

# The Museum for Black Innovation and Entrepreneurship

CREATING AN ECOSYSTEM FOR CREATIVITY AND WEALTH  
WASHINGTON, DC  
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The Museum for Black Innovation and Entrepreneurship is about creating a vibrant ecosystem of innovation and entrepreneurship in the communities of Wards 7 and 8 in the District of Columbia.

The Museum is not just a history about objects; it is an ongoing story about people and process: A catalyst to help residents start new businesses and build asset wealth in their communities. The Museum was established in the District of Columbia on 21 June 2011 as a nonprofit organization and is designated by the IRS as a 501(c)(3) public charity.

Our vision is a thriving section of the nation's capital, east of the Anacostia River, teeming with innovative startups and small and medium sized businesses owned and controlled by its residents, building asset wealth, and minimizing unemployment.

Three principal components constitute the core of this ecosystem:

1. A *Showcase* of historical and contemporary examples of Black innovation and entrepreneurship in all areas of creativity. This Showcase, open to the public, is designed to inspire creativity through positive roles models and provide access to resources that can help residents engage in innovation and entrepreneurship.
2. A *Community Innovation Lab* that will provide resources and workshops to members of the public interested in designing and building their own innovations (see, for example, <http://artisansasylum.com/>). This Lab will promote creation of new products that can be manufactured and marketed through local enterprises.
3. A *Community Business Incubator* that will provide training, mentoring, and access to legal and accounting assistance to research, validate, and launch new businesses, including worker owned cooperatives.

The Museum collaborates with existing programs and organizations interested in building the ecosystem, and creates new capacities where needed. For example, the Innovate 8 Initiative in Barry Farm, an ideal partner, is an outstanding example of an existing effort to promote business startups.

Our immediate need is space for a Showcase that can accommodate public visits as well as public lectures. Such a space is now available at the Anacostia Arts Center at a cost of \$9,000 for 6 months, or \$18,000 for 12 months. Having someone in the Museum space from 10 AM to 6 PM would cost \$10,192 for 6 months, or \$20,384 for 12 months.

See: <http://anacostiaartscenter.com/home.html>

We also seek space and materials for an Innovation Lab; and space for a Business Incubator. Ideally, all three programs would be located in a high-ceiling, open-space ground floor (est. 40,000 square feet).

Additionally, funding is needed to support a full time director and assistant for each of these three programs, as well as the resources and maintenance requirements.

To date, the Museum has been in discussions with community organizations, including the Anacostia Economic Development Corporation, and several government offices of the District of Columbia, including the DC Department of Employment Services and the Office of Partnerships and Grants, to work together for economic and social community development in a way that is voiced by the residents of the community.

Among activities to date:

- A nine-week series of workshops through Sasha Bruce to introduce youth to entrepreneurship, 28 March through 16 May 2012;
- A month-long exhibit, Creatively Making a World of Difference—African American Innovators and Entrepreneurs, held at THEARC in Ward 8, March 2013;
- An ongoing collaboration with the Innovate 8 Initiative to provide startup mentorship to emerging entrepreneurs in Ward 8;
- An ongoing collaboration with the Community Development Law Clinic of the David A. Clarke School of Law at the University of the District of Columbia to forge model legislation for worker cooperatives in the District;
- Ongoing design of a Community Innovation Lab with workspace, machinery, and a parts inventory for creating prototypes of products that could be taken in to the market.

For more information, please visit <http://www.mbiedc.org> and contact John Whitman, 781-708-2764 or [jwhitman@mbiedc.org](mailto:jwhitman@mbiedc.org).