

DISTRICT BRIDGES ANNUAL REPORT

2020





FROM OUR EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Dear Friends, Neighbors, & Partners,

The core of District Bridges' mission has always been serving our community. In 2020, that took on a whole new meaning as our city, country, and world faced the crisis brought on by COVID-19. This year has been one of tremendous growth for our organization and we have continued to adapt to the ever changing environment and needs of our communities and small businesses. This crisis has only served to bring into focus the need for our work and the necessity for us to expand the reach of our mission.

In 2020, through our five Main Street programs, we were able to serve over 1,000 small businesses in Cleveland Park, Columbia Heights and Mount Pleasant, Lower Georgia Avenue, Logan Circle, and U Street. Our dedicated staff have delivered over 3,300 hours of direct technical assistance to businesses and awarded over \$220,000 in small business grants to 86 businesses. While we are proud of our impact, it is only scratching the surface of the tremendous need of small businesses across our city.

District Bridges has always been a pioneering force in our sector and this year was no different. In 2020, we were able to successfully launch Access Point, an online technical assistance platform that will enable businesses across our city to access the training and resources they need to position themselves for success. We simultaneously launched three brand new Main Street programs building trusted relationships with business owners and community partners despite the challenges of working in a digital environment.

We also completed a strategic planning process that engaged every level of the organization and resulted in the development of a theory of change that will help guide us towards achieving our ambitious goals in the years to come.

As a values driven organization, we have invested in creating a culture that believes that our work impact is an outgrowth of living out our values of relationship, inclusion, diversity, story collaboration, innovation, solution-oriented, and fun on a daily basis. As you review our 2020 Annual Report, I trust that you will see the impact that these values are having in our communities. I invite you to celebrate with us what we have achieved this year and to invest in the work that lies ahead in the coming year.

Sincerely,

Brianne Dornbush
Executive Director

ABOUT DISTRICT BRIDGES

District Bridges is a nonprofit organization with a mission to enrich neighborhood vitality by bridging community engagement and economic development opportunities so individuals, businesses, and organizations can thrive together.



District Bridges fosters equitable, resilient, connected communities in Washington, DC and beyond.

Dedicated to supporting small businesses and investing in community, District Bridges is a solution-driven advisory and execution practice centered on socially impactful community development and micro-economic growth.

As the first multi-Main Street organization in the nation, District Bridges developed a model that makes managing Main Street programs a turnkey operation. We streamline the operational setup of new programs, creating economies of scale and increasing staff capacity. Our strategic approach to community development considers the holistic needs of the city and creates solutions in collaboration with community stakeholders. District Bridges understands that every community has its own priorities, so we work side-by-side with neighborhoods to identify critical needs and leverage the community's unique skills and assets.

In early March 2020, District Bridges initiated a strategic process to develop its first Theory of Change. The process, facilitated by Compass Consulting, kicked off with an in-person meeting with all staff and a meeting with the Board to finalize the approach. That same week, the COVID-19 pandemic hit, challenging small businesses and District Bridges in unprecedented ways and requiring virtual engagement. We quickly pivoted our approach and met virtually for the next 6 months to regroup staff and board in the history of District Bridges; define vision, ultimate and intermediate outcomes, interventions, and partnerships; and further strengthen relationships across the staff and Board. To achieve our collective vision, District Bridges identified and will endeavor to achieve the following Ultimate Outcomes:

- Equitable, strengthened, and connected communities with a strong sense of place
- Sustainable and self-determined small businesses
- Human-scaled commercial corridors with vibrant, valued small businesses



Thank you for everything you do! You are an invaluable resource... business owners never get "help" for free and the fact that you guys exist makes all the difference. We feel like we have allies.
- Logan Circle business owner



OUR WORK

FY20: OCTOBER 1, 2019 - SEPTEMBER 30, 2020

MAIN STREETS

DC Main Streets is a comprehensive program funded by the Department of Small and Local Business Development (DSLBD) that promotes the revitalization of commercial districts in the District of Columbia. Created in 2002 through the National Trust for Historic Preservation, DC Main Streets serve as the citywide coordinating program that provides services and funding for the designated Main Streets programs in the District of Columbia. Unlike other DC Main Street organizations, District Bridges is one entity that manages multiple Main Street programs. Our Main Street programs include Columbia Heights | Mount Pleasant launched in 2016, Lower Georgia Avenue launched in 2017, and Cleveland Park, Logan Circle, and U Street Main Streets all launched in the fall of 2019.



ACCESS POINT

Recognizing that business needs are distinct for every owner, District Bridges and Rhode Island Avenue Main Street partnered to create Access Point. Launched in spring of 2020, this online learning platform addresses the expressed pain points for businesses across DC, including limited time for in-person workshops, comprehension difficulties caused by language barriers, need for self-paced learning, and suspension of in-person technical assistance as a result of COVID-19. Access Point makes technical assistance more accessible for the small businesses currently served by Main Streets and new businesses being formed across the city. Through Access Point, we are helping small businesses thrive and creating a more vibrant DC.



TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE

Main Street program staff are champions of providing targeted and comprehensive one-on-one technical assistance, learning sessions, and business needs workshops to the small businesses within their designated corridors. The District Bridges' model also ensures that staff have a wide array of tools to address issues including the Capital Access Program, which provides financial advice and planning specifically to business owners for whom English is a second language; the Business Preservation Assistance Program, which helps DC's culturally vital small businesses avoid displacement as neighborhoods gentrify; and the Facade Improvement Program, which provides direct and leveraged grant funds to improve and preserve our historic commercial corridors.



1,415
hours contributed to District Bridges by 206 volunteers.

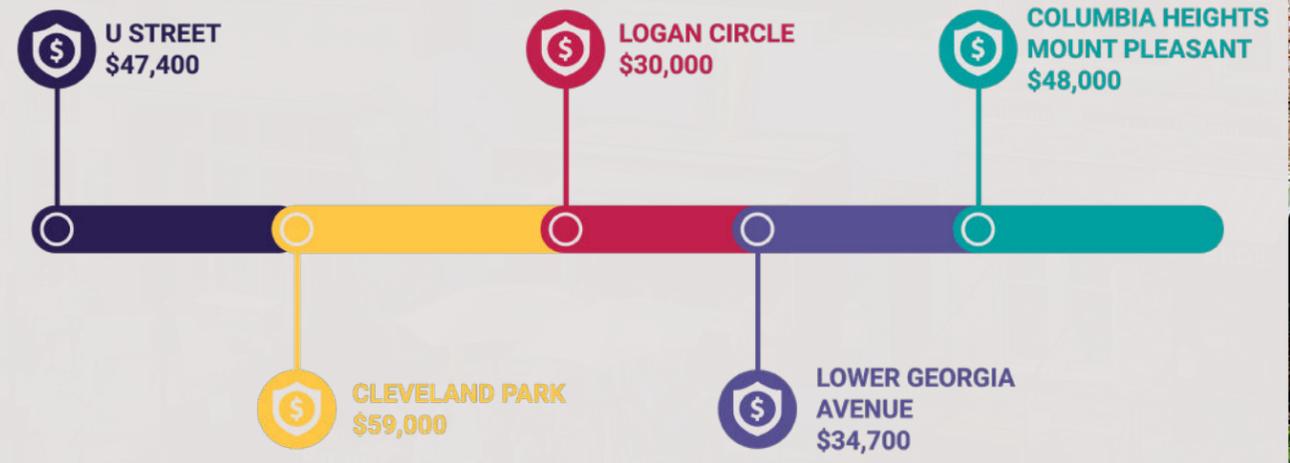
4,081
newsletter subscribers

21,138
social media followers across 16 platforms

3,324
hours of technical assistance provided to 862 businesses in nine DC neighborhoods

4
new team members

DISTRICT BRIDGES DISTRIBUTED \$220,675 TO 86 SMALL BUSINESSES IN FY20



- FOUNDED IN 2019 -

CLEVELAND PARK MAIN STREET



Cleveland Park is a walkable, people-centered historic corridor with beloved neighborhood-focused businesses.



\$59,566

CPMS distributed grants to 15 small businesses for costs including patio furniture; COVID-19 PPE; kitchen equipment repair and replacement; and an online shopping website.

COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS

CPMS was proud to partner with numerous community organizations and neighborhood groups in Cleveland Park to encourage residents to support local businesses through the COVID-19 pandemic and beyond. This past year, CPMS partnered with the Cleveland and Woodley Park Village, Woodley Park Main Street, and DC Library's Cleveland Park branch to host seven Tuesday Talks, a speaker series featuring some of the neighborhood's most fascinating residents. Additionally, CPMS partnered with the Cleveland Park Citizens Association to design, print, and install 30 signs encouraging residents to wear a mask and practice social distancing while supporting small businesses by shopping and dining.



BY THE NUMBERS

61 **2**

businesses served new businesses

498 **350**

technical assistance hours provided hours provided by 23 volunteers

EVENTS

- Tuesday Talks
- Art All Night
- Introducing CPMS with URBAN MAIN
- Cleveland Park Farmers Market
- Mayor's PPE Outreach

- FOUNDED IN 2016 -

COLUMBIA HEIGHTS MOUNT PLEASANT MAIN STREET



What makes Columbia Heights and Mount Pleasant unique? Diverse residents, lots of food options, and unique retail.



\$48,932

CHMPMS distributed grants to 35 small businesses for costs including equipment purchase, A/C repairs, COVID-19 support (rent and utilities payments), and streatery support (fence rentals, outdoor furniture, etc.)

SUPPORTING SPANISH - SPEAKING BUSINESS OWNERS

For businesses to remain competitive in the market and take advantage of new clientele, they must adapt to new conditions. One of the biggest barriers for businesses in adapting is accessing capital, and for minority-owned businesses there are additional challenges. In partnership with the Mayor's Office on Latino Affairs (MOLA), District Bridges developed the Latino Small Business Capital Access Program (CAP) which aims to advise and support Spanish-speaking businesses in accessing the capital needed to support their business development goals. Through this program, CHMPMS helped Spanish-speaking businesses secure over \$81,000 in government grant funds in FY20.



BY THE NUMBERS

244

businesses served

8

new businesses

1,430

technical assistance
hours provided

215

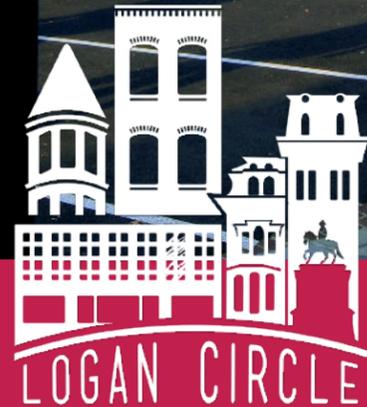
hours provided by
30 volunteers

EVENTS

- Book Festival
- Lighting Extravaganza
- Fiesta del Barrio
- Small Business Saturday
- Outdoor Yoga
- Sweat DC workout
- Virtual Yoga

- FOUNDED IN 2019 -

LOGAN CIRCLE MAIN STREET



Logan Circle is a neighborhood of charming, well-preserved Victorian homes with stylish decor stores, hip restaurants, gay bars, and craft beer pubs.



\$30,000

LCMS distributed grants to 10 small businesses for costs including COVID-19 emergency relief, a new refrigerator, new window, lighting, and signs.

STREATERIES FOR BUSINESSES

Profit margins are thin in the restaurant business in the best of times and these times certainly aren't the best. Under Phase II, DC allowed restaurants to re-open at 50% capacity for seated patrons with tables placed at least 6 feet apart. However, this doesn't take into account that many restaurants couldn't reach 50% capacity and people were reluctant to eat indoors - thus the "streatery" was born. In June 2020, the District's Department of Transportation began allowing restaurants to convert sidewalk space, alleys, and parking and travel lanes into outdoor seating. Since then, LCMS helped 25 restaurants create 12 streateries along the corridor, including applying and managing permits, covering equipment costs, and promoting the open businesses.



BY THE NUMBERS

179

businesses served

3

new businesses

336

technical assistance
hours provided

390

hours provided by
15 volunteers

EVENTS

Introducing LCMS with URBAN MAIN
Dog Days of Summer
Virtual Sidewalk Sale

- FOUNDED IN 2017 -

LOWER GEORGIA AVENUE MAIN STREET



Lower Georgia Avenue Main Street serves the Parkview, Petworth, and Pleasant Plains communities, known for their legacy and immigrant-owned businesses, active residential community, and historic homes.



\$34,700

LGAMS distributed grants to 13 small businesses for costs including legal support, COVID-19 rent relief, signage and exterior improvements.

DC OPEN STREETS

On Saturday, October 5, 2019, Mayor Muriel Bowser, the DC Department of Transportation, and District Bridges partnered on DC Open Streets, which drew over 35,000 people to Georgia Avenue throughout the event. DC Open Streets, which spanned nearly three miles along Georgia Avenue, featured interactive activities led by dozens of District government agencies, small businesses, and sponsors, including bike and scooter demonstrations, free bike repairs, an obstacle course, fitness classes, as well as other educational programming and entertainment.



BY THE NUMBERS

195

businesses served

12

new businesses

713

technical assistance hours provided

420

hours provided by 120 volunteers

EVENTS

- Open Streets
- Holiday Lights
- Chili Cook-Off
- Virtual Salsa Dancing Class

- FOUNDED IN 2019 -

U STREET MAIN STREET



U Street, known as the Black Broadway, is steeped in history, creativity, and energy boasting a blend of legacy and new businesses.

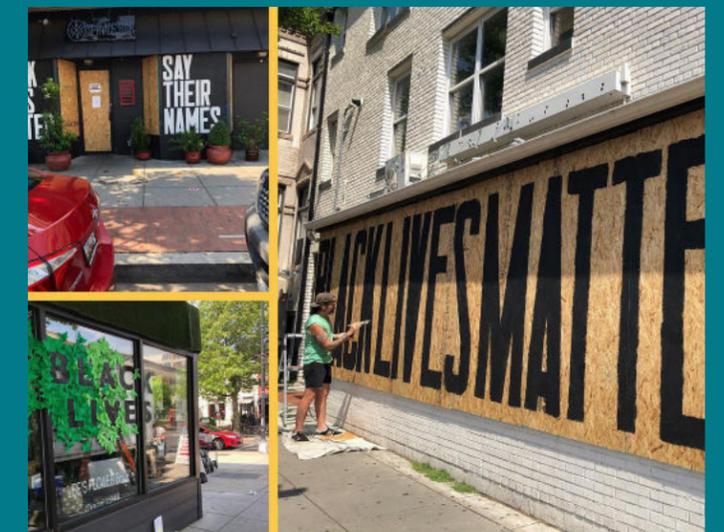


\$47,477

USMS distributed grants to 13 small businesses for costs including kitchen upgrades, exterior signage, PPE, and rent relief related to COVID-19.

BLACK LIVES MATTER

In June 2020, USMS was proud to sponsor the "Million Moe March," commemorating Juneteenth and highlighting the work of local organizations addressing racial equity. Long Live GoGo, local DC GoGo bands, representatives from DC organizations, social service providers, and other DC community leaders joined together for this historic march. The "Million Moe March" ended at the intersection of 14th & U Street with live music, speeches, and more.



BY THE NUMBERS

183

businesses served

4

new businesses

348

technical assistance
hours provided

40

hours provided by
8 volunteers

EVENTS

- Introducing USMS with URBAN MAIN
- Juneteenth March
- Virtual Bartending Class

OUR TEAM

FY20: OCTOBER 1, 2019 - SEPTEMBER 30, 2020



STAFF

Brianne Dornbush
Executive Director

Madeleine Odendahl
Director of Operations

Carolina Buitrago
Main Street Director, Columbia Heights Mount Pleasant

Jennifer Kuiper
Main Street Director, Lower Georgia Avenue

Michele Molotsky
Main Street Manager, Logan Circle

Sheika Reid
Main Street Manager, U Street

Zach Rybarczyk
Main Street Manager, Cleveland Park

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Andy Steinem
Board Chair

Evette Banfield
Vice Chair

Jim Steck
Treasurer

Liz Furgurson
Secretary

Meghan Pazmino

Hugo Mongollon

Ellen Patton

Adrian Washington

I wanted to express our sincerest gratitude to you for championing our business. We truly could not have done this without your support.
- Lower Georgia Avenue business owner



District Bridges is making connections across DC neighborhoods to better support small businesses and share what works.
- Cleveland Park community member

FINANCIALS

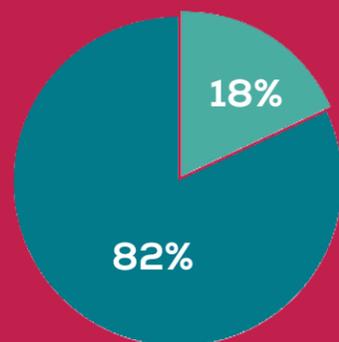
ASSETS

Total Current Assets	\$170,659.13
Total Fixed Assets	\$10,466.90
Total Other Assets	\$6,295.02
Total Assets	\$187,421.05

LIABILITY & EQUITY

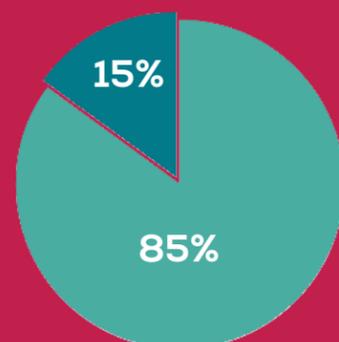
Total Current Liabilities	\$206,736.82
Total Long-term Liabilities	\$47,000.00
Total Equity	\$ -66,315.77
Total Liabilities and Equity	\$187,421.05

Revenues



● Revenue from Government Grants
● Earned Revenue and Direct Contributions

Expenses



● Administrative and Supporting Services
● Programming

DONORS

\$10,000 +

City First Enterprises Inc. and Wells Fargo
DC Department of Small and Local Business Development
DC Department of Transportation
Greater Washington Community Foundation
Mayor's Office on Community Affairs
Mayor's Office on Latino Affairs

\$5,000-\$9,999

Federal Realty
Lime

\$1,000-\$4,999

Adrian Washington
Avis Budget Car Rental, LLC
Robert Ward
City First Bank
Cleveland Park Citizens Association
Coldwell Banker Residential Brokerage
Dahl-Morrow International
DC Government
Elizabeth Furgurson
Ellen Patton
Fabrizio Ward, LLC
Garners Produce
MRP Realty
RY CPA

\$500-\$999

Adams Morgan BID
Ane Powers
Arif LLC
Bill & Becky Dornbush
Downtown BID
Dupont Circle BID
Evette Banfield
Felice Friedman
Golden Triangle BID
Guild International
LEDC
Lenda Washington
Queen's English
Salt and Pepper Grill
Cheese Goatees
Cold Country Salmon
Cracked Eggery
Via Volcan
Kuhn Orchards, LLC



We asked our stakeholders how they would describe District Bridges and they said...



THANK YOU TO EVERYONE WHO SUPPORTED OUR WORK DURING THIS CHALLENGING YEAR.

WHAT'S NEXT?

ADDRESSING RACIAL EQUITY

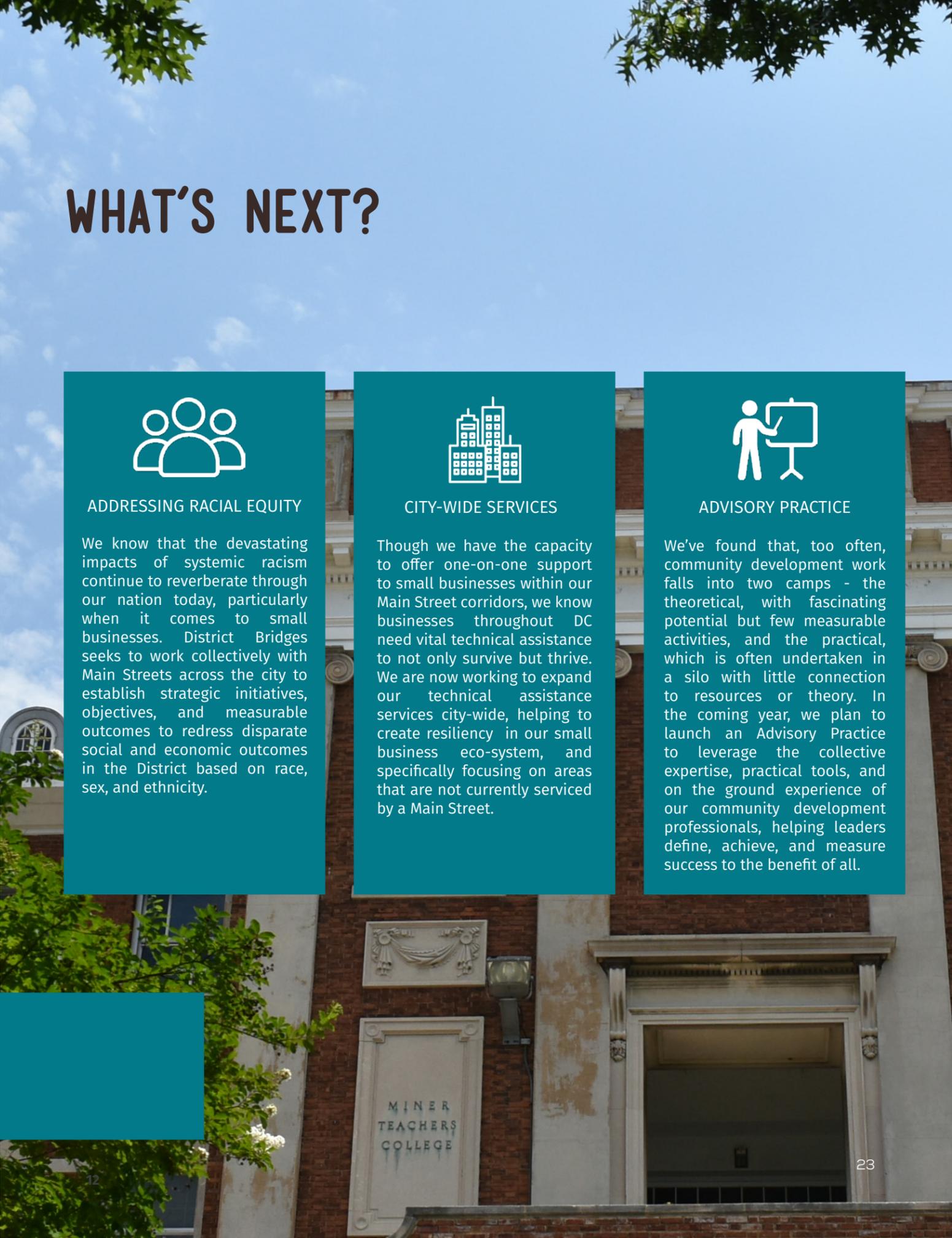
We know that the devastating impacts of systemic racism continue to reverberate through our nation today, particularly when it comes to small businesses. District Bridges seeks to work collectively with Main Streets across the city to establish strategic initiatives, objectives, and measurable outcomes to redress disparate social and economic outcomes in the District based on race, sex, and ethnicity.

CITY-WIDE SERVICES

Though we have the capacity to offer one-on-one support to small businesses within our Main Street corridors, we know businesses throughout DC need vital technical assistance to not only survive but thrive. We are now working to expand our technical assistance services city-wide, helping to create resiliency in our small business eco-system, and specifically focusing on areas that are not currently serviced by a Main Street.

ADVISORY PRACTICE

We've found that, too often, community development work falls into two camps - the theoretical, with fascinating potential but few measurable activities, and the practical, which is often undertaken in a silo with little connection to resources or theory. In the coming year, we plan to launch an Advisory Practice to leverage the collective expertise, practical tools, and on the ground experience of our community development professionals, helping leaders define, achieve, and measure success to the benefit of all.





3400 11th Street NW #200
Washington, DC 20010

INVESTING IN COMMUNITY +
SUPPORTING LOCAL BUSINESS

www.districtbridges.org
[@districtbridges](https://twitter.com/districtbridges)