

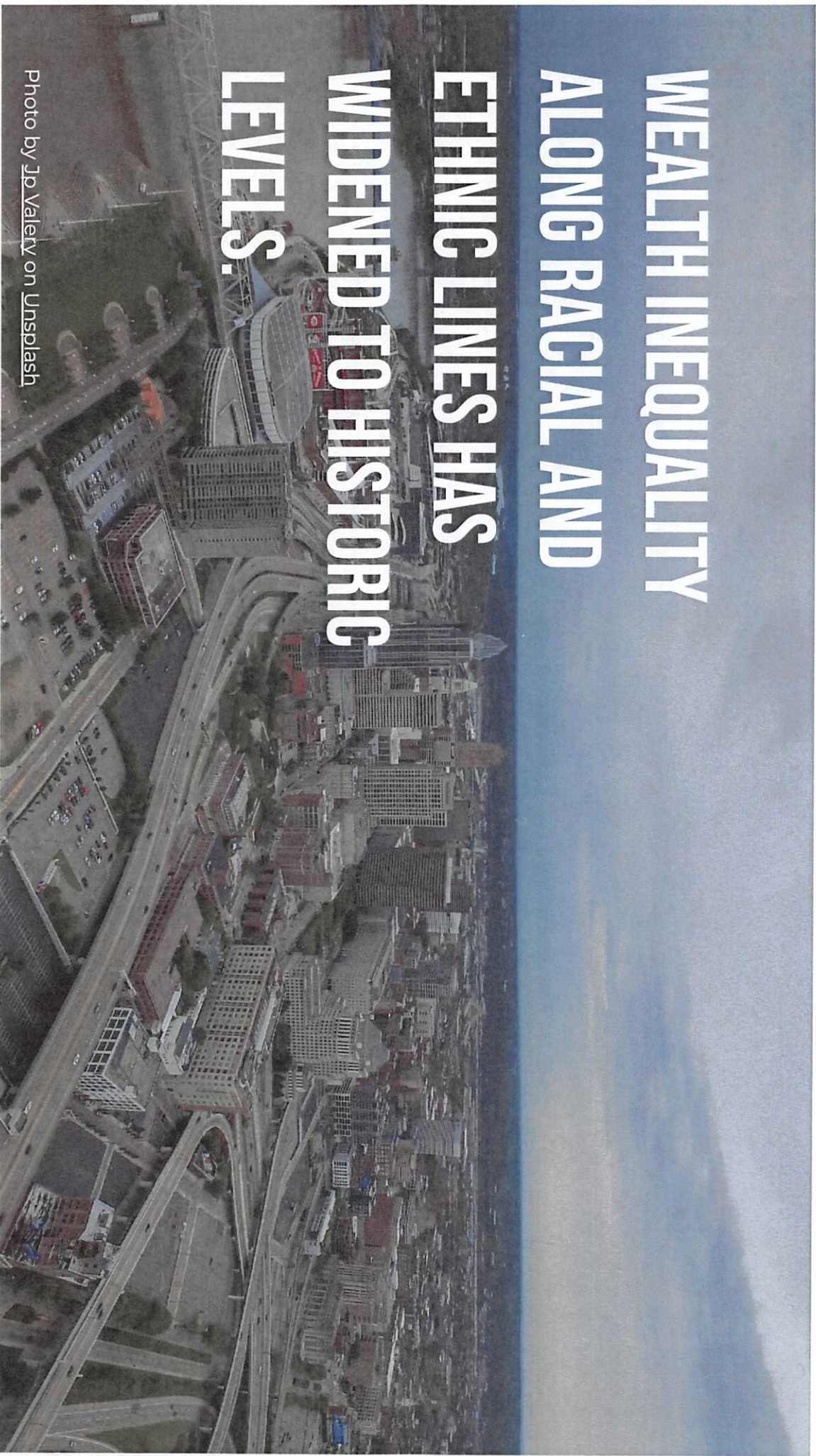
# WORLD OPTIMA

**BUILDING BUSINESSES. TRANSFORMING CITIES.**

**WEALTH INEQUALITY  
ALONG RACIAL AND**

**ETHNIC LINES HAS  
WIDENED TO HISTORIC  
LEVELS.**

Photo by [Jp Valey](#) on [Unsplash](#)





# ENTREPRENEURS OF COLOR CREATE JOBS AND WEALTH IN COMMUNITIES

But often they don't have access to the resources and culturally-competent training that they need for their businesses to survive and thrive.

Means Cameron owns two downtown Cincinnati shops.  
Photo: Maddie Mcgarvey For The Wall Street Journal


Of businesses in Cincinnati  
are African-American  
owned, despite  
representing nearly half of  
the city's population

**18.3%**

**MORTAR EXISTS TO HELP  
HISTORICALLY MARGINALIZED  
ENTREPRENEURS BUILD  
BUSINESSES AND TRANSFORM  
COMMUNITIES.**

We believe that any entrepreneur can thrive - when equipped with the right resources and hustle.





# WE ENSURE BUSINESSES SURVIVE & THRIVE

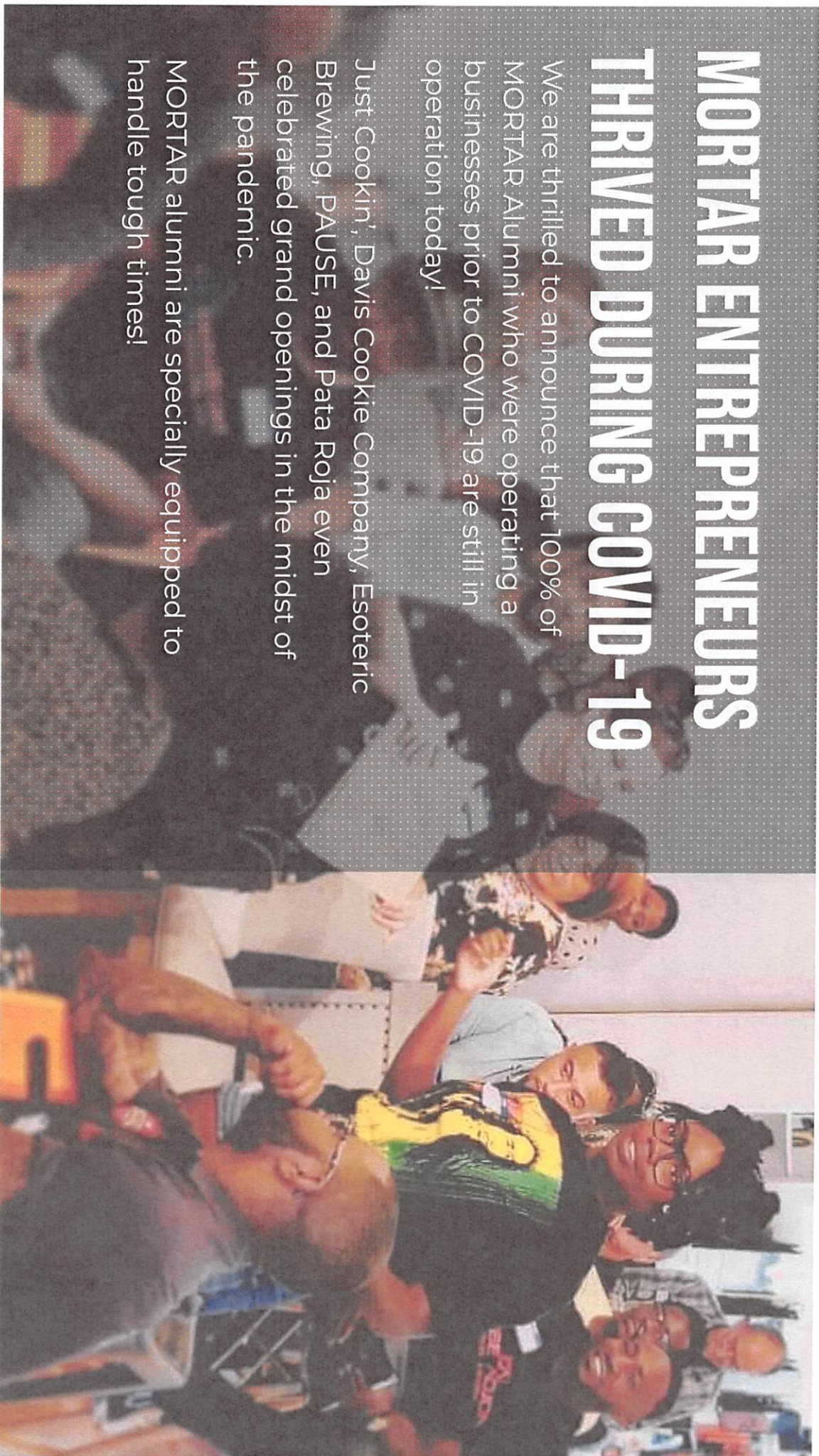
MORTAR works with historically marginalized entrepreneurs to start businesses, generate wealth and transform communities. MORTAR trains and supports entrepreneurs of color with our Entrepreneurship Academy, Alumni Program, Pop-Up Shop Spaces, and The Iron Chest Fund.

# MORTAR ENTREPRENEURS THRIVED DURING COVID-19

We are thrilled to announce that 100% of MORTAR Alumni who were operating a businesses prior to COVID-19 are still in operation today!

Just Cookin', Davis Cookie Company, Esoteric Brewing, PAUSE, and Pata Roja even celebrated grand openings in the midst of the pandemic.

MORTAR alumni are specially equipped to handle tough times!



# MORTAR STEPPED UP

At the onset of COVID-19 MORTAR activated over \$10,000 in emergency relief grants to our alumni from our Iron Chest Fund.

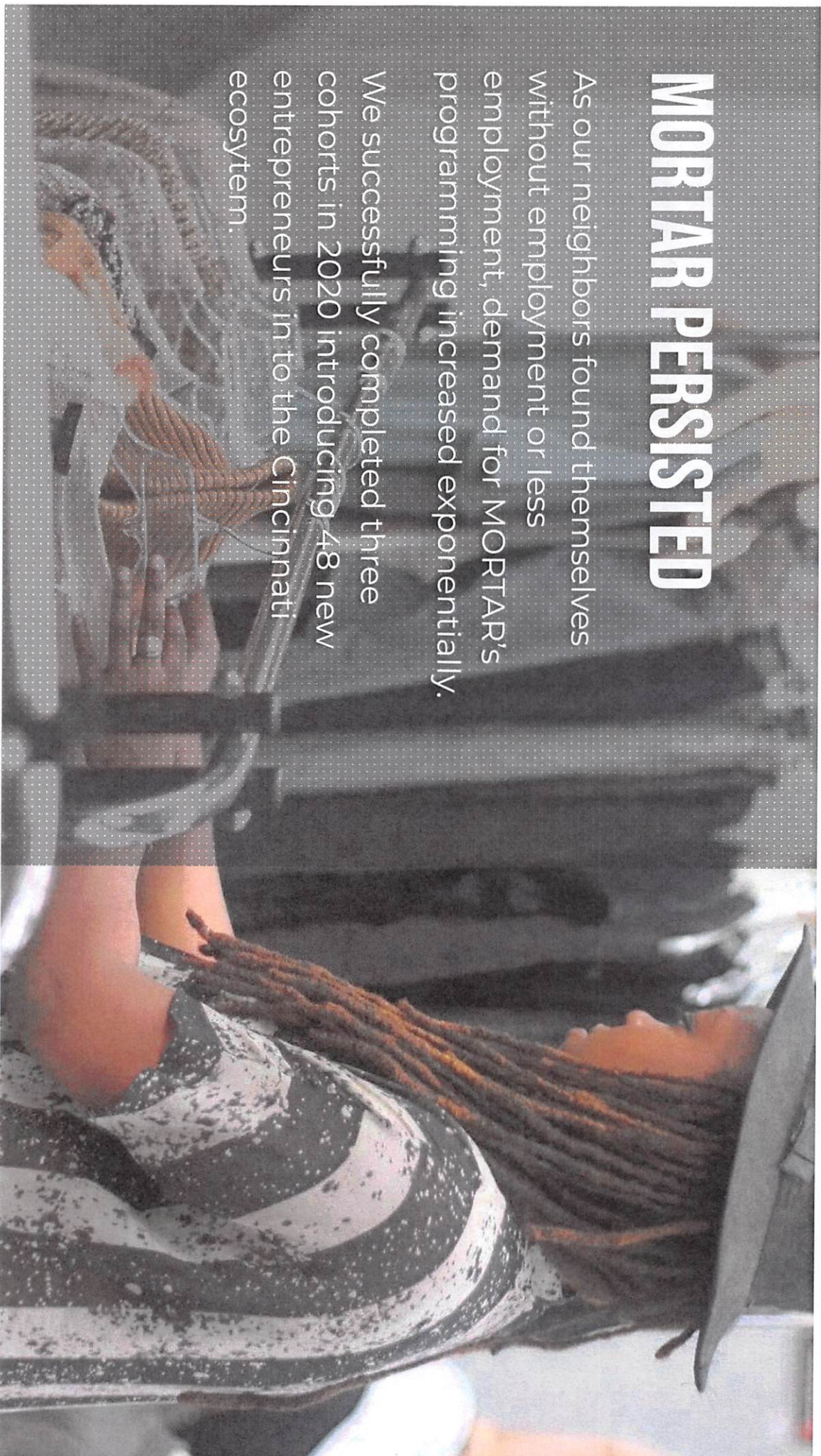
*"I'm so humbled to be a recipient of MORTAR's Covid-19 Emergency Grant. These funds will allow me to continue to move forward in my business. I'm able to continue to pay my monthly kitchen storage fees, insurance, website fees & give my employees a gift card to cover some of their grocery costs to offset the work they have missed due to the shutdown. We all know entrepreneurship is difficult but I don't think any of us could have seen this coming. The beauty of it all is, as a small business owner, to know that I have the support of MORTAR leaves me feeling confident that I will get through this trying time successfully."* Crystal Render, Magnificent Morsels Catering



# MORTAR PERSISTED

As our neighbors found themselves without employment or less employment, demand for MORTAR's programming increased exponentially.

We successfully completed three cohorts in 2020 introducing 48 new entrepreneurs in to the Cincinnati ecosystem.





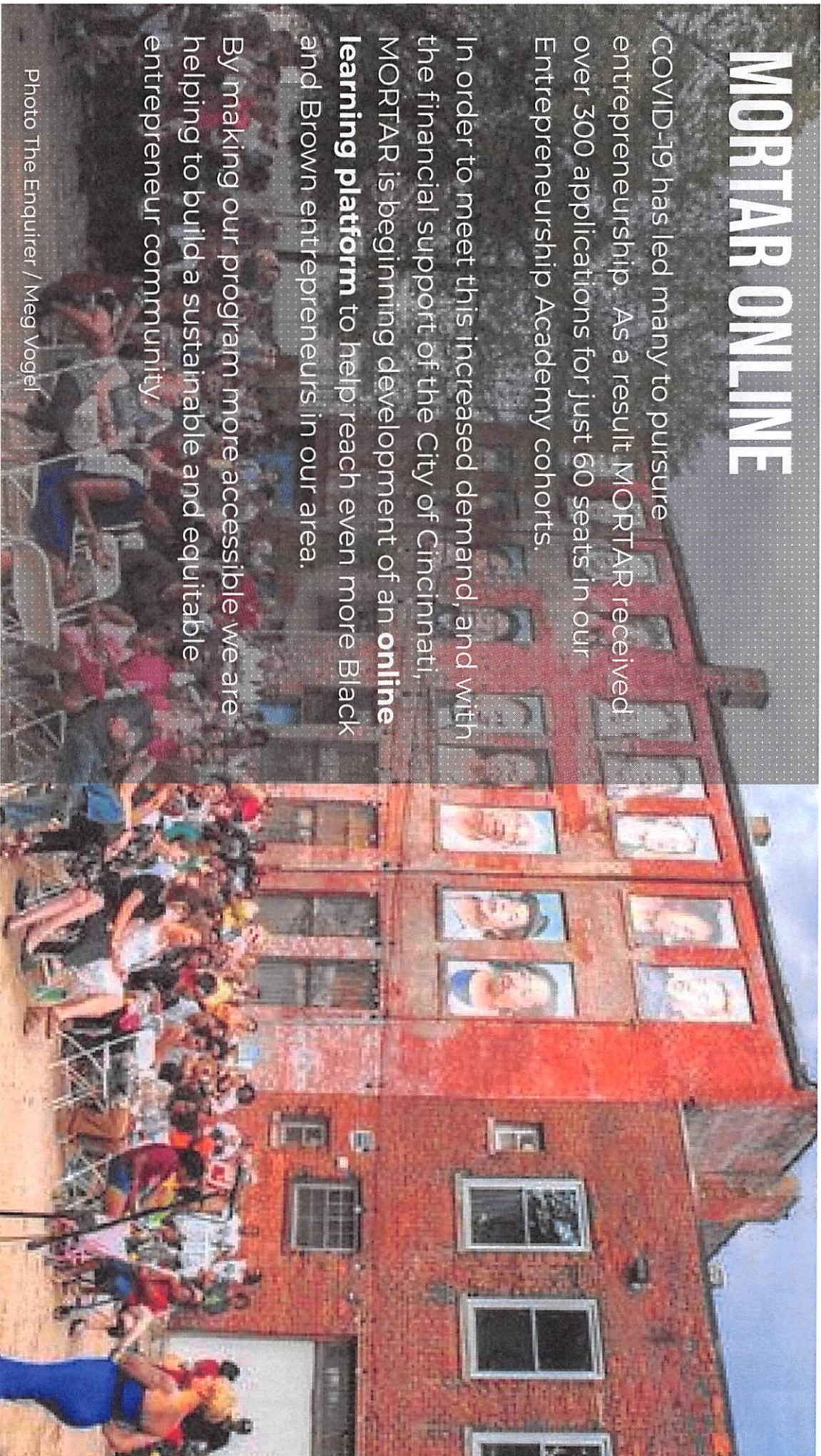
# MORTAR ONLINE

COVID-19 has led many to pursue entrepreneurship. As a result, MORTAR received over 300 applications for just 60 seats in our Entrepreneurship Academy cohorts.

In order to meet this increased demand, and with the financial support of the City of Cincinnati, MORTAR is beginning development of an **online learning platform** to help reach even more Black and Brown entrepreneurs in our area.

By making our program more accessible we are helping to build a sustainable and equitable entrepreneur community.

Photo: The Enquirer / Meg Vogel





# MORTAR HAS ALREADY DRIVEN OUTSIZED IMPACT

- We've had 306 graduates in Cincinnati alone
- We have maintained an 86% graduation rate
- In 2019, MORTAR businesses added 79 new jobs and \$4.4m in net profit (up from \$1.4m in 2018).
- We have expanded our capacity and are offering FIVE cohorts this spring to accommodate demand

**OUR PARTNERSHIP WITH THE  
CITY OF GINGINNATI  
CONTINUES TO HELP MORTAR  
INCREASE OUR GROWTH AND  
IMPACT!**

