

City of Cincinnati



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Jan-Michele Lemon Kearney
Vice Mayor

August 4, 2025

MOTION

WE MOVE that the \$250,000 in Capital Account No. 758X164X251630 (previously in the "Support for Local Businesses" bucket from the carryover) is reallocated to the Grow Avondale Businesses initiative, a public-private partnership.

LISC and the Urban League of Southwestern Ohio will deliver a bundled approach to strengthen Avondale's small business ecosystem by supporting both existing businesses and prospective tenants of the Avondale Town Center. Through a combination of direct investment, startup preparation, and embedded technical assistance, LISC and ULGSO will promote local ownership, commercial vibrancy, and long-term sustainability with the following three interrelated programs:

- Business Expansion and Growth
- New Business Readiness Accelerator
- Wraparound Technical Assistance

In addition to City funds, the private sector has expressed a commitment to lending financial support to this initiative.

Vice Mayor Jan-Michele Lemon Kearney

Councilmember Scotty Johnson

STATEMENT

After a series of discussions and meetings with City leaders and businesses in the Avondale Town Center, the Avondale Development Corporation convened a meeting with the Urban League of Greater Southwestern Ohio, LISC, and City leaders to discuss a plan to help the Avondale Town Center current and future businesses to survive, grow, and thrive. LISC and the Urban League interviewed the owners of each of the Avondale Town Center's existing businesses to ascertain their needs. LISC then devised the following 3-pronged approach:

1. Business Expansion & Growth Grants

Objective: Help stabilize and grow existing Avondale businesses

- Grant awards to existing businesses ranging from \$5,000 to \$15,000
- Uses: storefront improvements, equipment purchases, technology upgrades, or operations support
- Target: Existing businesses in the Avondale neighborhood, prioritizing the Avondale Town Center and locally owned businesses
- Wraparound services: application coaching and grant reporting support

2. New Business Readiness Accelerator

Objective: Prepare entrepreneurs to launch successful new businesses in the Avondale Town Center

- 6-week cohort-based accelerator
- Curriculum: startup planning, business licensing, financial forecasting, and customer acquisition
- Culminating business pitch event with seed funding awards (\$2,500–\$7,500)
Target: Entrepreneurs planning to lease space at the Town Center or other nearby commercial properties
- Optional post-program incubation support

3. Wraparound Technical Assistance for New Tenants

Objective: Ensure that businesses with new leases have the tools and guidance to succeed

- Business readiness assessments conducted at lease signing
- One-on-one business advising for 3–6 months
- Connection to workforce resources, access to capital, and marketing support
- Delivered in partnership with ULGSO Small Business Advisors and local partners (e.g., SCORE, CDFIs)

Program Administration & Evaluation by LISC:

LISC will track and report the following metrics to the City of Cincinnati and private sector partners:

- Number of businesses funded
- Business openings, expansions, or capital improvements completed
- Jobs created or retained
- Client satisfaction and impact surveys