

# Bridging the Gap:

## A Framework for Supporting Black Entrepreneurship in Charlottesville



Photo on the left was taken by Kevin Cox in 1950 of Vinegar Hill, a Main Street View. Photo on the Right was taken by Ty Cooper in The BEACON Polit Kitchen in 2023

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May 2025

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Prepared for and in consultation with the New Hill Development Corporation

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Disclaimer: The author conducted this study as part of the program of professional education at the Frank Batten School of Leadership and Public Policy, University of Virginia. This paper is submitted in partial fulfillment of the course requirements for the Master of Public Policy degree. The judgments and conclusions are solely those of the author, and are not necessarily endorsed by the Batten School, by the University of Virginia, or by any other entity.

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## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I want to take the time to thank the many people without whom this Applied Policy Project would not have been possible:

Before I even fully understood what an APP was, my journey began at **Virginia State University**. My HBCU created the foundation of who I am today. I am deeply grateful to my mentor and former professor, **Dr. Sheren Sanders** from Virginia State University. Thank you for telling me about New Hill and encouraging me to apply. Your guidance has been a north star throughout this process.

To **Yolunda Harrell**, the co-founder and CEO of New Hill, thank you for taking a chance on me and welcoming me into your organization. Since moving to Charlottesville, New Hill has truly felt like my first home. I also want to thank **David Givens**, Director of the BEACON Kitchen, for being such an incredible, supportive, and hands-on leader. Your encouragement and high standards consistently pushed me to grow, both personally and professionally.

To the entire New Hill team—when we started, we were just three people, and now we’ve grown into an organization with many arms. Thank you for your support, your investment in this project, and your unwavering belief in our mission.

I would also like to express my deep gratitude to my APP advisor, **Professor Jeanine Braithwaite** at the Frank Batten School of Leadership and Public Policy. Your time, patience, thoughtful guidance, and enthusiasm were instrumental to the success of this project.

To my MPP cohort—especially **Mariama Mohammed, Skylar Brement, and Jenna Huber**—thank you for your feedback, support, and friendship. You made this journey not only possible, but joyful. I am also grateful to the academic team for their patience and support as I navigated my way here.

To the Charlottesville community: thank you Zyahna Bryant, thank you for helping me fall in love with Charlottesville—especially Black Charlottesville. Your endless support and guidance were truly appreciated.

To the Community Investment Collaborative (CIC), thank you for your dedication to supporting entrepreneurs in Charlottesville. Your work is invaluable, and it continues to inspire and uplift those who dream of building something of their own. I also want to thank the Charlottesville Economic Development Office—while you host the “Hookie,” Matt Johnson, our conversations were nothing short of impactful. I’m so grateful for the opportunity to connect with this beautiful community through my work at New Hill.

In my role as Program Coordinator, I was able to engage with a range of partner organizations. Thank you to Kelsey Waters at Network2Work and Ella Jordan at United Way—your insight helped me understand the rich web of relationships and resources in Charlottesville. I learned so much from you both.

I am forever grateful to Gerard Robinson, my APP I advisor at the Frank Batten School of Leadership and Public Policy, for your time, patience, and commitment in preparing me for this journey. Your feedback and encouragement helped shape this project in meaningful ways.

## Special Dedications

I have two very inspirational Black women in my life who I would like to dedicate this work to:

A very special dedication goes to **Dawn Thomas**. Thank you for your mentorship, your advice, and your patience. Without you, this paper could not have been written. Your many years of experience with USAID, your analytical wisdom, and your steady encouragement pushed me to keep going even when things felt overwhelming. Your voice echoed in my head in moments of doubt: *Don’t give up*. I didn’t—and I made it.

And lastly a very special dedication goes to *my mother*, **Patience Woka**. Thank you for your unwavering hustle and entrepreneurial spirit. Research out of the University of Chicago shows that children of entrepreneurs are 60% more likely to become entrepreneurs themselves. While I’m not sure I have that in me, I now understand the sparkle in your eyes when you dreamed up new business ventures—whether here in

America or back home in Ghana. Working on this project brought me closer to you and deepened my appreciation for the legacy you've built.

*Mummy, thank you for every sacrifice, for your strength, and for the life you've given me. You always said Ne e kpo eue, na xi (when we see a hole, you fill it or close it). You always addressed gaps with care, kindness, creativity, and community. You inspire me endlessly.*

## ACRONYMS

**ARPA:** American Rescue Plan Act

**BEACON:** Black Entrepreneurial Advancement and Community Opportunity Network

**CDFI:** Community Development Financial Institutions

**CIC:** Community Investment Collaborative

**CRA:** Community Reinvestment Act

**CVSBDC:** Central Virginia Small Business Development Center

**DEI:** Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion

**ESO:** Entrepreneurial Support Organizations (ESOs)

**NHDC:** New Hill Development Corporation

**OSS:** *One-Stop Shop*: A centralized digital or physical platform that consolidates entrepreneurial resources, such as funding, training, and technical assistance.

**SBDC:** Small Business Development Center

**UVA:** University of Virginia



## DEFINITIONS

**Culturally Responsive Services:** Programs designed to reflect and respect the cultural backgrounds, values, and lived experiences of the populations they aim to serve.

**Disaggregated Data:** Data broken down by specific demographic groups (e.g., race, gender, income level) to better understand disparities and target interventions.

**Entrepreneurial Ecosystem:** The interconnected network of organizations, programs, funders, and policies that support entrepreneurs in starting and growing businesses.

**Fragmentation:** A lack of coordination among support organizations that results in duplicated efforts, inefficient service delivery, and confusion for entrepreneurs seeking help.

**Horizontal Equity:** The principle that individuals in similar circumstances should be treated equally and have access to the same level of services.

**Minority Supplier Development Programs:** Initiatives designed to increase procurement and contracting opportunities for minority-owned businesses from governments and corporations.

**One- Stop Shop:** A service delivery model that consolidates various administrative and regulatory functions into a single access point—either physical, digital, or hybrid—to streamline interactions between citizens or businesses and government agencies. OSS platforms are designed to reduce transaction costs, improve compliance, and enhance user experience by providing integrated, coordinated services that typically span multiple departments or levels of government (OECD, 2020).

**Strategic Investment Fund:** A local funding mechanism (in this case, Charlottesville's use of ARPA funds) dedicated to investing in high-impact community initiatives.

**Systems Navigator:** An organization or staff role responsible for helping clients move through complex networks of services and resources efficiently.

**Technical Assistance:** Expert support provided to entrepreneurs, often in the form of help with licensing, legal issues, business planning, or compliance.

**Vertical Equity:** A principle of fairness that recognizes that people facing greater disadvantages (e.g., due to race or economic status) require more targeted support to access equal opportunities.

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Charlottesville's entrepreneurial ecosystem presents significant barriers to success for Black business owners. Despite accounting for 17% of the city's population, Black residents own just 7% of its businesses, revealing deep-rooted disparities that stem from a fragmented support system and the enduring legacy of racially discriminatory policies like urban renewal and redlining. Today, Black entrepreneurs face disjointed services, unclear referral pathways, and bureaucratic obstacles that complicate their ability to access funding, training, and mentorship. These challenges limit their capacity to build sustainable ventures and contribute to a persistent racial wealth gap.

The New Hill Development Corporation (NHDC), through its BEACON initiative, sits at the heart of Charlottesville's entrepreneurial support landscape. It provides business incubation services and mentorship for Black entrepreneurs, yet the lack of ecosystem-wide coordination limits its impact. In consultation with NHDC, this project identifies the structural gaps in service delivery and evaluates four strategic policy interventions to improve ecosystem cohesion, accessibility, and equity for Black entrepreneurs in Charlottesville:

1. Maintain the Status Quo
2. Expand Outreach and Engagement
3. Implement a Feedback Monitoring System
4. Develop a Centralized Resource Portal (One-Stop Shop)

Each option was assessed against four criteria: cost-effectiveness, administrative feasibility, political feasibility, and equity impact. While Options 2 and 3 provide meaningful improvements—through increased coordination and data-driven adaptability—Option 4 stands out as the most transformative. Modeled after successful implementations in cities like Newport News, VA, the One-Stop Shop would create a

centralized digital platform that simplifies navigation across services and enables real-time coordination between NHDC, CIC, CVSBDC, the Fountain Fund, and the City of Charlottesville.

Although this option carries the highest estimated cost—approximately \$430 per entrepreneur—it offers long-term savings through reduced duplication, clearer pathways, and increased service efficiency. It also presents the strongest equity impact by addressing the historical and present-day barriers Black entrepreneurs face, offering a culturally responsive and accessible tool that enhances their ability to build wealth and stability.

Ultimately, this project recommends pursuing the One-Stop Shop as a bold and necessary investment. By unifying Charlottesville’s fragmented entrepreneurial infrastructure and streamlining access for Black entrepreneurs, this intervention can shift the region toward a more inclusive and resilient economy.

## PROBLEM DEFINITION

Black entrepreneurs in Charlottesville face long standing systemic barriers that limit their ability to start, sustain, and scale businesses. **Of Charlottesville’s local businesses, only 7% are Black-owned (Black Business Guide - United Way, 2024) while 17% of the population is Black (Charlottesville, VA | Data USAO).** This stark disparity is the result of a fragmented entrepreneurial ecosystem characterized by disjointed resources, unclear support pathways, and bureaucratic inefficiencies, all of which reduce accessibility and perpetuate economic inequities (Jimenez, 2014; Singh & Nurse, 2024). These challenges are compounded for women and younger entrepreneurs, who face even greater hurdles in accessing capital, mentorship, and professional networks (Q. Harrell, personal communication, December 6, 2024).

Present day challenges are deeply rooted in historical injustices, notably the **destruction of the Vinegar Hill neighborhood**, a once-thriving Black economic and residential hub dismantled and dispersed under urban renewal policies in the 1960s. This act displaced families and businesses with deep roots in the Black community, stripped the community of generational wealth, and eroded trust in institutional systems (Document Bank of Virginia Library of Virginia, 2021). Impacts of this

disruption persist and are evident in Charlottesville's current economic and demographic data which shows lagging Black business ownership despite modest improvements in related socioeconomic indicators.

Although this project focuses specifically on Black entrepreneurs, it is important to note that Charlottesville's publicly reported data often aggregates racial demographics under the broader category of BIPOC (Black, Indigenous, and People of Color). Still, for this category, persistent disparities are evident: BIPOC residents make up 35.6% of the city's population, yet experience poverty at a rate of 34.0% (according to the US Census Bureau, the overall poverty rate for 2023 is 23.6%), and with median household income well below the citywide average of \$69,829 (CEDA, 2025). Homeownership, another key indicator of long-term wealth building, has only recently surpassed 30% among BIPOC residents, as compared with 43 percent overall (CEDA, 2025). These data reflect the persistence of systemic barriers, and highlight the need for targeted, equity-driven interventions. Without intentional coordination and investment, Charlottesville risks exacerbating its racial wealth gap and missing opportunities to unlock the full economic potential of its underrepresented communities (D. Givens, personal communication, January 21, 2025).

Charlottesville's **Strategic Plan Goal #1** aims to invest in entrepreneurship to grow a more diverse, equitable, and vibrant local economy (City of Charlottesville, 2024). While Charlottesville has strong anchor institutions, a knowledge-based economy, and a growing base of BIPOC-owned businesses, these advantages are blunted by persistent inequities in income, access to capital, and opportunity. The Strategic Plan acknowledges that Charlottesville must intentionally support multicultural small businesses, strengthen partnerships with Entrepreneurial Support Organizations (ESOs), and streamline access to city resources to ensure broad-based economic prosperity. Currently, more than one-third of businesses are BIPOC-owned, yet BIPOC residents remain underrepresented in higher-income sectors and face disproportionate barriers in accessing technical assistance, capital, and real estate (City of Charlottesville, 2024). Without targeted interventions to integrate and coordinate the city's entrepreneurial ecosystem, Charlottesville risks deepening its racial wealth gap and failing to capitalize on the innovative potential of its diverse communities. A failure to act not only intensifies existing inequities but also jeopardizes long-term economic resilience, innovation, and inclusive growth across the region.

## CLIENT OVERVIEW

The New Hill Development Corporation (NHDC) is a Black-led nonprofit organization dedicated to advancing economic equity and resilience within Charlottesville's Black community. Born out of a need to address the absence of Black-led development efforts in the city, NHDC was founded by community leaders inspired by the legacy of Vinegar Hill—a once-thriving Black neighborhood destroyed by urban renewal in the 1960s.

NHDC's flagship initiative, the Black Entrepreneurial Advancement and Community Opportunity Network (BEACON), serves as a business incubator that provides entrepreneurial training, tailored mentorship, and access to a shared-use commercial kitchen. BEACON supports Black-owned businesses from ideation through growth and sustainability, with the broader goal of closing opportunity gaps and building generational wealth.

While BEACON has made measurable strides in supporting Black entrepreneurship, it operates within a fragmented ecosystem that limits its potential for transformative impact. Duplication of efforts, unclear referral pathways, and a lack of centralized coordination among stakeholders perpetuate inefficiencies and hinder Charlottesville's broader goals of building an inclusive economy.

NHDC sits at the center of this ecosystem, amassing support and bridging gaps between Black entrepreneurs and critical resources that disparate entities in the ecosystem provide: The City of Charlottesville is a key partner, channeling funds—such as a \$500,000 investment from the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA)—through its Department of Economic Development. The City's engagement is in alignment with their Strategic Plan Goal #1: promoting economic diversity. Community Development Financial Institutions (CDFIs) like Community Investment Collaborative (CIC) connect entrepreneurs to capital and training.

A range of funders provide additional support. These include Bank of America, the Charlottesville Area Community Foundation, the Virginia Department of Housing and Community Development, and local philanthropic organizations. A diverse network of community partners—such as the Minority Business Alliance, Piedmont Housing Alliance, United Way, and the Central Virginia Small Business Development Center (CVSBDC)—provide complementary services.

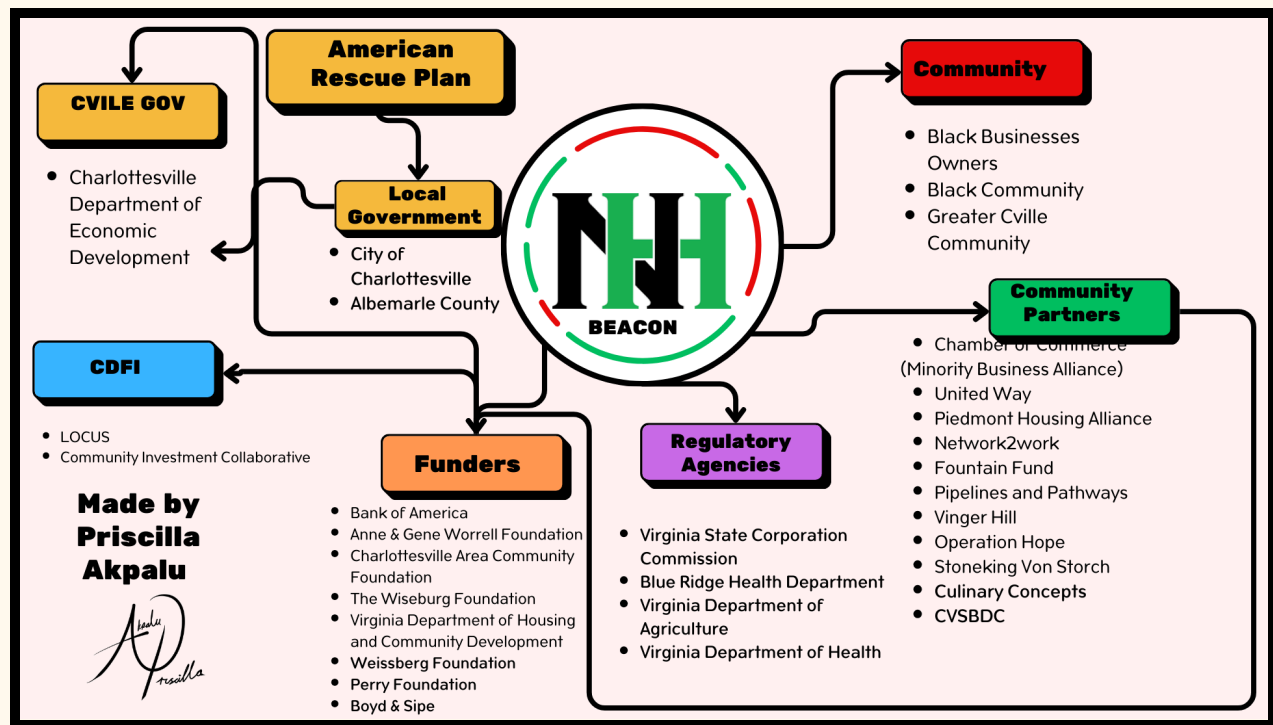


Figure 1 (Ecosystem Map) (Made by Author) illustrates the complexity of this network and NHDC's central role in navigating it.

The funding and services each entity provides are accompanied by different and sometimes overlapping layers of compliance. As a result, BEACON's clients and other entrepreneurs must access multiple windows and navigate disparate requirements and pathways to benefit from financing, mentoring, etc. This complicates and frustrates the entrepreneurial journey.

To maximize BEACON's impact, NHDC must lead efforts to streamline collaboration, clarify resource pathways, and build a more integrated system of support. Doing so will not only strengthen individual businesses but also advance Charlottesville's collective vision of economic inclusion and racial equity.

## BACKGROUND AND PROBLEM ORIENTATION

### *Historical and Structural Barriers to Black Entrepreneurship*

The historical and structural barriers hindering Black entrepreneurship are rooted in discriminatory policies and practices that have systematically disadvantaged Black communities for generations. The legacy of slavery, Jim Crow laws, and redlining have created a persistent racial wealth gap, leaving Black entrepreneurs with limited access to capital, markets, and resources (Singh & Nurse, 2024; Fairlie, 2017). A lack of intergenerational wealth transfer significantly impedes their ability to secure funding, launch ventures, and weather economic downturns (Leppert, 2024). The destruction of vibrant Black business districts through urban renewal projects, as exemplified by the displacement of Black residents and businesses from Vinegar Hill in Charlottesville in the 1960s, further exacerbated these challenges (Edmondson et al., 2023). The loss of these cultural and economic hubs severed vital networks, disrupted community cohesion, and created lasting obstacles to Black business ownership (Saunders & Shackelford, 2005). Moreover, Black entrepreneurs were stripped of access to critical networks and resources, and left with insurmountable challenges to rebuilding professional mentorship, and entrepreneurial networks. Analysis by Bunk History (2011), highlights how the absence of cohesive economic ecosystems following such displacements has hindered the growth of Black-owned businesses in the region. These systemic barriers underscore the need for targeted interventions that address present-day challenges and the historical injustices that continue to shape the economic landscape for Black entrepreneurs.

Contemporary structural inequities compound and perpetuate disparities already noted (i.e. access to capital, mentorship, and professional networks). Studies have consistently shown that Black entrepreneurs face higher loan denial rates, receive less venture capital funding, and are often offered loans at less favorable terms..." (Singh & Nurse, 2024; Alliance for Entrepreneurial Equity, 2024; Fairlie, 2017). A recent analysis by the Stanford Institute for Economic Policy Research (SIEPR) underscores the extent of these disparities, noting that Black business owners are twice as likely to be denied loans as white counterparts, even when controlling for creditworthiness and business performance. Furthermore, Black entrepreneurs receive, on average, less than half the amount in loan funding compared to white-owned firms, thereby limiting their ability to scale businesses or withstand economic shocks (Stanford SIEPR, 2024). These financial constraints perpetuate the racial wealth gap and reinforce the need for systemic financial reforms, including expanded access to community development financial institutions (CDFIs) and government-backed microloan programs that specifically serve minority entrepreneurs. These discriminatory lending practices, both historically and in the current



financial landscape, reinforce the cycle of economic disadvantage, further limiting the growth and sustainability of Black-owned businesses (The State of Black Business 2024).

The ramifications of this historical disenfranchisement extend beyond financial constraints to the social and cultural dimensions crucial for entrepreneurial success. Black entrepreneurs are less likely to benefit from the intergenerational family and social ties that often facilitate business partnerships and mentorship opportunities among white-owned firms (Edmondson et al., 2023). This limited access to networks and mentorship restricts their ability to acquire essential knowledge, resources, and support, hindering successful navigation of the complex business landscape. The dearth of Black entrepreneurs within established professional networks isolates aspiring Black business owners, curtailing their exposure to potential investors, partners, and clients, further impeding their growth and sustainability.

Addressing the historical and structural barriers to Black entrepreneurship in Charlottesville requires a multifaceted approach. This approach must acknowledge the deeply ingrained systemic factors perpetuating the disparities. It must also address the barriers hindering access to capital, to fostering inclusive networks, and to providing culturally relevant mentorship.

#### *Existing Support Systems and Their Limitations*

Charlottesville's business support ecosystem comprises a diverse network of organizations committed to fostering local entrepreneurship, especially within underserved communities. Key stakeholders include the New Hill Development Corporation (NHDC) and its BEACON initiative, the Community Investment Collaborative (CIC), the Central Virginia Small Business Development Center (CVSBDC), the Fountain Fund, and the Charlottesville Department of Economic Development.

NHDC's BEACON initiative provides culturally responsive support for Black entrepreneurs through business incubation, training, and shared-use kitchen facilities tailored to food-based startups. CIC, established in 2012, supports small business development through its four-pillar model: a proven business education program, mentorship and peer support, access to microfinancing, and broad-based community networking. Its emphasis on inclusion has made CIC a critical player in expanding access to entrepreneurship for historically marginalized groups (Community Investment Collaborative, 2024).

CVSBDC offers no-cost, confidential one-on-one business counseling and technical assistance across various areas, including access to funding, product development, employee retention, and government contracting. Its Business Essentials Training (BET) program equips entrepreneurs with core skills, while its access to in-depth market research provides critical insights for business growth. With offices in Charlottesville and Culpeper, CVSBDC serves a broad regional population across multiple counties (Central Virginia Small Business Development Center, 2024).

The Fountain Fund addresses economic inequities faced by formerly incarcerated individuals by offering low-interest loans and financial coaching to help build credit and achieve economic self-sufficiency. In addition to direct financial assistance, the Fountain Fund also engages in policy advocacy aimed at removing systemic barriers to reentry and entrepreneurship (Fountain Fund, 2024).

While these organizations are instrumental to Charlottesville's entrepreneurial landscape, their collective impact is limited by fragmented operations, overlapping services, a lack of centralized coordination, and policy and governance incoherence. Concerning policy and governance, reforms in these areas are also critical to addressing the fragmentation in Charlottesville's support ecosystem because disjointed governance structures can lead to inefficient resource allocation —particularly for historically marginalized groups (Jimenez, 2014); decentralized governance can exacerbate inequalities due to inequitable access and limit economic development (Kim and Jurey, 2013). Policy-driven solutions, such as incentivizing cross-agency cooperation and investing in integrated support systems, can foster greater inclusivity and equity in entrepreneurial development. By addressing these governance challenges, Charlottesville can create a cohesive framework that empowers Black entrepreneurs and supports sustainable economic growth. In sum, this disjointed program and policy landscape forces entrepreneurs—especially Black business owners—to navigate a maze of disconnected resources and inconsistent program guidelines. The result is confusion, redundancy, and missed opportunities for collaboration and efficiency (Jimenez, 2014; Singh & Nurse, 2024). (Jimenez, 2014). These insights point to the need for collaborative policymaking and strategic partnerships among local organizations.

Beyond Charlottesville, broader support systems to promote Black entrepreneurship have been developed at state and national levels through public and private sector efforts. These include: Minority Supplier Development Programs, Black Capitalism Policies, the Community Reinvestment Act (CRA), and Small Business Development Centers (SBDCs) (Edmondson et al., 2023; Singh & Nurse, 2024). These programs aim to level the playing field by expanding access to capital, contracting opportunities, and technical support. However, their effectiveness is often undercut by insufficient oversight, limited reach, and systemic bias. For example, Black-owned businesses receive less than 2% of federal procurement contracts, despite decades of supplier diversity efforts (Third Way, 2024). Similarly, CRA investments often bypass the smallest Black-owned businesses, favoring larger firms that already have access to financing (National Urban League, 2024).

### *Alternative Support Systems*

Evaluating and strengthening local initiatives like BEACON are essential for addressing systemic barriers to Black entrepreneurship in Charlottesville. BEACON, developed by the New Hill Development Corporation (NHDC), has made significant contributions by providing Black entrepreneurs with access to shared-use facilities, business incubation programs, and mentorship opportunities. These efforts have supported the development of small businesses and created pathways for economic mobility. However, persistent challenges include scalability, limited resources, fragmented support networks, and bureaucratic inefficiencies that together hinder realization of full potential. Addressing these challenges is crucial for maximizing BEACON's impact and ensuring that it can serve as a model for fostering economic inclusivity.

To build a robust entrepreneurial ecosystem, Charlottesville can draw lessons from experiences elsewhere, specifically, the Motor City Match in Detroit, Michigan; Virginia's Business One Stop (BOS); Chicago's Small Business Improvement Fund (SBIF); and Newport News, Virginia OSS. Motor City Match emphasizes tailored outreach, and matching businesses with resources, technical support and opportunities. BOS demonstrates the effectiveness of centralizing resources to streamline processes and reduce administrative burdens (Virginia BOS). SBIF takes a deliberate incremental approach that incorporates feedback mechanisms to assess program success and make iterative improvements (City of Chicago). Newport News OSS brings counseling, mentoring, financing, funding business registration, etc. under

one umbrella, through a network of private businesses, civic organizations, and academic institutions (Economic Development Authority, Newport News). These programs employ models useful for BEACON to explore and indeed emulate since they have similar objectives as BEACON and have achieved success with elements like greater integration, resource centralization, and adaptive feedback systems.

Fundamentally, support systems must emphasize a client centric perspective. This means that in BEACON's case, the support it provides towards the goal of enhancing Black entrepreneurship must more aggressively help clients leverage and benefit from resources across the ecosystem in ways that are effective. This idea is captured in the One-Stop Shop (OSS) approach where single access hubs or portals are promoted as a way to help new and small businesses. It does so by removing barriers to business creation, expansion, and operation by providing a streamlined pathway for people establishing new businesses (Harpel 2022, National Governors Association). While the concept is not new, its use has accelerated since COVID-19, as examples from states like Connecticut, Delaware, Rhode Island, Missouri, Tennessee, and Texas attest (Harpel, 2022 National Governors Association). In addition, European countries have embraced the approach for facilitating cross-border services (OECD, 2020, One- Stop Shop for Citizens and Businesses). While OSS is promoted as a win-win solution for delivering seamless access at lower cost, often, the complexity, costs and risks can be understated (Howard, 2017), notably in implementation.

## METHODOLOGY

To develop a comprehensive understanding of the systemic barriers facing Black entrepreneurs in Charlottesville and to craft actionable recommendations, I employed a multi-method approach consisting of a literature review, stakeholder interviews, and comparative case analysis. Each method contributed uniquely to framing the problem, identifying solutions, and establishing evaluation criteria for proposed interventions.

### *Literature Review*

The literature review served as the foundation for understanding the historical, systemic, and structural barriers to Black entrepreneurship. Key topics included the impact of discriminatory policies such as redlining, urban renewal projects like the destruction of Vinegar Hill, and the challenges posed by fragmented support systems. The review also examined successful interventions from other regions, such as centralized resource portals, targeted outreach programs, and feedback-driven systems, to inform the feasibility of implementing similar models in Charlottesville. Insights from scholarly articles, organizational reports, and case studies provided a robust framework for identifying the root causes of economic inequities and potential pathways for reform.

### *Stakeholder Interviews*

To complement the literature review, I conducted interviews with key stakeholders directly involved in Charlottesville's entrepreneurial ecosystem. These included Yolunda Harrell, Founder of New Hill Development Corporation; David Givens, Director of BEACON Kitchen; Quinton Harrell, Chair of the Minority Business Alliance; Matt Johnson, Charlottesville office of Economic Development; Teira Farley, Operation Director of CIC; Keith Groomes, Entrepreneurship Program Specialist for the Charlottesville office of Economic Development and Cristine Mahoney, Batten Professor. The interviews explored their perspectives on challenges, systemic barriers, and potential solutions.

- **Understanding the Problem:** Stakeholders consistently highlighted the lack of access to capital, fragmented support systems, and the lack of mentorship opportunities as major barriers. They also discussed the bureaucratic and

systemic hurdles that disproportionately affect Black entrepreneurs, emphasizing the need for streamlined processes and targeted support.

- **Historical Context:** Interviewees stressed the ongoing impact of historical injustices, such as the destruction of Vinegar Hill, which erased generational wealth and disrupted economic networks. These insights underscored the enduring nature of systemic inequities in the region.
- **Unwritten Knowledge:** Stakeholders provided valuable insights into informal practices and underappreciated challenges, such as the siloed nature of support organizations and community skepticism toward government initiatives.

These interviews informed the development of tailored recommendations, ensuring they addressed both documented and undocumented challenges.

#### *Comparative Case Analysis*

Building on the literature review and stakeholder input, I analyzed successful interventions from other regions to identify scalable models. Examples included Virginia's Business One Stop portal, Detroit's Motor City Match Program, and Chicago's Small Business Improvement Fund. Each case provided insights into best practices for addressing challenges such as fragmented support, limited resource accessibility, and adaptability to evolving needs. This analysis helped shape the proposed solutions and evaluation criteria by highlighting practical and proven approaches.

#### *Integration of Findings*

By combining insights from the literature, stakeholder interviews, and comparative case studies, I developed a nuanced understanding of the systemic issues and potential solutions. This integrative approach ensured that the proposed interventions, such as the centralized resource portal, were both evidence-based and tailored to the unique context of Charlottesville. Additionally, these methods informed the creation of evaluation criteria to measure the success and sustainability of the recommendations.

## EVALUATIVE CRITERIA

To determine the most viable strategy for improving coordination and resource accessibility in Charlottesville’s entrepreneurial ecosystem, I assess three proposed policy options using a standard set of evaluative criteria. These criteria ensure consistent and rigorous comparison across options, providing a grounded basis for recommending an intervention that aligns with NHDC’s mission and Charlottesville’s broader goals for equitable economic development.

### (1) Cost-Effectiveness

This criterion evaluates whether the proposed option can be implemented and sustained within NHDC’s and its partners’ current financial capacity. Without access to detailed per-person cost data, this analysis focuses on comparing the overall expense of each option—considering both short-term costs (e.g., development, outreach, onboarding) and long-term costs (e.g., platform maintenance, staffing, ongoing support). NHDC’s limited resources and reliance on grant funding make it essential that any policy intervention remain financially manageable without requiring significant new investment.

*Rated: Estimated total cost, projected resource demands, and long-term affordability within NHDC’s current and foreseeable funding structure per entrepreneur.*

### (2) Administrative Feasibility

This criterion evaluates whether NHDC and its ecosystem partners can implement the proposed option within existing staffing, technological, and coordination capacities. With a six-person team and limited technical infrastructure, NHDC cannot feasibly absorb high-burden interventions without significant external support. Therefore, the most administratively feasible options are those that can be integrated into current workflows, leverage existing community partnerships, and minimize the need for complex inter-agency coordination.

*Rated: high-to-low scale, based on estimated implementation time, staff capacity requirements, and ease of integration into Charlottesville’s current entrepreneurial infrastructure.*

### (3) Political Feasibility



This criterion measures the likelihood that key stakeholders—including city and state governments, partner organizations, and funders—will support implementation. NHDC currently enjoys local and state backing, particularly as its work aligns with Charlottesville’s Strategic Plan Goal #1, which centers on building a more inclusive and equitable economy. However, political feasibility at the federal level is increasingly volatile. Under the Trump-aligned political climate, federal efforts to defund diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) initiatives—including restrictions on DEI programs in agencies and education—could undermine support for policies that explicitly prioritize racial equity (Hing, 2024).

Despite this, local investment in Black-owned businesses remains a politically advantageous and socially resonant economic strategy, capable of advancing racial equity while also boosting regional innovation, workforce participation, and local revenue generation. Options that align with city- and state-level priorities while minimizing dependence on unstable federal support will be rated as more politically feasible.

*Rating: High to Low, based on stakeholder alignment, potential resistance, and political volatility.*

#### **(4) Equity Impact**

This criterion evaluates the extent to which each option addresses the historical and systemic inequities faced by Black entrepreneurs. Horizontal equity ensures equal access for similarly situated individuals, while vertical equity accounts for the need to allocate additional support to historically marginalized groups. Given the legacies of structural racism, NHDC’s work must prioritize vertical equity by tailoring solutions—such as targeted outreach, mentorship, and culturally relevant resource navigation tools—to the lived realities of Black business owners in Charlottesville.

Each option will be assessed on its capacity to reduce structural barriers, increase access to capital and networks, and promote long-term wealth-building opportunities for Black entrepreneurs.

*Rating: High to Low, based on targeted impact and inclusivity design.*

## **ANALYSIS OF POLICY OPTIONS**



Four policy options are presented below. Each is aimed at improving coordination, accessibility, and responsiveness within Charlottesville's entrepreneurial support ecosystem, with a specific focus on advancing equity for Black entrepreneurs. These interventions respond directly to the structural barriers identified in the existing system, including fragmented support, limited outreach, and insufficient feedback mechanisms. If implemented, each option seeks to enhance NHDC's capacity to serve Black-owned businesses and advance closing racial gaps in business ownership and opportunity. The options in sum are: Maintain the current situation, expand outreach, improve feedback monitoring, and establish a one stop shop portal.

## Option 1: Maintain the Status Quo

**Table X: Status Quo Option Summary**

Table 11. Status quo Option Summary			
Option Summary			
Objective	None		
Fit with Current Programming	No change		
Access to Resources Across the Ecosystem	Maintain current programming		
Evaluation			
Cost Effectiveness	Administrative Feasibility	Political Feasibility	Equity
\$5-\$7.50/ Entrepreneur	VERY HIGH	MODERATE	LOW

The Status Quo option reflects NHDC’s current operations, preserving existing partnerships and workflows without introducing new systems or coordination mechanisms. Support for Black entrepreneurs remains decentralized, requiring individuals to independently navigate a patchwork of services offered by CIC, CVSBDC, the Fountain Fund, and other entities. Communication between NHDC and partner organizations is largely informal and dependent on a single coordinator, limiting scalability and consistency. This lack of centralized infrastructure contributes to duplicated efforts, missed opportunities for collaboration, and confusion for entrepreneurs seeking assistance. As a result, the broader ecosystem remains fragmented, hindering the city’s ability to deliver equitable and efficient support to Black-owned businesses.

### *Ranking the Status Quo through the lens of our criteria:*

#### **1. Cost-Effectiveness**

The Status Quo has the lowest cost of all the alternatives, estimated at \$5–\$7.50 per entrepreneur. It leverages NHDC’s existing operations without introducing new

programs, platforms, or staffing. While cost-effective in terms of minimal financial outlay, its limited reach and inefficient coordination yield low returns on impact, making it a financially conservative but ultimately low-leverage investment.

**Rating: ★★★★★☆ 4 (High on affordability, low on overall value)**

## **2. Administrative Feasibility**

Administratively, the Status Quo is very feasible, as it requires no new infrastructure or staffing changes. NHDC can continue operating within its current capacity, using existing communication channels and workflows. However, this ease comes at the cost of perpetuating inefficiencies and failing to reduce fragmentation across the ecosystem.

**Rating: ★★★★★ 5 (Very High)**

## **3. Political Feasibility**

The Status Quo carries no political risk, as it involves no major policy shifts or new funding requests. However, it may face criticism for failing to respond to pressing racial equity goals or local demands for inclusive economic development. Stakeholders may see it as stagnation rather than progress.

**Rating: ★★★★★☆ 3 (Moderate)**

## **4. Equity Impact**

This option has the lowest equity impact of the three. It fails to meaningfully address the structural barriers facing Black entrepreneurs in Charlottesville, offering no targeted outreach, tailored support, or systems-level reform. By maintaining fragmented service delivery, the Status Quo reinforces existing disparities.

**Rating: ★★☆☆☆ 2 (Low)**

## Option 2: Outreach Expansion

**Table X: Outreach Expansion Option Summary**

Option Summary			
Objective	Facilitate structured collaboration among key entrepreneurial support organizations to align goals, streamline services, and co-develop a unified strategy for supporting Black entrepreneurs in Charlottesville.		
Fit with Current Programming	Builds on NHDC’s existing relationships with partners such as CIC, CVSBDC, and the Fountain Fund, while formalizing regular communication and joint planning to enhance coordination across the ecosystem.		
Access to Resources Across the Ecosystem	Strengthens NHDC’s leadership role as a steward and systems navigator for Black entrepreneurs by deepening institutional knowledge, cross-organizational trust, and collaborative problem-solving capacity.		
Evaluation			
Cost Effectiveness	Administrative Feasibility	Political Feasibility	Equity
\$76-\$100/ Entrepreneur	MODERATE	HIGH	HIGH

The Outreach Expansion has the potential to address Charlottesville's fragmented entrepreneurial support system: organizations often operate in silos, leading to duplicated efforts and missed opportunities to effectively serve Black entrepreneurs. This initiative proposes a structured, three-year collaboration process that brings together NHDC, CIC, CVSBDC, the Fountain Fund, and the City's Office of Economic Development to establish consistent communication channels, shared goals, and joint planning efforts. While NHDC maintains informal relationships with these partners, there is no formalized structure for engagement, referral tracking, or problem-solving across the ecosystem.

Expanding outreach and engagement programs would increase awareness of available resources and better target underserved entrepreneurial communities.

Programs like Detroit’s **Motor City Match** have demonstrated the power of tailored outreach in reconnecting historically excluded neighborhoods—particularly those impacted by urban renewal—to business development support and technical assistance (Motor City Match Program). While one might ask, “*What do Detroit and Charlottesville have in common?*”—both cities share legacies of racialized urban renewal policies that dismantled thriving Black communities. Charlottesville’s Vinegar Hill and Detroit’s Black Bottom were both razed in the name of “progress,” displacing families, destroying businesses, and creating long-term barriers to wealth-building and entrepreneurship (Kotkin, 2024). These shared histories highlight the urgency of rebuilding community trust through intentional and sustained outreach.

In Charlottesville, the initiative would launch with a professionally facilitated planning session, followed by monthly in-person meetings among key partners focused on improving referrals, tracking client outcomes, and addressing service gaps collaboratively. By shifting from ad hoc outreach to intentional, coordinated engagement, this strategy aims to transform a fragmented support landscape into a cohesive network capable of empowering Black entrepreneurs. However, its success depends on the sustained collaboration of multiple stakeholders, which may present logistical and organizational challenges.

### ***Ranking Outreach Expansion through the lens of our criteria:***

#### **1. Cost-Effectiveness**

Outreach Expansion is a moderately priced option, estimated at \$76–\$100 per entrepreneur. While more expensive than the Status Quo, the cost reflects deeper engagement, broader reach, and higher potential returns. The investment supports ongoing community events, culturally tailored materials, and direct engagement with underserved groups. Though not the cheapest, it balances cost with strategic impact, especially in improving awareness and trust in the system.

**Rating: ★★★☆☆ 3 (Moderate)**

#### **2. Administrative Feasibility**

This option is administratively manageable, though it does require increased coordination across multiple partners. Regular monthly meetings, follow-ups, and shared planning responsibilities will place a moderate burden on NHDC’s small team. However, because it builds on existing relationships rather than new infrastructure, the

lift is relatively feasible with intentional scheduling and clear delegation.

**Rating: ★★★★★☆ 4 (Moderately)**

### **3. Political Feasibility**

Outreach Expansion is politically strong. It aligns closely with Charlottesville’s Strategic Plan Goal #1 by proactively promoting inclusive economic development. It is also locally appealing—engaging trusted institutions like NHDC, CIC, and CVSBDC—and avoids reliance on federal DEI funding, reducing exposure to national political shifts. This makes it both low-risk and high-visibility in the local policy landscape.

**Rating: ★★★★★ 5 ( High)**

### **4. Equity Impact**

This option makes a significant equity impact. By focusing on outreach to historically marginalized communities and designing programming that meets them where they are, it addresses both horizontal and vertical equity. Programs like Motor City Match show that targeted engagement can rebuild trust and bridge long-standing accessibility gaps. Outreach Expansion helps ensure that Black entrepreneurs are not only aware of services—but feel welcomed to use them.

**Rating: ★★★★★☆ 4 (High)**

### Option 3: Feedback Monitoring

**Table X: Feedback Monitoring Option Summary**

Option Summary			
Objective	Establish a continuous feedback loop to assess program performance, identify service gaps, and adapt interventions to better meet the evolving needs of Black entrepreneurs in Charlottesville.		
Fit with Current Programming	Integrates seamlessly with NHDC’s existing evaluation practices and aligns with BEACON’s goal of offering responsive, data-informed support. Enhances the ability of all partner organizations to track impact and improve service delivery.		
Access to Resources Across the Ecosystem	Builds evaluative capacity within NHDC and its partners by equipping staff with tools and processes for data collection, analysis, and program refinement—ultimately improving the quality and effectiveness of support services.		
Evaluation			
Cost Effectiveness	Administrative Feasibility	Political Feasibility	Equity
\$216-\$295/ Entrepreneur	MODERATE	HIGH	MODERATE

The Feedback Monitoring System had the potential to address the lack of a coordinated, data-driven approach to assess whether programs are effectively meeting the needs of Black entrepreneurs. Currently, each organization evaluates its work separately—if at all—resulting in blind spots, duplicated efforts, and unaddressed service gaps. This initiative proposes establishing a continuous feedback loop, modeled after successful programs like Chicago’s Small Business Improvement Fund, where regular feedback has been shown to refine services and improve outcomes (City of Chicago).

Similar to Detroit, Chicago experienced urban renewal projects in neighborhoods like Lincoln Park led to significant displacement and community upheaval, sparking both nonviolent and violent protests (Neis, 2023). These shared histories underscore the importance of intentional, coordinated efforts to rebuild and support Black entrepreneurship.

In Charlottesville, the proposed system would enable NHDC, CIC, CVSBDC, the City’s Office of Economic Development, and other partners to align goals through an initial facilitated session, conduct quarterly client surveys, and collaboratively review data to guide adjustments. While the benefits include better resource allocation, improved service delivery, and more responsive support for Black entrepreneurs, creating an effective feedback system will require a robust framework for data collection, analysis, and reporting—potentially demanding new investments in technology and evaluation capacity.

***Ranking Feedback Monitoring through the lens of our criteria:***

**1. Cost-Effectiveness**

The Feedback Monitoring System falls in the moderate cost range, estimated at \$72–\$98 per entrepreneur. While it requires investment in survey tools, evaluation staffing, and data systems, these costs directly support long-term program adaptability. Unlike the Status Quo, this option ensures that resources are continually refined based on real-time feedback. The return on investment is not immediate, but over time, it improves the efficiency and effectiveness of every other program in the ecosystem.

**Rating: ★★★☆☆ 3 (Moderate)**

**2. Administrative Feasibility**

Administratively, this option presents moderate to high complexity. It requires consistent data collection, analysis, and coordination across multiple organizations—tasks that can stretch NHDC’s six-person team. However, if designed with user-friendly tools and distributed responsibilities, it is feasible. Its long-term benefit—improved decision-making and targeted resource allocation—can eventually lighten the administrative load.

**Rating: ★★★☆☆ 3 (Moderate)**

**3. Political Feasibility**

Feedback Monitoring is politically favorable, particularly at the local and state level. It signals accountability, data-driven planning, and a commitment to improving service quality—values that resonate with policymakers and funders alike. Because it is process-oriented and not explicitly DEI-branded, it is also more insulated from national political backlash, making it a relatively safe choice even in turbulent federal climates.

**Rating: ★★★★★☆ 4 (High)**

**4. Equity Impact**

This option offers a strong equity impact, though much of its work happens



behind the scenes. Instead of delivering direct services, it equips NHDC and its partners with the data and insight needed to respond to the evolving needs of Black entrepreneurs. By identifying service gaps and adjusting programs accordingly, it ensures that equity efforts are not just aspirational, but measurable and accountable. However, because this work is largely invisible to the public, entrepreneurs may not fully recognize the improvements being made. Without transparency, there's a risk that community members feel like data points being monitored rather than people being supported. For this system to achieve true equity impact, it must include clear communication and visible feedback loops that build trust and encourage meaningful participation. **Rating: ★★★☆☆ 3 (Moderate)**

#### Option 4: One- Stop Shop

**Table X: One Stop Shop Option Summary**

Option Summary			
Objective	Create a centralized, user-friendly digital platform that consolidates entrepreneurial resources, simplifies navigation, and streamlines access to funding, training, licensing, and technical assistance for Black entrepreneurs in Charlottesville.		
Fit with Current Programming	Builds on Charlottesville’s existing entrepreneurial ecosystem by enhancing connectivity among NHDC, CIC, CVSBDC, the Fountain Fund, and city departments. Provides a shared infrastructure that supports coordination without replacing individual programs.		
Access to Resources Across the Ecosystem	Empowers entrepreneurs by providing clearer pathways to support services, reducing administrative burdens, and improving self-navigation skills. Also enhances organizational capacity by minimizing duplication and increasing efficiency in service delivery.		
Evaluation			
Cost Effectiveness	Administrative Feasibility	Political Feasibility	Equity
\$430/ Entrepreneur	MODERATE	HIGH	VERY HIGH

Looking at the OSS as a potential solution for Charlottesville's entrepreneurial support ecosystem highlights a key issue: Black entrepreneurs often face the challenge of navigating a complex web of services offered by various organizations and city departments. This disjointed approach often leads to duplicated efforts, service gaps, and a lack of cohesive support. The proposed OSS aims to address these challenges by creating a centralized, user-friendly digital platform that consolidates resources, streamlines access to funding, training, licensing, and technical assistance. This initiative builds upon Charlottesville's existing partnerships, enhancing coordination without replacing individual programs. A key component involves a series of stakeholder workshops—bringing together representatives from partner organizations—to guide the planning, streamlining, and execution of the portal.

A similar model has been successfully implemented in Newport News, Virginia. Their OSS provides comprehensive support for entrepreneurs, particularly targeting specific neighborhoods. The program offers resources for planning, permitting,

launching, and growing businesses, demonstrating the effectiveness of a centralized approach in revitalizing underserved communities (Newport News Economic Development Authority).

Implementing such a system in Charlottesville would require significant initial investment and stakeholder collaboration to ensure effective design and long-term sustainability. However, by learning from Newport News' experience, Charlottesville can create a more cohesive and accessible support network for Black entrepreneurs, fostering economic inclusivity and community empowerment.

### ***Ranking the One Stop Shop through the lens of our criteria:***

#### **1. Cost-Effectiveness**

The OSS is the most expensive option, with a projected cost of \$430 per entrepreneur. This high cost reflects major upfront investments in web development, stakeholder coordination, platform maintenance, and user experience design. While the price tag is steep, it addresses long-standing inefficiencies by reducing duplication, improving navigation, and making the ecosystem function as a unified support system. Over time, it has the potential to produce significant savings in staff time and resource redundancy, but its cost makes it less immediately attractive for a grant-dependent organization like NHDC.

**Rating: ★★☆☆☆ 2 (Low)**

#### **2. Administrative Feasibility**

This option presents the highest administrative burden. It requires intensive planning, stakeholder buy-in, IT infrastructure, ongoing troubleshooting, and cross-agency coordination. With only six staff members, NHDC would likely need outside contractors or a dedicated project manager to oversee implementation. While the payoff is a streamlined ecosystem, the lift is heavy—especially during the development phase.

**Rating: ★★★☆☆ 3 (Moderate)**

#### **3. Political Feasibility**

The OSS is not only aligned with Charlottesville's Strategic Plan Goal #1—it's already in motion. Matt Johnson of the city's Economic Development Office confirmed that the city is actively working on building the portal, while Teira Farley, CFO of CIC, has been pushing the city to accelerate development. With NHDC's community trust and convening power, it is ideally positioned to unify these efforts, secure early funding, and ensure that the portal reflects the needs of Black entrepreneurs. Far from speculative, this option has multi-stakeholder alignment, clear urgency, and momentum behind it.

**Rating: ★★★★★ 5 (Very High)**

#### **4. Equity Impact**

The equity impact of this option is potentially transformational. By centralizing services and reducing the burden of navigating fragmented systems, it creates a more inclusive infrastructure—especially for first-time, under-resourced, and digitally excluded entrepreneurs. If designed with accessibility and cultural responsiveness in mind, the portal could become a long-term engine for racial equity and wealth-building.

**Rating: ★★★★★ 5 (Very High)**



## OUTCOME MATRIX

	Cost Effectiveness	Administrative Feasibility	Political Feasibility	Equity Impact
Option 1: Status Quo	\$5–\$7.50/Entrepreneur ★★★★☆	Very High ★★★★★	Moderate ★★★★☆	Low ★★☆☆☆
Option 2: Outreach Expansion	\$76–\$100/Entrepreneur ★★★★☆	Moderately ★★★★☆	High ★★★★★	High ★★★★★☆
Option 3: Feedback Monitoring	\$72–\$98/Entrepreneur ★★★★☆	Moderate ★★★★☆	High ★★★★★☆	Moderate ★★☆☆☆
Option 4: One-Stop Shop	\$430/Entrepreneur ★★☆☆☆	Moderate ★★★★☆	Very High ★★★★★	Very High ★★★★★★

I conduct a comparative analysis of all four policy options using cost-effectiveness, administrative feasibility, political feasibility, and equity impact as guiding criteria. While Option 1 (Status Quo) is the most affordable, it offers no strategic response to the fragmentation within Charlottesville’s entrepreneurial ecosystem. Option 2 (Outreach Expansion) and Option 3 (Feedback Monitoring) both offer modest improvements, but each comes with key tradeoffs: Outreach Expansion demands sustained inter-organizational coordination, while Feedback Monitoring, though data-driven, operates largely behind the scenes and requires robust evaluation infrastructure. Ultimately, Option 4 (One-Stop Shop) emerges as the most compelling choice due to its transformative equity potential, long-term systemic efficiency, and alignment with successful precedent models.

Option 2 performs well on equity and political feasibility, with a moderate cost of \$76–\$100 per entrepreneur. It builds trust and visibility in the community through direct engagement but relies heavily on staff time and consistency in meeting participation. Option 3, slightly more affordable at \$72–\$98 per entrepreneur, supports long-term adaptability through quarterly feedback loops. Yet, its less-visible impact

may weaken community trust and buy-in, and the effort to implement meaningful feedback systems may strain NHDC's small team without significant tech support.

Option 4, while the most expensive at \$430 per entrepreneur, addresses the root issue of ecosystem fragmentation through a digital infrastructure that integrates services, simplifies navigation, and minimizes duplication. Unlike the incremental adjustments offered by Options 2 and 3, the OSS fundamentally restructures how entrepreneurs access support—providing them with a centralized, culturally responsive, and streamlined point of entry into Charlottesville's business development network. This option mirrors the successful model used in Newport News, where the city's One-Stop Center targeted historically underserved neighborhoods and successfully helped entrepreneurs access critical planning, permitting, and startup resources (Newport News Economic Development Authority).

Although Option 4 has a higher administrative lift, its long-term benefits outweigh its upfront costs. A shared platform reduces inefficiencies across partner organizations and enables sustained collaboration without requiring constant meeting cycles or piecemeal evaluation systems. Moreover, its strong alignment with Charlottesville's Strategic Plan Goal #1 makes it politically feasible, particularly with the right funding coalition and early stakeholder buy-in.

In summary, while Options 2 and 3 offer incremental improvements to the current landscape, only Option 4 transforms the ecosystem in a way that prioritizes equity, scalability, and sustainability. Despite its cost, the OSS is a legacy investment that would redefine how Charlottesville serves Black entrepreneurs—offering not just access, but clarity, dignity, and a real chance to build generational wealth.

## RECOMMENDATION

The primary recommendation is to develop an OSS to address the fragmented support systems hindering Black entrepreneurs in Charlottesville. Such a portal would consolidate critical resources and provide a single, user-friendly access point for funding opportunities, training programs, and regulatory compliance. By streamlining these processes, the portal would reduce the inefficiencies caused by disjointed support networks, making it significantly easier for entrepreneurs to navigate available resources (Virginia Business One Stop).

In addition to simplifying access, a centralized portal would foster collaboration among stakeholders, enhancing interagency coordination and creating a more cohesive entrepreneurial ecosystem. This approach aligns with proven best practices, such as Virginia's Business One Stop, which has successfully reduced administrative burdens and increased resource utilization through its unified platform (Virginia Business One Stop).

This solution offers a comprehensive approach to overcoming the systemic barriers faced by Black entrepreneurs in Charlottesville. By addressing the core issue of fragmented support systems, the portal would enable more equitable access to essential services while promoting inclusivity and sustainability in the local business environment. Ultimately, the implementation of this portal would represent a critical step toward fostering a thriving and equitable entrepreneurial ecosystem in Charlottesville.

# **IMPLEMENTATION ASSESSMENT: Centralizing Entrepreneur Support through a One-Stop Shop**

## **Building the Infrastructure to Unify a Fragmented Ecosystem**

Currently, entrepreneurial resources in Charlottesville are dispersed across multiple organizations, including NHDC, CIC, CVSBDC, the Fountain Fund, and various city departments. This fragmentation limits accessibility, creates duplication, and hinders Black entrepreneurs from efficiently navigating available support systems. The OSS—a centralized digital resource portal—proposes to integrate these services into one streamlined platform that supports navigation, funding, technical assistance, and regulatory guidance. Following Pressman’s (1973) guidance, successful implementation requires a clear chain of command, coordinated decision points, and early coalition-building to reduce procedural delays.

Just as Newport News launched a neighborhood-centered business resource hub to revitalize historically excluded communities, Charlottesville must pursue a similarly inclusive approach that prioritizes transparency, co-ownership, and sustained stakeholder engagement (Newport News Economic Development Authority, n.d.).

## **Key Stakeholders**

The successful implementation of this initiative hinges on establishing a strong, cross-sector implementation coalition that includes:

- **Government Partners:**
  - Charlottesville Office of Economic Development
  - Charlottesville Economic Development Authority



- Department of Neighborhood Development Services
- IT and Communications departments for platform integration
- **Ecosystem Partners:**
  - New Hill Development Corporation
  - CIC, CVSBDC, and the Fountain Fund
  - Minority Business Alliance and Chamber of Commerce
  - UVA School of Continuing and Professional Studies (for data and tech support)
- **Technical & Financial Partners:**
  - Web developers and UX designers
  - CDFIs, local banks, and regional funders
  - Software vendors for backend integration
- **Community Stakeholders:**
  - Black business owners and entrepreneurs
  - Local grassroots and cultural organizations
  - Community navigators and peer mentors

## **Risks and Considerations**

### **1. High Upfront Costs**

- With implementation costs at \$258,200-\$516,750, the OSS is the most capital-intensive of all options. To mitigate funding delays, NHDC should pursue joint grant applications with city partners and seek multi-year commitments from foundations and impact investors.

### **2. Coordination Fatigue**

- Pressman & Wildavsky (1973) note that each additional decision point increases implementation failure risk. To avoid “coordination fatigue,” NHDC should centralize project authority in a cross-agency working group with a lead project manager empowered to make operational decisions.

### **3. Digital Divide and Community Buy-In**

- For the platform to be equitable, it must be intuitive, multilingual, and accessible via mobile. Additionally, consistent community engagement and onboarding workshops will be key to ensuring entrepreneurs feel the system is built for them—not imposed on them.

## **Timeline and Key Milestones**

### **Months 1–3:**

- Establish governance structure (working group + project manager)
- Host stakeholder roundtable and visioning session

- Hire technical partners (web developers, UX team)

#### **Months 4–6:**

- Design platform wireframes and collect partner data
- Pilot entrepreneur user journey workshops
- Secure seed funding and finalize shared data governance model

#### **Months 7–9:**


- Conduct alpha launch with feedback loop from 10–15 entrepreneurs
- Train ecosystem partners on referral pathways and use-case scenarios
- Launch community onboarding campaign (social media, events, flyers)

#### **Months 10–12:**

- Full public launch with multilingual support and integrated referral tracker
- Launch evaluation dashboard to track access, use, and bottlenecks
- Begin biannual partner review meetings to refine implementation

Launching the OSS is a bold, equity-centered policy move with the potential to redefine how Charlottesville serves Black entrepreneurs. While the cost and coordination demands are significant, so too is the opportunity: a durable, scalable system that simplifies access, strengthens institutional trust, and fosters inter-agency alignment. As Pressman and Wildavsky remind us, implementation is where policy lives or dies. With a streamlined structure, sustained investment, and deep community

collaboration, Charlottesville has the chance to build not just a portal—but a promise to do better by its Black business community.



## ANNEXES

Policy Option	Estimated Cost Range	Cost Categories	Notes
Maintain the Status Quo	Low	Ongoing program costs only	No new investment; inefficiencies persist
Expand Outreach and Engagement Programs	Moderate	Workshops, staff, translations	Varies by engagement scale/frequency
Implement Feedback and Monitoring Systems	Moderate	Workshops, surveys, analytics, staffing	Ongoing costs tied to adaptive programming
Develop a Centralized Resource Portal	High	Web platform, database, staff, IT support	Major upfront costs; long-term savings possible

### Status Quo Costing:

Item	Low Estimated cost	High Estimated cost	Low Clients	High Clients	Low Total	High Total
Coordinator Expenses	\$3,000.00	\$9,000.00	600	1,200	\$5.00	\$7.50
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$3,000.00</b>	<b>\$9,000.00</b>			<b>\$5.00</b>	<b>\$7.50</b>

The Status Quo option represents the most affordable path, maintaining NHDC's existing coordination model without introducing new programming or digital infrastructure. The sole cost accounted for in this model is coordinator support, as NHDC currently relies on a single staff member to connect Black entrepreneurs with services across organizations like CIC, CVSBDC, and the Fountain Fund. Estimated

expenses range from \$3,000 to \$9,000 annually, based on an hourly wage of \$25 over a range of 120 to 360 hours of labor—reflecting time spent managing outreach, referrals, and ad hoc support. With an estimated 600 to 1,200 entrepreneurs served, the cost per client remains exceptionally low, ranging from \$5.00 to \$7.50 per entrepreneur. While this minimal investment may seem fiscally appealing, it does little to address the fragmentation or inefficiencies in the current system, and does not include expenses for platform development, data tracking, or cross-agency planning—leaving long-standing structural barriers intact (Pressman & Wildavsky, 1973).

### **Outreach Expansion Costing:**

<b>Item</b>	<b>Low Estimated cost</b>	<b>High Estimated cost</b>	<b>Low Clients</b>	<b>High Clients</b>	<b>Low Total</b>	<b>High Total</b>
<b>Venue</b>	\$0.00	\$0.00	600	1,200	\$0.00	\$0.00
<b>Catering</b>	\$900.00	\$3,000.00	600	1,200	\$1.50	\$2.50
<b>Facilitator Fees</b>	\$5,000.00	\$8,000.00	600	1,200	\$8.33	\$6.67
<b>Miscellaneous Expenses</b>	\$1,200.00	\$6,000.00	600	1,200	\$2.00	\$5.00
<b>Coordinator Expenses</b>	\$3,000.00	\$9,000.00	600	1,200	\$5.00	\$7.50
<b>Client Manager</b>	\$50,000.00	\$65,000.00	600	1,200	\$83.33	\$54.17
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$60,100.00</b>	<b>\$91,000.00</b>			<b>\$100.17</b>	<b>\$75.83</b>

The Outreach Expansion option reflects a modest investment in relationship-building and collaborative infrastructure across Charlottesville’s fragmented entrepreneurial support system. This approach proposes monthly stakeholder meetings—hosted by NHDC, CIC, CVSBDC, the City of Charlottesville’s Office of Economic Development, and Keith Grooms, Entrepreneurship Program Specialist—designed to align services, share client referrals, and build trust between institutions. The initiative begins with a facilitated planning session and continues through regular in-person meetings to deepen cross-organizational awareness and

follow-through. Estimated total costs range from \$60,100 to \$91,000, translating to \$75.83 to \$100.17 per entrepreneur served, assuming 600 to 1,200 clients annually.

The largest cost driver is staffing: a client relationship manager, budgeted between \$50,000 and \$65,000 annually, would coordinate partner communications and track shared client outcomes. Facilitator fees for the launch session are estimated between \$5,000 and \$8,000 (Sanjuan), and coordinator expenses reflect a \$25/hour wage over 40 hours, totaling \$3,000 to \$9,000. Catering, estimated using Omni Charlottesville Hotel's pricing, includes breakfast and lunch for 10 monthly attendees, resulting in a range of \$900 to \$3,000, with service fees and taxes adding further variation (Omni Hotels & Resorts). Miscellaneous expenses, including transportation, printed materials, and tech setup, are estimated between \$1,200 and \$6,000. Because the meetings are hosted at existing partner offices (CIC or New Hill), venue costs are negligible, making this a relatively low-cost, high-engagement coordination strategy. While not transformative on its own, this option strengthens collective accountability and client follow-through without requiring significant new infrastructure investment.

## Feedback Loop Costing:

Item	Low Estimated cost	High Estimated cost	Low Clients	High Clients	Low Total	High Total
Venue	\$0.00	\$0.00	600	1,200	\$0.00	\$0.00
Catering	\$300.00	\$1,000.00	600	1,200	\$0.50	\$0.83
Facilitator Fees	\$5,000.00	\$8,000.00	600	1,200	\$8.33	\$6.67
Miscellaneous Expenses	\$400.00	\$2,000.00	600	1,200	\$0.67	\$1.67
Coordinator Expenses	\$3,000.00	\$9,000.00	600	1,200	\$5.00	\$7.50
Client Manager	\$50,000.00	\$65,000.00	600	1,200	\$83.33	\$54.17
Survey Software	\$240.00	\$1,200.00	600	1,200	\$0.40	\$1.00
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$58,940.00</b>	<b>\$86,200.00</b>			<b>\$98.23</b>	<b>\$71.83</b>

The Feedback Monitoring System is a mid-range cost policy option designed to create a quarterly feedback loop between NHDC and its ecosystem partners—including CIC, CVSBDC, the City of Charlottesville’s Office of Economic Development, and Keith Grooms, Entrepreneurship Program Specialist. This system facilitates quarterly meetings to review survey results and assess program performance based on client feedback. The total estimated cost ranges from \$58,940 to \$86,200, or \$71.83 to \$98.23 per entrepreneur served (600–1,200 clients annually). The largest expense is staffing, particularly a client manager tasked with synthesizing data and coordinating quarterly evaluation efforts, with costs ranging from \$50,000 to \$65,000. Coordinator support is also factored in, assuming a \$25/hour wage over 40 hours per cycle (\$3,000–\$9,000).

Facilitator fees for the system’s launch meeting are estimated at \$5,000–\$8,000 (Sanjuan), and survey software subscriptions—such as SurveyMonkey, Qualtrics, or SurveyCTO—range from \$20 to \$100/month depending on features and response volume, totaling \$240–\$1,200 annually (SurveySparrow, SurveyMonkey, & SurveyCTO). Additional costs include catering (\$300–\$1,000 for quarterly meetings), miscellaneous expenses like



transportation and tech setup (\$400–\$2,000), and venue usage, which is cost-free due to partnerships with CIC and New Hill office spaces. Though the feedback loop is not a front-facing intervention, it ensures that programs are responsive, gaps are addressed, and service quality is continuously refined through community-informed decision-making.

### One Stop Shop Costing:

Item	Low Estimated cost	High Estimated cost	Low Clients	High Clients	Low Total	High Total
<b>Website Development &amp; Design</b>	\$200,000.00	\$400,000.00	600	1,200	\$333.33	\$333.33
<b>Maintenance</b>	\$600.00	\$24,000.00	600	1,200	\$1.00	\$20.00
<b>Staff Support</b>	\$50,000.00	\$78,000.00	600	1,200	\$83.33	\$65.00
<b>Venue</b>	\$200.00	\$750.00	600	1,200	\$0.33	\$0.63
<b>Catering</b>	\$300.00	\$500.00	600	1,200	\$0.50	\$0.42
<b>Facilitator Fees (One time)</b>	\$5,000.00	\$8,000.00	600	1,200	\$8.33	\$6.67
<b>Miscellaneous Expenses</b>	\$100.00	\$500.00	600	1,200	\$0.17	\$0.42
<b>Coordinator Expenses</b>	\$2,000.00	\$5,000.00	600	1,200	\$3.33	\$4.17
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$258,200.00</b>	<b>\$516,750.00</b>			<b>\$430.33</b>	<b>\$430.63</b>

The cost breakdown for implementing the OSS initiative reflects both the infrastructure investment and community coordination required to launch a centralized resource portal. The most significant expense is website development and design, with costs ranging from \$200,000 to \$400,000 based on average estimates for Tier 3 web platforms with moderate functionality (Digiteum, MilesIT, 45ly.co). Annual maintenance and IT support adds an additional \$600 to \$24,000, depending on the scale and responsiveness of services, aligning with industry averages for support packages (Intelivita). Project management and staff support is estimated between

\$50,000 and \$78,000 annually, based on national salary benchmarks for IT and coordination roles in nonprofit digital infrastructure projects.

Community-facing costs include a three-part stakeholder workshop series—one 6-hour day for planning, a 3-hour day for streamlining, and another 6-hour day for execution—bringing together 15–20 representatives from key partner organizations. Venue rentals at facilities like the Hillsdale Conference Center are estimated between \$200 and \$750 per session (Eventective), and catering for breakfast and lunch across the three days totals \$2,720, with an added \$1,273 for taxes and service fees (Omni Hotels & Resorts). Facilitation fees, based on a 6-hour day of expert guidance, are projected at \$5,000 to \$8,000 (Sanjuan), and miscellaneous costs—including parking and AV support—are budgeted at \$100 to \$500. Lastly, coordinator compensation, assuming \$25/hour over 40 hours for planning and execution, adds \$2,000 to \$5,000.

Overall, total implementation costs range from \$258,200 to \$516,750, depending on final scope and contractor rates, with per-entrepreneur costs holding steady around \$430—a high but justified investment given the potential for long-term ecosystem integration and racial equity advancement.

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