier and more effective for entrepreneurs to move their businesses forward.

And this year, our shared office space from **City/SCORE/SBDC** has allowed entrepreneurs to access even more resources. Whether they're looking for funding opportunities, expert business planning, or mentoring, entrepreneurs can access all these resources while participating in our programs, such as Can-Do Kalamazoo's Business Boost, Incubator Kitchen, or Can-Do Camp - or by simply visiting the Can-Do Hub at 519 S. Park.





Thank
You!



Support for entrepreneurs, by
entrepreneurs.

KCHCS Program Overview

Presenter: Lindsay Merling, MPH, CHES



HEALTH & COMMUNITY SERVICES DEPARTMENT



Mission: To improve the health for all residents of Kalamazoo County

Vision: A community where equity in social, mental, physical and environmental health is achieved for all County residents

KCHCS provides essential and mandated public health functions as well as a variety of community/social services that are less traditional of a local health department.





Programs Within KCHCS

- **Area Agency on Aging Division (AAA)**
 - Provides leadership and advocacy on aging issues while also identifying needs of older persons and coordinating services to meet those needs to enable older persons to live independently with dignity in their own homes or chosen place of residence.
- **Environmental Health Division**
 - Works to prevent disease, prolong life, protect the environment, and promote public health through inspections, land water & wastewater monitoring and protection, laboratory services, and Household Hazardous Waste.
- **Public Health Emergency Preparedness**
 - Protects the county and its residents through public health prevention, response, and rapid recovery as it relates to public health emergencies.
- **Veterans Services Office**
 - Provides services, assistance, and advocacy to those who have served our country. Specific programs include VA benefits, Soldiers and Sailors Relief, Michigan Veterans Trust Fund, Burial Benefits, and Veterans Service Office Fund Grant.



Programs Within KCHCS

- **Maternal Child Health Division**

- Provides advocacy, education, and service coordination
- Home-visiting programs such as Nurse Family Partnership, Healthy Babies Healthy Start, and Health Families America
- Other programs in this division include
 - Breast & Cervical Cancer Control Navigation Program
 - Children's Special Healthcare Services (CSHCS)
 - Fatherhood Program 4DAD
 - Infant Safe Sleep
 - Fetal Infant Mortality Review
 - Women, Infant, and Children (WIC)





Programs Within KCHCS

- **Personal Health Division**

- Provides prevention, direct services and education and outreach through the following programs and services
 - Childhood Lead Poisoning Prevention Program
 - Communicable Diseases Team
 - Epidemiology and Surveillance Reporting
 - STI Counseling & Testing
 - HIV Counseling & Testing
 - Immunization Action Program and International Travel Immunizations
 - Hearing & Vision
 - Family Planning





Programs Within KCHCS

- **Health Education**

- Wear One Campaign
- Naloxone Training & distribution
- Gun lock distribution
- Healthy Homes workshops
- Marijuana lock bag distribution
- Tobacco Cessation
- Presentations on a variety of topics
- Community tabling events
- Partnerships with community organizations





KCHCS Mobile Unit

- **Outreach Services**

- Vaccinations
- STI Testing
- Health Education
- Childhood Lead Testing
- Lactation Consultation
- Tobacco Cessation Consultation
- Health Screening (coming soon!)





HEALTH & COMMUNITY SERVICES DEPARTMENT

We are here to help you!



**Questions?
Comments?**

HealthEd@kalcounty.gov



HEALTH & COMMUNITY SERVICES DEPARTMENT