

MANUFACTURING'S EMERGING PARTNERS

**Faith-Informed Organizations
Supporting Employment and
Entrepreneurship**



**Urban
Manufacturing
Alliance**

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

3	Introduction
4	Organizations Interviewed
5	Where Faith and Manufacturing Meet
7	The Role of Faith-Based and Faith-Informed Organizations
8	Skills Development
12	Wraparound Services
16	Workspace
19	Advocacy and Outreach
21	Conclusion
22	Ecosystem Map

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Introduction

In cities where we're seeing renewed opportunity in urban manufacturing, faith-based and faith-informed organizations are emerging as partners or connectors between the manufacturing sector and communities. These organizations, driven by a mission to end poverty, are becoming critical partners to inclusive manufacturing growth.

The role of faith-based and faith-informed organizations in linking their communities with new opportunities in the manufacturing sector is wide-ranged and shaped based on the organization's capacities, needs of the community they care for, and the manufacturing landscape specific to the region. Some organizations partner with manufacturers to provide health services for employees while others have developed in-house training programs to help individuals obtain the skills they need to join the workforce or achieve their entrepreneurial goals. Whatever role faith-based and faith-informed organizations play, what unites their work is the consensus that manufacturing offers the opportunity for stable employment and the understanding that when serving vulnerable populations, wraparound services to help them overcome barriers to employment and remain employed are crucial to give them the greatest chance to succeed. This understanding is where faith and manufacturing meet.

The Urban Manufacturing Alliance's Equity and Inclusion Community of Practice (CoP) engages a network of manufacturing practitioners committed to connecting the growth of the production economy to an equity and inclusion agenda in cities. The work of the CoP is a mix of ecosystem building, storytelling,

and policy development that showcases promising practices and programs that are harnessing the power of manufacturing and drives this work forward in local communities. This thought-piece explores the role of faith-based and faith-informed organizations in the manufacturing sector and aims to encourage discussions on how manufacturing practitioners and faith-based and faith-informed organizations can work together towards the common goal of reducing economic disparities.

Six organizations based in Pittsburgh, Nashville, Cleveland, Cincinnati, Detroit, and Chicago are featured in this thought-piece. Of the six organizations, two are faith-based or faith-informed organizations with in-house workforce development programs. Three are community-based organizations and the last is a manufacturer who partners with faith-based organizations. All four deliver health, career readiness, and financial education services; provide access to affordable space or transportation; or serve as advocates. A background of each organization interviewed is presented on the following page.

The discussions with the six organizations were held before the COVID-19 pandemic and therefore do not reflect the changes that may have occurred as organizations refocused their attention and resources to meet the pressing needs that have arisen from the health crisis. However, the partnerships that have developed between the manufacturing industry and faith-based and faith-informed organizations can provide inspiration for how both can be allies with the most marginalized communities.

Organizations Interviewed

1 Catholic Charities of Tennessee

Nashville, TN

Catholic Charities of Tennessee provides human services to enhance and enrich the quality of life for people in need. Annually they serve over 11,000 clients in a variety of ways. Their major areas of service include adoptions and parental support, refugee and immigration services, counseling, senior services, and workforce development.

3 Eastern Market

Detroit, MI

Detroit Kitchen Connect, an Eastern Market Corporation program, provides reliable spaces for local entrepreneurs to process high-quality food products in a diverse and collaborative community environment. In collaboration with local partners, they seek to make kitchens more accessible and turn neighborhoods into food entrepreneurship hubs.

2 East End Cooperative Ministry

Pittsburgh, PA

East End Cooperative Ministry is an interfaith human services organization serving the East End of Pittsburgh. They feed the hungry, shelter the homeless, help to break the cycles of dependence on social services, and nurture and encourage at-risk children and youth in their community.

4 Manufacturing Renaissance

Chicago, IL

Manufacturing Renaissance was founded in 1982 to address the wide-scale loss of jobs in Chicagoland. Their advocacy, community engagement, and education initiatives serve to develop an educational and economic infrastructure that meets the needs of both the manufacturing sector and communities.

5 Manufacturing Works

Cleveland, OH

For 30 years, Manufacturing Works has been a leading force in strengthening manufacturing in greater Greater Cleveland. They provide expertise and resources that proactively assist manufacturers in understanding and adapting to fast changing trends in technology, talent, and organizational leadership.

6 Nehemiah Manufacturing

Cincinnati, OH

Nehemiah Manufacturing is a purpose driven manufacturer focused on building a profitable business that will bring employment, investment, and hope to the inner-city of Cincinnati. Nehemiah partners with companies to license/acquire small brands, innovate new concepts, and contract manufacture products to achieve their mission.

Where Faith and Manufacturing Meet

“When the jobs go, churches rise because people need hope,” says David Robinson, External Affairs Director at Manufacturing Renaissance. In Chicago, the church plays a significant role in the Latinx and Black communities in the Southside and Westside of the City and South suburbs. In these neighborhoods, it cultivates strong social connections and a sense of collective identity. The church also provides significant aid for families in need, from food assistance to counseling for students and after-school care. While these services are pivotal, many faith-based and faith-informed organizations realize the services are not necessarily transformative.

“Moving somebody from really bad poverty into not quite as bad poverty isn’t enough,” says Reverend Kellie Wild, former IMPACTS Program Director



East End Cooperative Ministry

at East End Cooperative Ministry in Pittsburgh. If the ultimate goal is to move people out of poverty completely, to change their situation that led to homelessness and become self-sufficient, “income acquisition and employment is a big part of that for many people.”

A 2018 research report published by the Century Foundation and the University of Illinois at Chicago’s Great Cities Institute found that there were over 58,000 manufacturing job postings¹ in the Chicago region between April 2017 to March

¹ Córdova, Teresa L . Stettner, Andrew. Wilson, Matthew D. (2018). Revitalizing Manufacturing and Expanding Opportunities for Chicago’s Black and Latino Communities. Retrieved from: <https://greatcities.uic.edu/2018/06/06/revitalizing-manufacturing-and-expanding-opportunities-for-chicagos-black-and-latino-communities/>

2018, more than all but three sectors. Within that period, there were two manufacturing jobs for every hire and 16,000 unfilled openings in front-line production occupations that did not require more than a high school degree as formal education. Manufacturing is a viable industry and so are the opportunities in manufacturing.

On a national level, manufacturing jobs continue to provide above-average wages. Among workers without a four-year college degree, manufacturing workers earn \$150 more per week than in other industries.² In a recent report published by the Economic Policy Institute, the manufacturing industry continues to play a vital role in generating indirect jobs, beating out other industries often championed for fueling a thriving urban economy such as wholesale and retail trade, finance and insurance, and accommodation and food services.³

These quality jobs with low barriers to entry have convinced faith-based and faith-informed organizations that manufacturing is the strongest and most effective way to reshape struggling communities. As a result, these organizations are developing ways to make manufacturing jobs more accessible.

“If beer was the thing that could change communities, we’d be pushing beer,” says Robinson. “We find manufacturing, based on our research, is by far the best tool to catalyze communities.” In 2017, Manufacturing Renaissance formed Ministers for Manufacturing, a committee

that advocates for training and job placement by serving as ambassadors in communities where manufacturing has been off the radar or has few connections to the industry. The Committee, which now stands 60 members strong, is motivated by the prospect that dignified work in manufacturing will reduce violence among youth and lead them on the pathway to earn a middle-class income.

When Reverend Wild joined the East End Cooperative Ministry (EECM) in Pittsburgh eight years ago, the faith-informed organization was providing shelter and free meals to families and adults but was not addressing the causes that lead to homelessness. During her tenure, EECM began offering training programs for people facing barriers to employment. Sew Forward, one of the training programs designed to help people learn the skills to be able to work any sewing job, is largely attended by unemployed immigrants and refugees with extremely limited language skills. EECM’s programs work in unison. Individuals are able to focus on enhancing their skills in the training programs without having to worry about their next meal or finding a place to stay.

Providing access to opportunities in manufacturing fulfills the mission of faith-based and faith-informed organizations. To help individuals gain independence and build wealth is the spirit behind the movement of these organizations as they become emerging partners in the growth of the manufacturing sector.

2 McCormack, Michael. Stettner, Andrew. Yudken, Joel S. (2017), “Why Manufacturing Jobs Are Worth Saving.” Retrieved from: <https://tcf.org/content/report/manufacturing-jobs-worth-saving/?session=1>

3 Bivens, Josh. Economic Policy Institute. (2019). “Updated Employment Multipliers for the U.S. Economy.” Retrieved from: <https://www.epi.org/publication/updated-employment-multipliers-for-the-u-s-economy/>

The Role of Faith-Based and Faith-Informed Organizations

Based on the six organizations interviewed, the role of faith-based and faith-informed organizations can be outlined in four categories:

Skills Development

Workshops and curricula to train individuals or enhance their skills to qualify for a manufacturing job or pursue entrepreneurship.

Wraparound Services

Services that support employee well-being. This includes remedial support, rehab programs, soft skills, health and wellness, and transportation assistance.

Workspace

Renting underutilized buildings and places to provide affordable and accessible workspace.

Advocacy and Outreach

Serving as ambassadors in their communities to advocate for manufacturing training and job placement.

While an organization's role can span across multiple categories on the following pages, their primary role was used to determine in which category they are presented. Each category introduces the organizations that provide or receive that support, discusses how the partnerships formed, and defines how the organizations

determine success. A visual summary at the end maps out the relationship between the organizations interviewed and their partners. The summary captures the dynamic connections between faith-based and faith-informed organizations and their manufacturing allies and the ecosystem of support.

Skills Development

Featuring the work of East End Cooperative Ministry in Pittsburgh and Catholic Charities of Tennessee in Nashville

Before offering workforce development training programs, East End Cooperative Ministry (EECM) and Catholic Charities of Tennessee ran their own job readiness programs for the unemployed and underemployed in Pittsburgh and Nashville, respectively. Refugees, for instance, received English language and financial literacy training to learn how to hold their first job in Nashville. Similarly, Pittsburgh residents in EECM's housing programs, who have struggled throughout their lives with barriers such as mental health issues, substance use disorders, chronic poverty, and incarceration, participated in conflict resolution, interviewing, and computer literacy workshops as part of the Work Therapy program. The idea for creating a workforce development training program alongside the support services offerings came from learning about employer needs within the region. The

opportunity to establish an in-house program was made possible through local partnerships that provided essential support in funding, curriculum development, marketing, and outreach.

The Sewing Training Academy at Catholic Charities of Tennessee was the idea of Van Tucker, a fashion industry veteran and the former CEO of the Nashville Fashion Alliance. She recognized the need for more commercial sewing machine operators and sought an organization that could supply a pipeline of skilled workers for factories and local fashion brands. Catholic Charities of Tennessee became the Nashville Fashion Alliance's partner and agreed to house the program because the organization would be able to provide another pathway to connect refugees and immigrants to available, living wage jobs. They also had the infrastructure from a previous sewing contract as part of their job readiness program and the ability to receive grants from Frist Foundation, the Memorial Foundation, and numerous private donors to fund it. The Nashville Fashion Alliance offered a support role, referring employers and students to the program when it launched and selecting Trishawna



East End Cooperative Ministry

Quincy to run the academy and screen applicants. “I start everyone at the beginning [in Level I Foundations] regardless if they have experience or not,” says Quincy. “That allows me to assess where people are at because a lot of people are self-taught and may not be familiar with the commercial techniques of the trade. You don’t know what you don’t know so everybody starts at the beginning.”

The classes at the Sewing Training Academy are designed as building blocks but Quincy will weave in supplemental courses on knitwear and alterations into the schedule to keep the curriculum engaging and current. Recently, she finished teaching her new Production Intensive Course for machine operators, which was developed by Deborah Vandermar of The Makers Coalition (predecessor to the Industrial Sewing and Innovation Center). Trishawna was introduced to Deborah at the Urban Manufacturing Alliance’s Sewn Trades Collective meeting at their 2017 Seattle Gathering. The success of the Sewing Training Academy has prompted Catholic Charities of Tennessee to expand their training programs to include hospitality, banking, and culinary, which was launched Fall 2019.

Sew Forward was the latest program to be incorporated into EECM’s employment training after acquiring a sewing project from the Pittsburgh Opera. Four years ago, the Pittsburgh Opera invited



participants to their headquarters for a four-week program where they learned sewing techniques and the fundamentals of costume design from Pittsburgh Opera’s wardrobe staff. Some of the participants came from EECM’s housing program. When the Pittsburgh Opera decided not to run the program a second time, the Richard King Mellon Foundation asked EECM if they wanted to take it over and offered a grant to launch the program. EECM converted a classroom into a sewing studio, purchased top-of-the-line JUKI sewing machines, and hired a sewing instructor. Since Sew Forward launched in early 2017, EECM formalized their program and now offers apprenticeships.

Over 300 students in Tennessee completed the Sewing Training Academy in the past five years, but the success of the program hinges on the placement of graduates into jobs. For many students, that’s a job at a local company where Catholic Charities of Tennessee has established

relationships with owners who will recruit students. Sew Forward also has a job placement component and EECM is proud of their 80% job placement rate across their training programs. In addition to placing their students in jobs with local employers, EECM hires their students to work on small batch manufacturing projects in their studio.

When Sew Forward was added to EECM's Workforce programs, Carole Bailey, President & CEO of EECM, recognized the opportunity to morph into the production side of manufacturing as a way to self-sustain the program while employing people with employment barriers. There was also a need for small-batch manufacturing in Pittsburgh, and the maker community was eager to support EECM's mission by commissioning Sew Forward for their sewing projects. KLoRebel Art Co. contracted Sew Forward to produce pillowcases with the owner Kirsten Lowe-Rebel's architectural art. PupCycled exclusively uses Sew Forward to produce their dog sweaters made from upcycled human clothes that would have otherwise gone to landfill. Bridgeway Capital, a Community Development Financial Institution based in Pittsburgh, has been instrumental in helping EECM grow the production business by connecting them to businesses seeking sewing services.

While Sew Forward and the Sewing Training Academy were originally created to place students in manufacturing jobs, employment in the manufacturing industry can also entail pursuing entrepreneurship. Catholic Charities of Tennessee and EECM are supporting students who want to pursue that career path too.

"People come to us wanting to sew but they have different goals," says Quincy. "There are people who are in the vein of wanting a job in manufacturing and that's straightforward. They need the skills to be able to get that job or feel confident in applying for that job. There are also people whose goal is more on the creative end and want to create a product but they aren't able to attend fashion school because they can't afford it."

Catholic Charities of Tennessee and EECM continuously enhance their programs, helping students apply the skills they learned to achieve their personal goals. They also leverage their community partners to open new opportunities for their students. Both organizations are not just increasing access to manufacturing jobs, they are expanding opportunities in the manufacturing sector.

In 2019, Catholic Charities of Tennessee hosted SewPOP for the first time, a fundraiser for the Sewing Training Academy and a marketplace that featured twelve new student vendors and thirteen established student businesses. The twelve new student vendors worked on their branding and created at least one product to sell at the event held in the backyard of Imogene + Willie, a local denim store that was the Sewing Training Academy's production partner for the Level 1 course. SewPOP became a catalyst for students to start a business and through this event, Quincy continues to mentor her students after they graduate from the Academy. Trishawna hopes to host SewPOP again to encourage more students to launch their own business or at least begin thinking in that direction.

Over the years, the Sewing Training Academy's and Sew Forward's successes have shown that reaching hard-to-hire and unemployed individuals and placing them in manufacturing jobs build household income and community wealth. Despite these successes, Catholic Charities of Tennessee and EECM acknowledge the growing pains of their programs. One of the biggest challenges is finding a balance between supporting the programs financially and keeping them affordable.

The Sewing Training Academy initially priced their courses at a low cost of \$150 but now has a sliding scale fee to accommodate individuals at different income levels, and continues to subsidize the program. Sew Forward offers their training at no cost. However, EECM believes that individuals are still deterred from enrolling because trainees experience a loss of income during the training period, which is difficult to accept when they rely on every paycheck.

"People have a desire to work but it can be very hard when they're living in poverty and don't have a reliable form of transportation and they can't afford a bus pass," says Reverend Kellie. "Sometimes people can't show up for work on time. There are many reasons why things don't work out and it's nobody's fault - it's just the nature of the difficulties that the people we are working with face."

EECM hopes that through additional funding they will be able to offer paid training in the future and consequently improve recruitment. In the meantime,

"PEOPLE HAVE A DESIRE TO WORK BUT IT CAN BE VERY HARD WHEN THEY'RE LIVING IN POVERTY AND DON'T HAVE A RELIABLE FORM OF TRANSPORTATION AND THEY CAN'T AFFORD A BUS PASS"

EECM, like Catholic Charities of Tennessee, is able to alleviate some of the difficulties people living in poverty encounter that impede their job performance by providing basic necessities.

In addition to EECM's housing services, which include emergency shelter and permanent housing, the nonprofit organizes in-school and afterschool programs for youth, and runs a food pantry that feeds 400 families a month. Though those supportive services, "we take care of folks so they can focus on their job," says Bailey.

EECM and Catholic Charities of Tennessee are steering individuals into manufacturing jobs by taking on the roles of trainer and employer because they believe that manufacturing presents an opportunity to obtain steady employment. Coupled with their support services, the organizations are helping individuals sustain their employment and progress towards self-sufficiency. Human service organizations like EECM and Catholic Charities of Tennessee understand how to best provide and deliver services to vulnerable populations, which also makes them ideal partners for mission-driven manufacturers who want to hire hard-to-hire individuals. The following section describes two examples where manufacturers have partnered with faith-based and faith-informed organizations to deliver support services to their employees.

Wraparound Services

Featuring the work of Nehemiah Manufacturing in Cincinnati and Manufacturing Works in Cleveland

Nehemiah Manufacturing got the idea to hire second chance employees from their partners, City Gospel Mission and Cincinnati Works, who help the working poor and individuals out of work obtain employment through their job readiness programs. The organizations approached Nehemiah Manufacturing and asked if they would hire someone with a felony, because if Nehemiah Manufacturing wouldn't, no one else would either.

Nehemiah Manufacturing partners with companies to license or acquire small brands and runs the marketing, sales, R&D, manufacturing, and logistics in return for a royalty payment. The company got its start with a license from Procter and Gamble for Pampers Kandoo, a toddler line of flushable wipes and personal care products, and has since worked with Tide, Downy, Febreze, and other established

household brands. The name, Nehemiah, is a reference to a prophet called by God to rebuild Jerusalem, one stone and brick at a time. The story exemplifies Nehemiah Manufacturing's mission to help change lives, one person and one day at a time in the neighborhoods of Cincinnati.

Staying true to their mission, Nehemiah Manufacturing started by hiring one second chance employee for every two employees from the general population. "We quickly found out they are the most dedicated and are the ones that needed, wanted, and most importantly, deserved, a second chance," says Dan Meyer, CEO of Nehemiah Manufacturing.

When Meyer started the company, he believed employment was enough to fulfill its mission. But as he began hiring second chance employees, he noticed that Nehemiah Manufacturing was having a difficult time retaining them. "They'd be with us for a while, work hard, and we'd lose them," says



Meyer. His “aha” moment came after speaking with individuals and nonprofits experienced in helping job seekers overcome barriers to employment. “We had the right objectives and vision. We had the right strategies. We didn’t have the right organizational structure to accomplish what we needed to do.”

Nehemiah Manufacturing sought to identify the obstacles second-chance employees faced that disrupted their ability to be on time and productive. They hired a social worker who revealed a range of needs including affordable housing, daycare, transportation, legal support, financial wellness, and physical health and wellness. These became the pillars of support offered at the company.

“We’re a town that is very philanthropic,” says Meyer. “But it has got to be beyond the handouts. You have to get people to be self-sufficient, to feel good about themselves. It starts with having a job, having a purpose. But along the journey you realize it’s much bigger than just a job, there’s all this wraparound support.” Nehemiah Manufacturing has three full-time social workers that work alongside 130 second-chance employees out of their 180-strong workforce. The second-chance employees who have joined the team extend beyond people with felonies. The company hires people who have been in and out of drug rehab, with gaps in their employment history, and who have been homeless – people on the fringe that companies tend to shy away from hiring.

Nehemiah Manufacturing developed a support system comprised of 20 to 30 nonprofit organizations, where the company provides monthly contributions to the organizations or are

major sponsors for their fundraisers. In return, the organizations deliver services to their employees. City Gospel Mission provides rehabilitation for individuals who are overcoming substance abuse; Wheels at Crossroads Church offers free used cars; Bloc Ministries sends their trainers to teach physical fitness at Nehemiah Manufacturing’s fitness center; CityLink provides job readiness support; and New Life Furniture Bank delivers gently used furniture for free or at a very reduced cost. Those are just a few of the ministries with whom Nehemiah Manufacturing partners. Their key supporters also include Freestore Food Bank, a food pantry employees can access on a more frequent basis; Education Matters, an adult education school that develops custom programs for individuals with levels of education attainment ranging from fourth grade to one year of college; Cincinnati Works, an employment procurement assistance and job training organization that provides career coaching; Santa Maria Community Services, an agency partner of United Way that offers free financial education; and the Talbert House, a nonprofit network of social services that provides mental health services.

Through these expansive services, Nehemiah Manufacturing is not only improving their employees’ job performance but helping them through their journey of life, which is why Meyer prefers to use the term family members instead of employees, “They’re not just here for eight hours. “I want to know everything about them, what challenges their kids have, what gets in their way of accomplishing greatness, because everybody has that. You just kind of have to remove these barriers and pull it out of them.”

Nehemiah Manufacturing's model for uplifting employees has produced many success stories. The company promotes from within and all their line supervisors and captains are second chance. They have maintained a very low employee turnover rate of 15% during their 11 years in operation. Meyer believes focusing on employee wellness and incorporating social impact into a company's corporate strategy is common sense if the company really believes its employees are the most valuable asset. While not commonly practiced, this approach has been gaining momentum in Cincinnati with Meyer as the movement's leading proponent.

Seven years ago, Meyer created a business alliance in the spirit of the many job candidates knocking on his door seeking employment — more than Nehemiah Manufacturing could hire. The Beacon of Hope Business Alliance was formed to inspire more companies to provide second-chance employment, raise awareness of the need and proven business benefits, and leverage the ecosystem of social services and incentives for second-chance support. Meyer engages the CEOs of the companies in the Alliance to show them why hiring second-chance is good for business and for the community. A few years ago, Rodney McMullen, the Chairman and CEO of Kroger, one of the largest grocery retailers in the U.S., toured Nehemiah Manufacturing's facility. Energized by what he saw, Rodney decided to implement a similar program. Kroger's HR teams at the State Avenue and Springdale Dairy plants collaborated with local agencies and nonprofits to form

New Beginnings in 2017. Through the program, Kroger has hired 40 second-chance associates and maintains a 93% retention rate. Since the Beacon of Hope Business Alliance was established, it has gained 80 corporate members who collectively have created over 600 second chance jobs across Hamilton County.

Meyer's impact at Nehemiah Manufacturing and the influence of the Beacon of Hope Business Alliance across Cincinnati shows how the business community can be a catalyst for change, and it starts with the company's leadership who set the vision and purpose. For Nehemiah Manufacturing, that is to eradicate poverty over time.

Northeast of Cincinnati in Cleveland, Ken Patsey, President and Executive Director of Manufacturing Works, sought to diversify the industry's workforce.

During one Board of Directors meeting, Patsey presented a call to action. He wanted to start focusing more on inclusivity in manufacturing and asked who could connect Manufacturing Works to organizations working in communities of color. One Board Member was high school classmates with



Manufacturing Works

the founder of the American Association of Clergy and Employers and brought the Cleveland Clergy Coalition into the discussion. “It was kind of love at first sight,” says Brianna Schultz, Vice President of Workforce Development at Manufacturing Works. “We are very passionate and we were able to work really well together from the beginning. It just took off from there.”

The shared purpose between the Cleveland Clergy Coalition and Manufacturing Works is to improve people’s lives, and both organizations see manufacturing as a way to do that. According to Schultz, manufacturing is the third largest contributor to Northeastern Ohio’s economy and there are 2,000 to 3,000 open positions at any given moment in Cleveland alone. “There is a lot of opportunity for living wage, family-supporting jobs within manufacturing,” says Schultz.

Manufacturing Works, a network of manufacturing business leaders and industry experts who share resources and expertise, took on the role of a matchmaker. They coordinate with HR departments to identify entry-level positions manufacturers are looking to fill and the Cleveland Clergy Coalition recruits eligible workers through their job readiness and placement assistance program, many of whom had not yet explored a career in manufacturing.

Early in the partnership, Cleveland Clergy Coalition requested that the employers Manufacturing Works engage be located near the East side of Cleveland because the job seekers are residents in the Lee-Harvard and Glenville neighborhoods and many don’t have reliable transportation. The geographical constraints severely limited the number of manufacturers with whom Manufacturing Works

could pair job seekers because the majority of the employers are not located in the city, let alone the East side of Cleveland. Then Manufacturing Works got the idea to use church vans that sit idle throughout the week to transport individuals from the East side neighborhoods to the manufacturing hubs in Strongsville and Solon, cities outside of Cleveland which are impossible to get to using public transportation.

The Get2WorkNow program officially launched in February 2020 with a grant from The Fund for Our Economic Future as one of the winners of the Paradox Prize, an award to organizations trying to create solutions outside traditional public transit routes to connect employees with their work locations. Currently 26 employees, all people of color, receive door-to-door pick-up and drop-off services. The grant covers the cost of servicing the vans, paying for fuel, and compensating the drivers, and allows the program to offer their transportation free of charge. In the future, Manufacturing Works plans to implement a model to subsidize the program expenses that will request payments from the rider, at an affordable rate below the price of a daily bus pass, and from the employer of the rider, as an appealing benefit for new employee recruitment.

Since the launch of Get2WorkNow, Manufacturing Works has been approached by other churches and communities that want to participate in the program, which Schultz is excited about. She is currently focused on fine-tuning the program but hopes to eventually partner with churches on the West side and expand transportation routes to West side residents.

Workspace

Featuring the work of Eastern Market in Detroit

In 2008, Eastern Market began selling value-added products, like jams and salsas, for the first time alongside their produce vendors. The new energy the products brought to the market and the interest from consumers motivated the management team at Eastern Market to become more involved in food entrepreneurialism in Detroit.

Since 1891, Eastern Market has been improving access to healthy, green, affordable, and fair food choices in the city. The market is one of the largest historic public market districts in the United States with over 150 food and specialty businesses. It is also a central wholesale food distribution hub for the city's restaurants. Eastern Market consists of four sheds that sprawl across four and a half acres. Shed 2 and Shed 3 are popular spaces where visitors and Michigan farmers mingle. Shed 4 hosts a mix of vendors, from food trucks to honey distributors. Shed 5, dedicated to flowers, live plants, and garden décor, was selected by Eastern Market for a \$8.5 million

renovation project to install a new commercial-grade community kitchen.

While Shed 5 was in construction, FoodLab Detroit, a nonprofit that provides low-resourced entrepreneurs of color with technical assistance and the resources they need to start and grow a food business, was searching for commercial kitchens that would allow small start-up food businesses to use their space to make their products. A commercial kitchen was necessary for many of FoodLab Detroit's start-ups that aren't classified as cottage foods and for those that needed more space than a home kitchen could provide. FoodLab Detroit knew Eastern Market had affiliate kitchens with Saints Peter and Paul Orthodox Church in Southwest Detroit and Matrix Human Services in Osborn that were available and underutilized — so they proposed a collaboration.





Detroit Kitchen Connect (DKC) was formed in 2013 to provide food entrepreneurs with shared-use kitchens in neighborhoods. The broader goals of the program are to make it easier for more businesses to launch and showcase Detroit's growing food economy. Partnering with organizations like Sts. Peter and Paul Orthodox Church and Matrix Human Services were a good fit because their kitchens only needed minor configurations in order to become commercial-grade.

"They may need a drain here, a three part sink there, or a wash sink there but most of them are ready to go," says Christine Quane, Food Hub and Innovation Director at Eastern Market. "These big organizations also have been doing large catering for congregations so their kitchens are great."

Eastern Market used a grant they received to upgrade security and equipment at the two

community kitchens, and FoodLab Detroit began sending their entrepreneurs. During its first year, DKC helped launch the businesses of 18 Food-Lab Detroit members.

In 2015, Shed 5 at Eastern Market joined DKC's network of kitchens. Unlike Sts. Peter and Paul Orthodox Church and Matrix Human Services, Shed 5 is a community kitchen and an incubator. Quane describes the entrepreneurs at Shed 5 as growth-minded, whose goals

are to graduate from the kitchen within three years and have their own brick and mortar or processing facility. Entrepreneurs who apply for membership at Shed 5 may already have one or two wholesale accounts, direct market experience, or are in a couple of farmers markets and are gaining traction. Food start-ups that are looking for long-term leases or don't have a desire to expand their operations are referred to DKC's affiliate kitchens who are interested in having a long-term tenant. DKC offers an application and in-take process on behalf of the network of affiliate kitchens and collaborates on wraparound services.

The affiliate kitchens continue to be an important asset to DKC because they provide food entrepreneurs access to a commercial kitchen in their respective communities that might not otherwise be easily accessible. DKC has expanded their affiliate kitchen network to ten other commercial kitchens in Wayne, Washtenaw,

and Macomb counties which include faith-based organizations Fellowship Chapel, St John's Episcopal Church Royal Oak, Mayflower Congregational United Church Of Christ, and Bethany Lutheran Church (opening soon). DKC is also in discussions with Sweetest Heart of Mary Church. In line with FoodLab Detroit's commitment to serving low-resourced entrepreneurs of color and Eastern Market's mission to fortify the food sector as a pillar of regional economic growth, four of the five churches are located in low-income geographies where over 95% of the residents are non-white.

Quane joined Eastern Market in 2011 and since she assumed management of the Kitchen in 2019, she has been working on strengthening the relationship between the affiliate kitchens and Shed 5 by sharing Eastern Market's network of support services, "A lot of folks don't understand the network of support out there so it is part of my job to educate them on what's available."

She envisions hosting monthly or bimonthly meetings at the affiliate kitchens to assess what the needs are and direct entrepreneurs to partner organizations including Detroit Economic Growth Corporation (DEGC), Michigan State University Product Center, Tech Town, New Economy Initiative (NEI), Fair Food Network, Accounting Aid Society, SCORE, ProsperUS, Build Institute, and various lenders. By better engaging the entrepreneurs in each of their kitchens and coordinating market and education opportunities, Eastern Market is positioning Detroit as the most inclusive and robust regional food hub in the United States.

Advocacy and Outreach

Featuring the work of Manufacturing Renaissance in Chicago

For almost 40 years, Manufacturing Renaissance has been advancing sustainable development through manufacturing in an effort to address the wide-scale loss of manufacturing jobs across Chicagoland. They link public high school students and young adults to the regional manufacturing sector through Manufacturing Connect, a career pathways program, and advocate for policies that strengthen the sector through the Chicagoland Manufacturing Renaissance Council, a network of manufacturing companies, community development leaders, labor organizations, workforce development agencies, government entities, and educators.

When David Robinson joined Manufacturing Renaissance, Dan Swinney, Founder and former Executive Director, asked him to

increase the diversity of manufacturing advocates and expand the reach of the Chicagoland Manufacturing Renaissance Council. To address both requests, Swinney created two committees; the Legislative Committee, a group of retired public servants to help Manufacturing Renaissance negotiate, manage, and respond to legislation, and Ministers for Manufacturing.

“In Chicago, the church plays a significant role in community diversity,” says Robinson, External Affairs Director at Manufacturing Renaissance. “They are powerful and political too so I thought, we need to have access to them and try to get them to be ambassadors.”

Robinson hit the road and for two years met with over 200 ministers in the Southside and Westside of the City and South suburbs, communities that are predominantly Latinx and African American. From his outreach efforts, David realized that the Southside preachers don’t interact with Westside



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preachers, and the suburban preachers don’t interact with the city preachers. Despite the territorial boundaries, Dan was able to attract clergies across Chicagoland and unify them under the same vision. Violence plagues many of the communities the ministers serve, and they seek pathways out of the conditions that contribute to it. During each visit, Robinson would inform the ministers about the opportunities for a dignified job in manufacturing and how manufacturing offers the fastest, most effective pathway to begin to reverse those conditions.

“We educate them, get them excited, and what happens is they’ll say, ‘This is the greatest thing since Jesus walked. I’ve gotta be part of this,’” says David.

The 60 ministers who participate in the Ministers for Manufacturing speak with their church groups or at a community function to inspire youth to consider a career in manufacturing, advocate for legislation and public policy, and steer their constituents into the Manufacturing Connect training program. Of the 60 members, there are 15 core members who also host events with Manufacturing Renaissance and attend planning meetings to carry out the business of the Committee.

“Manufacturing has not been talked about in any of these homes, in any of these communities, so kids

don’t know what manufacturing means,” says Robinson. “But once they go on the floor, get a chance to hang out with the CEO, those that really take to it, they love it. It’s really eye-opening for them.”

During the 2019-2020 program year, 342 high school youth participated in Manufacturing Connect’s program activities. Of those participants, 74 youth enrolled in training to enter the metal work industry, an industry where the demand for labor is high because Chicago’s robust medical districts are in constant need of medical supplies, particularly precision surgical instruments.

Robinson’s goal for the Ministers for Manufacturing is to team up with the Young Manufacturers Association, 250 young adults aged 18 to 29 who work or have worked in manufacturing and can provide peer support and community outreach for Manufacturing Connect. David also hopes to find funding so the Committee’s members can provide much-needed additional support services to their constituents such as job readiness, tutoring, and civic engagement. He believes this will strengthen the Committee’s commitment to the work and increase outreach effectiveness.

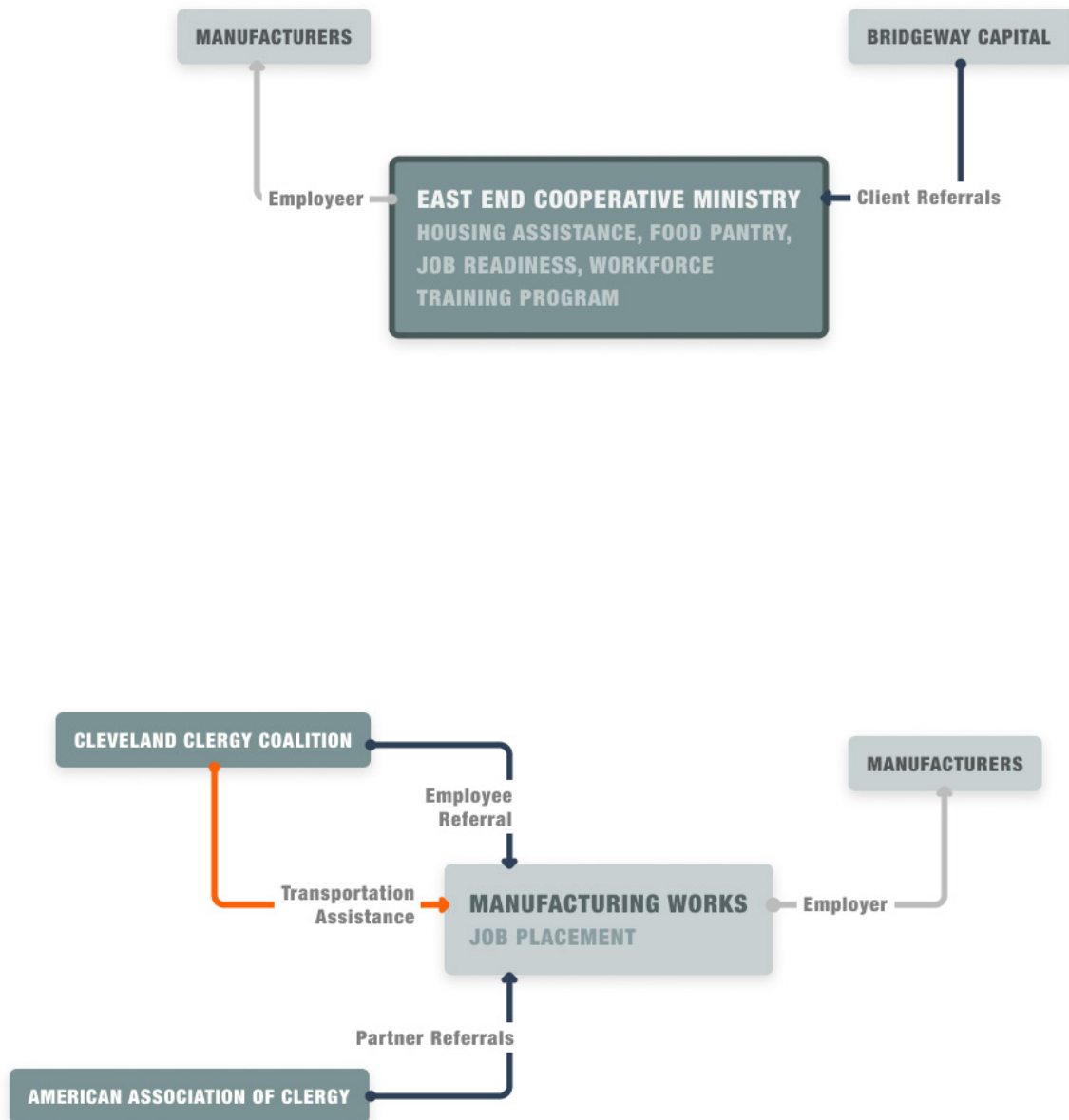
The two groups Robinson hasn’t officially reached out to yet are faith leaders in the Muslim and Jewish communities, but both are on his list. According to Robinson, the universal lesson is that manufacturing is an opportunity to cross political lines and geographical boundaries, and unify racial and religious groups because in times of crisis and need, those differences matter less.

Conclusion

Accessible manufacturing jobs can have a transformative impact on individuals and the broader community. When hard-to-hire individuals, marginalized individuals, and the unemployed secure consistent and gainful employment, the manufacturing community expands their skilled workforce, and the health and economic stability of communities improve. Inspired by the prospect of using manufacturing as a wealth building strategy, faith-based and faith-informed organizations are becoming emerging partners in manufacturing's growth by linking communities to employment and entrepreneurship opportunities.

While this thought-piece focuses on the role of faith-based and faith-informed organizations, the conversations with EECM, Catholic Charities of Tennessee, Nehemiah Manufacturing, Manufacturing Works, Eastern Market, and Manufacturing Renaissance also emphasize the value of cultivating a diverse network of partners, and the importance of organizational leadership in establishing a mission and carrying out their commitment to lead the change they want to see in their communities. The mindset of, "we are all in it together," is the foundation for achieving inclusive, sustainable industry growth and lifting up communities.

ECOSYSTEM MAP



KEY

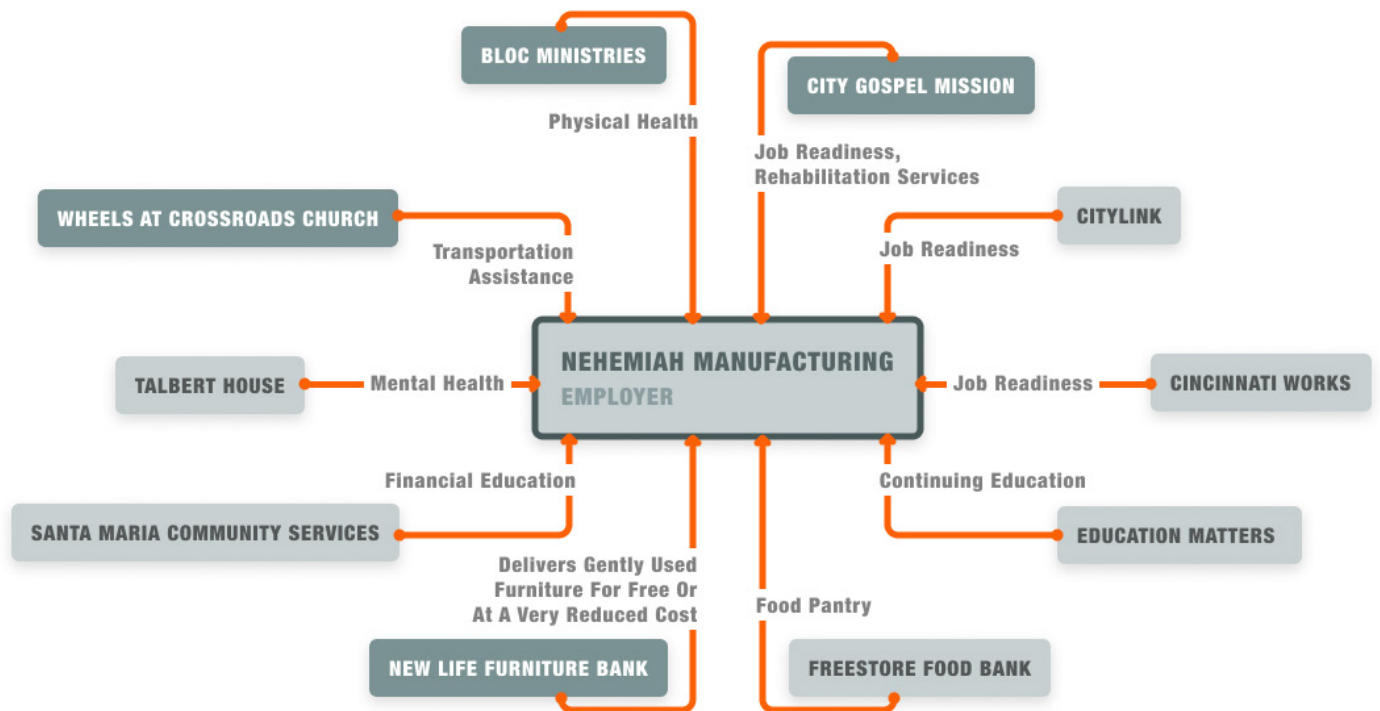
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- Workspace** (Dark Blue line)
- Outreach / Recruitment & Advocacy** (Dark Blue line)
- Other** (Grey line)

FAITH-BASED ORGANIZATIONS

FAITH-BASED EMPLOYERS

ORGANIZATIONS

EMPLOYERS



KEY

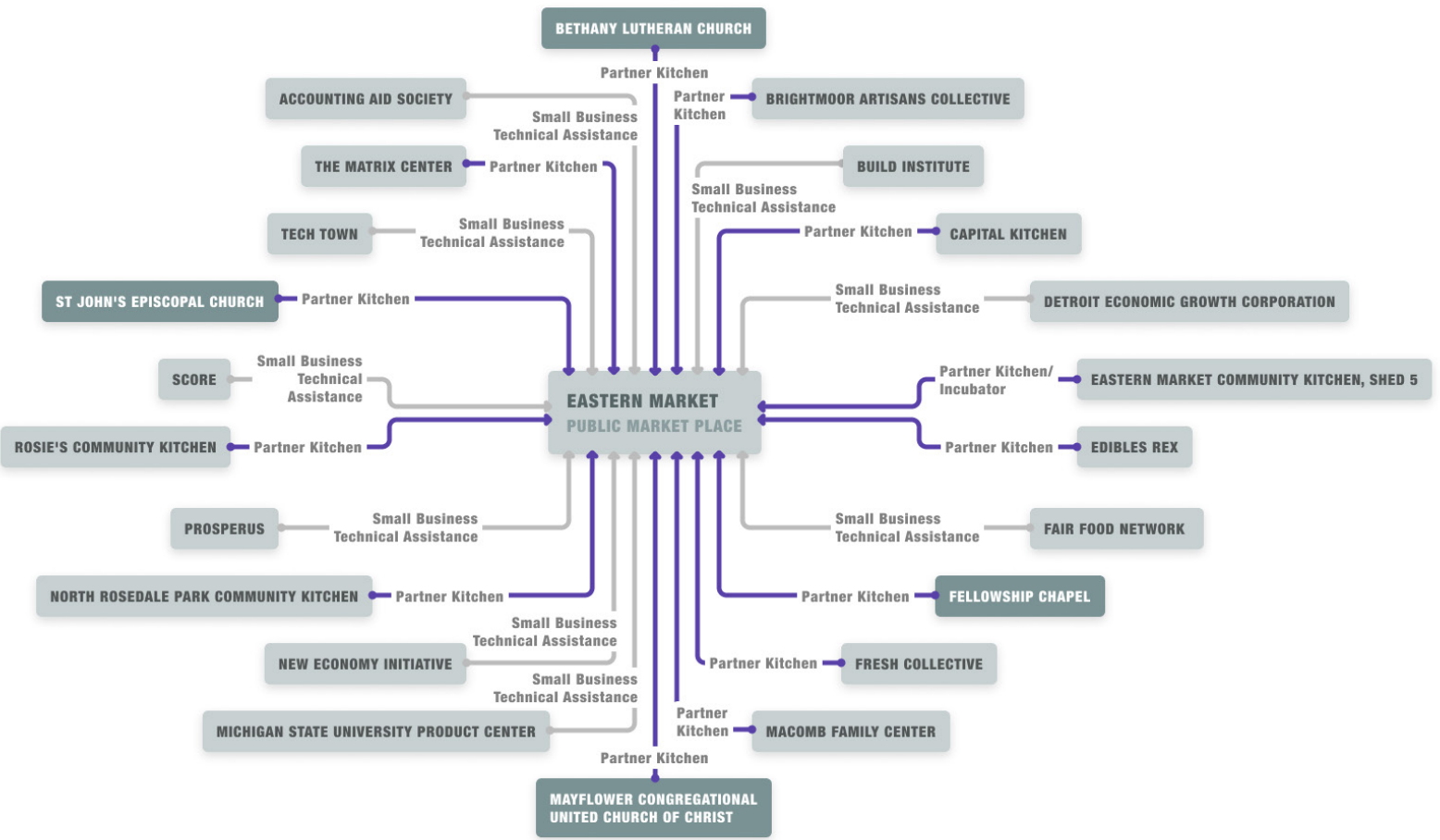
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- Workspace** — Purple line with arrow
- Outreach / Recruitment & Advocacy** — Dark blue line with arrow
- Other** — Grey line with arrow

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