



Smart Growth America
Improving lives by improving communities



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The Business Loop CID Awarded Federal Grant to Support Small-Scale Manufacturing
Six Cities Selected to Receive Technical Assistance Grant

After a competitive application process, the Business Loop Community Improvement District (CID) has been selected by the national organization Smart Growth America to receive technical assistance that will support local efforts to use small-scale manufacturing as a strategy to create economic opportunity, boost the prospects of urban management districts, and build great places. The Business Loop CID will partner with Regional Economic Development Inc. (REDI) on this project. This assistance is made possible by support from the U.S. Economic Development Administration (EDA).

Small-scale manufacturing has emerged as a powerful way to tie opportunity to place, and can fill a key missing piece in today's local economic development and neighborhood revitalization toolbox. This new-but-old economic trend is diversifying the manufacturing sector and encouraging more small-scale manufacturing in downtowns, older commercial corridors, and neighborhood centers, helping to create a more resilient and inclusive small business environment, increase the accessibility of the local job market, and create a foothold for future growth.

Technological and economic changes have led to a surge in small-scale manufacturing and the growth of the maker economy. The goal of this program from Smart Growth America is to support areas like the Business Loop as they strive to intentionally support and build their maker economies.

Chris Zimmerman, Vice President of Economic Development at Smart Growth America, explains, "Small-scale manufacturing, which generally includes entrepreneurial, specialized, and boutique-style manufacturing operations, has emerged as a new tool for economic development in urban areas. Smart Growth America's technical assistance program helps cities like Columbia integrate small-scale manufacturing spaces into urban redevelopment efforts."

The Business Loop Community Improvement District was chosen from among 63 other organizations and communities in 32 different states who applied for this year's program. The applicants included municipal governments, local non-profits, and regional- and state-level organizations.



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The Business Loop CID in Columbia is looking to revitalize a working-class neighborhood with new, locally-owned manufacturers. Although a clear artisan movement with an active start-up culture has emerged in recent years, the city lacks a comprehensive policy to develop and encourage small-scale manufacturing. The Business Loop CID plans to partner with Regional Economic Development Inc., along with other key players in Columbia, to use this opportunity to implement workforce training, develop public financing mechanisms, and educate the real estate community about the potential of small-scale manufacturing. Particular attention will be paid to identifying and supporting those often outside the formal support structures, such as women and minority fabricators, producers, and makers.

Five other communities were chosen by Smart Growth America to receive this year's technical assistance, following the program's success in Knoxville, TN, Lowell, MA, Youngstown, OH, and Twin Falls, ID. More information on how these communities used this grant opportunity is available at: <https://smartgrowthamerica.org/announcing-recipients-small-scale-manufacturing-place-based-economic-development-technical-assistance/>.

In addition to Columbia, MO, the five other communities awarded 2018 technical assistance grants include Baltimore, MD; High Point, NC; Lafayette, LA; South Bend, IN; and Cusick, WA.

Smart Growth America advocates for people who want to live and work in great neighborhoods. We believe smart growth solutions support thriving businesses and jobs, provide more options for how people get around and make it more affordable to live near work and the grocery store. Our coalition works with communities to fight sprawl and save money. We are improving lives by improving communities. <https://smartgrowthamerica.org/>

Regional Economic Development Inc. is a nonprofit, public/private partnership created to enhance the vitality of business and increase the number of quality, sustainable jobs in Columbia and Boone County, Missouri. They focus on attraction, expansion/retention, and entrepreneurship. <http://www.columbiaredi.com/>

The Business Loop Community Improvement District is an organization dedicated to creating an attractive and authentic multimodal corridor; attracting and retaining dynamic and innovative businesses, employees, and investors; designing a street that is safe, vibrant, and healthy; and communicating the importance of the area to Columbia. They recently completed a 10-year Corridor Plan to revitalize The Loop. <http://theloopcomo.com/>