

LOCAL ECONOMY

DEFINITION/DESCRIPTION

Growing local businesses within the city contributes to economic stability and resilience. A strong local economy is a sign that the City can support itself and become self-sufficient. The local economy serves as a catalyst in attracting or losing population, fostering job creation and, as a result, reducing crime. Producing and selling locally produced goods and services can strengthen local employment ensuring money spent within the City is kept in the City. Sustaining a strong, growing, local economy lifts the entire City.

CURRENT STATUS

Baltimore City's unemployment rate has steadily declined since hitting a high in 2010. At the end of 2016, it was at a low of 5.7%. This decline can be viewed as an indicator that the local economy is strengthening. Local initiatives to support business have gained traction. These include the Made in Baltimore Campaign, Baltimore Development Corporation's (BDC) Small Business Resource Center and its partner the Maryland Procurement and Technical Assistance Center. BDC also provides access to financing for small businesses and the Propel Baltimore Fund managed by TCP Venture Capital, makes investments in high-growth, early-stage companies willing to establish headquarters in Baltimore City. But, we can and need to do more.

EQUITY INDICATORS

The current model of economic development and extraction is not sustainable for many Baltimore neighborhoods. Money flows in but, it either does not circulate into the communities that need it the most, or it is extracted out of the city. The economic systems of how we are interpreting sustainability need to be examined. A new framework should take into account intersectional problems such as race and class. Small, local minority and women owned businesses need access to capital. Equitable practices must be expanded to support greater access to job training and quality jobs, inclusive hiring practices and advocating local and women and minority-owned businesses.

STRATEGIES

1. Proactively embrace local businesses and sustainability practices including green technologies.

Action 1 - Conduct an assessment of local economic conditions, including economic leakage and targeted sectors for future investment.

Action 2 - Adopt an economic plan to increase local production for local consumption and export. Use San Francisco's Green Streets.

Action 3 - Promote purchasing preferences for locally produced goods and services in neighborhoods, anchor institutions and the local government.

Action 4 – Promote and support the use of green technologies by local businesses.

2. Support community wealth building to strengthen communities through broader democratic ownership and control of business and jobs. Community Wealth Building develops local talents, capacities and institutions, rebuilds capital to strengthen and create local and community-owned businesses.

Action 1 - Connect entrepreneurs and business owners with lenders and investors to facilitate investment in the local economy.

Action 2 - Create and/or support promotional campaigns to bank locally, buy locally, or buy from small and independent businesses and retailers.

Action 3 – Partner with city government, anchor institutions and employers to support job growth and equitable access, especially for historically disadvantaged populations. Leverage partnerships to develop industry-led efforts that offer career laddering and advancement opportunities.

3. Increase, support and promote the number of small manufacturing businesses and minority and women owned businesses

Action 1 – Provide support services to strengthen value and develop market channels through programs, trainings and workshops to develop shared ideas and infrastructure, increased energy efficiency or use of new technologies.

Action 2 – Connect employers to trained workers.

Action 3 - Streamline city services and increase transparency.

METRICS FOR SUCCESS

Strategy 1: # of new local businesses registered annually

Strategy 2: Demonstrate that 50% of import sectors have increasing location quotients over the past 3 years

Strategy 3: Increase the total funds deposited in locally owned and operated financial institutions over time

Qualitative Improve _____ through _____