

CREATE ENTREPRENEURSHIP SUMMIT

Wednesday, August 13
8:30 am - 4:30 pm

**Helping community leaders implement
entrepreneurship & small business growth plans.**



Economic Developer



Why Entrepreneurship Matters

Scott Purvis

**Regional Economic Development Manager
South Region**

Why & How to Support Small Businesses

- Investing in small businesses and entrepreneurs strengthen your economy.
- Entrepreneurship ecosystems can accelerate the growth of small businesses.
- Resources that are available to help your community build and grow its entrepreneur ecosystem



Small businesses make a BIG impact

Entrepreneurs strengthen your community and local economy.



Small businesses are

- Job creators
- Wealth builders
- Place makers
- Locals



- 11%

Adding 1,000 new microbusinesses, entrepreneurs in a county is associated with a drop of 11 percentage points in the unemployment rate.

GoDaddy & UCLA Anderson Forecast

+ 7

At the county level, every microbusiness entrepreneur is correlated with 7 additional jobs by hiring directly, indirectly, or creating more demand and spending in their communities

Bureau of Labor Statistics

+ 40%

Communities with greater microbusiness density had stronger economic recoveries from the 2011 recession based on an index of economic indicators.

Index of Economic Indicators

+ \$489

Each additional microbusiness per 100 people in a county increase household income by \$489/year.

American Communities Survey

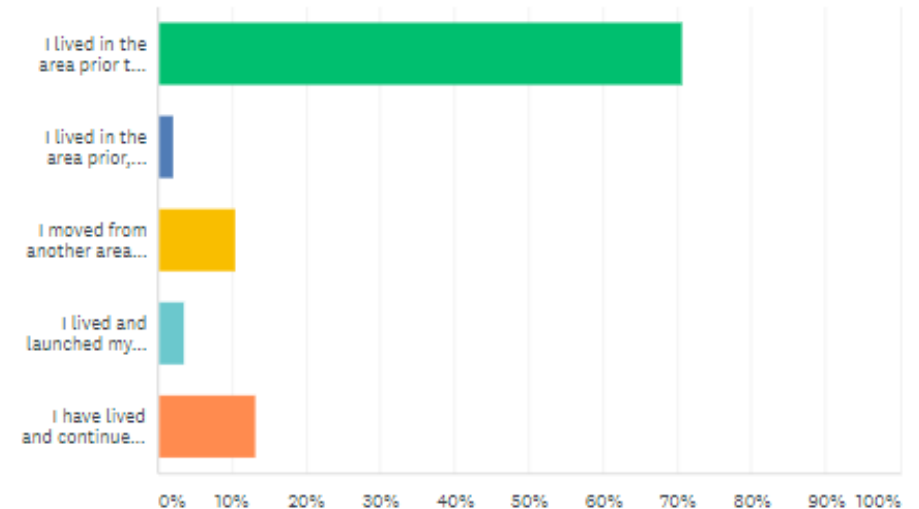
Entrepreneurship Represents a Higher ROI

- Net new job growth (60%) results from small businesses.
- Small business provide for unique community identity
- Economic Development more often by Local Entrepreneurs and NOT from Outside Recruitment Activities (MSA Survey of 2,500 businesses – 2021)
 - Overall, ~70 percent of local businesses were started by individuals residing in those same communities.
 - At 92 percent, small-scale producers (like artisans, makers, value-add ag producers, and small manufacturers) were nearly always launched by local community residents.
- For businesses employing between 11 and 20 employees, 81 percent started locally
- For employers of 20 plus employees, 57 percent were launched locally.

Q14

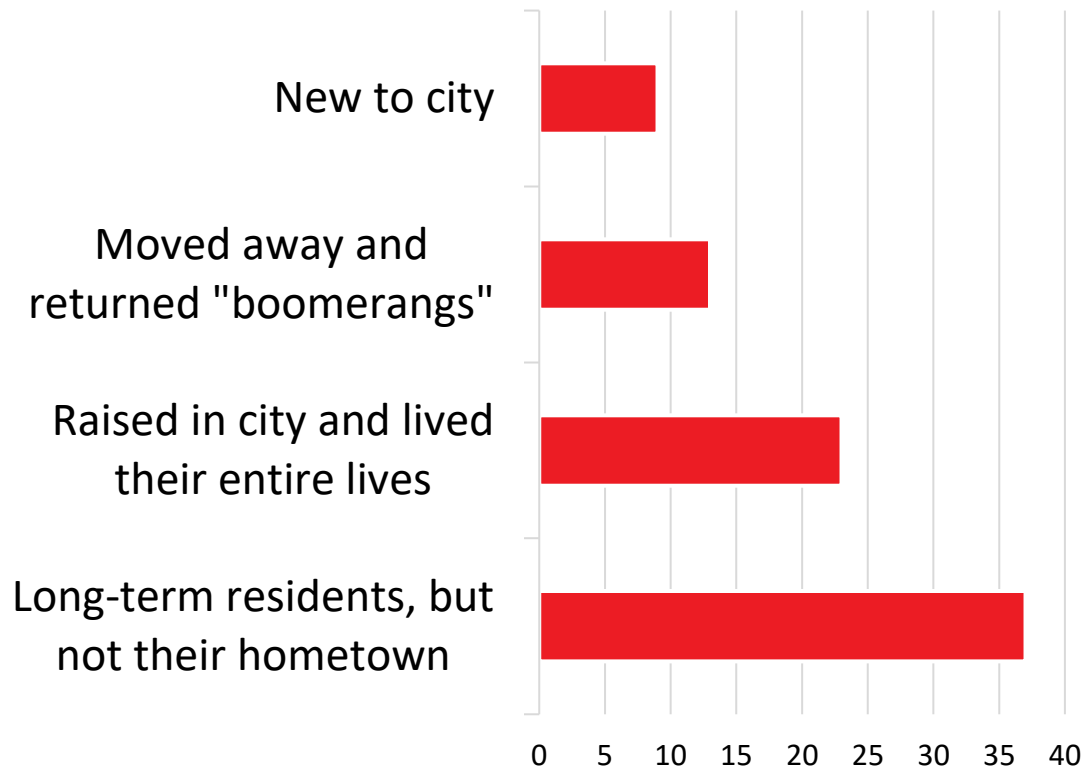
Which of the following best describes your relationship with your business's locale?

Answered: 1,407 Skipped: 0



It's Their Home Too

Where Entrepreneurs Resided
Before Launching



~70% of local businesses were started by individuals residing in the community that the business is located.

- 37% of business owners indicated that they moved to their city and lived there for a while before deciding to launch a business.
- 23% of business owners own businesses where they were raised and have lived their entire lives.
- 13% of business owners are “boomerangs” — entrepreneurs who moved away from the place they were raised before returning to start their businesses.
- 9% of business owners moved from elsewhere to start their business in a community.

Small Capital Investments Would Make a Big Difference

Over 80 percent of small business respondents need less than \$25,000 in affordable capital to grow their businesses.

© Main Street America

Q: If you could access affordable capital to grow your business, how much would you need?



27%

indicated an amount
less than \$10,000

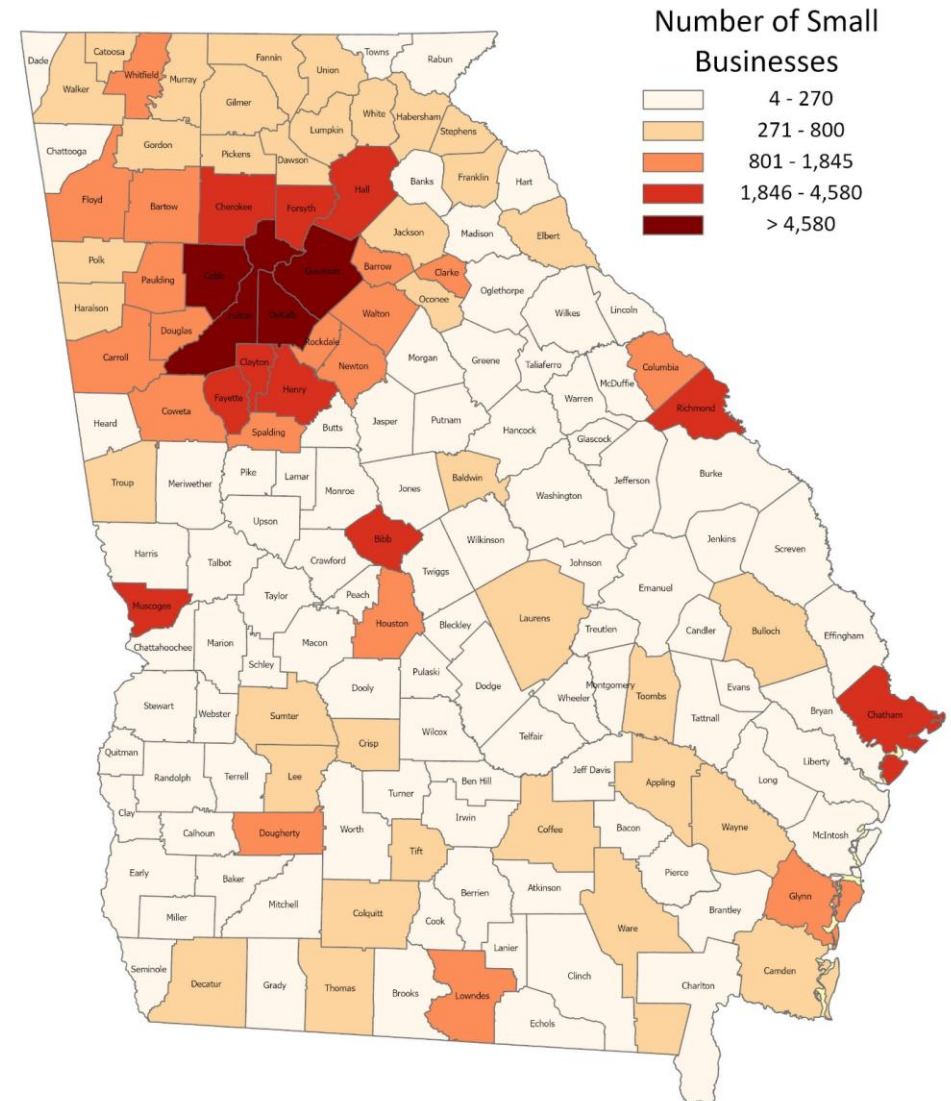


59%

indicated an amount
less than \$25,000

Georgia's Small Business Overview

- 99.7% of Georgia businesses are small.
- 87.3% of all Georgia exporters are small businesses.
- Georgia small business employment grew by 21.9% between 1997 and 2021, which exceeded the national small business employment growth rate.



Georgia's Small Business Overview

Industries with the Highest Percentage of Small Businesses

- Construction: 93.2%
- Services: 87%
- Manufacturing: 69.5%
- Wholesale Trade: 62.8%
- Transportation & Public Utilities: 59.9%

Industries with the Most Small Businesses

- Services: 53,546
- Retail: 18,677
- Construction: 9,955
- Finance, Insurance, & Real Estate: 8,244
- Wholesale Trade: 6,316

Georgia's Top Industries

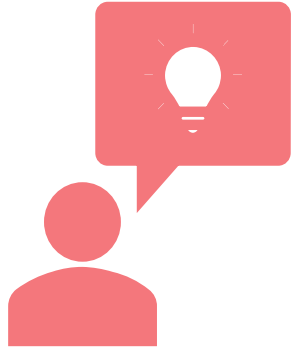
Industries with the Highest Percentage of Small Businesses

- Technology: 81.8%
- Metal Manufacturing: 72%
- Warehouse Distribution: 65.7%
- Automotive Manufacturing: 58.1%
- Chemical Manufacturing: 53.3%

Industries with the Most Small Businesses

- Warehouse Distribution: 2,514
- Technology: 2,475
- Metal Manufacturing: 555
- Food Processing: 250
- Chemical Manufacturing: 240

Entrepreneurship in Georgia



#2

Top State to Start a
Small Business
(WalletHub, 2025)



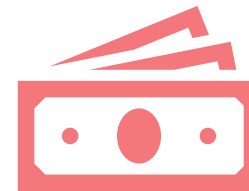
#2

Most Entrepreneurial
State
*(The Digital Project Manager,
2025)*



834

Georgia Companies
Received VC Funding
in the Last 5 Years
(Pitchbook, 2025)



\$9.91B

Capital Raised by Georgia Companies
That Received VC Funding
in the Last 5 Years
(Pitchbook, 2025)

Entrepreneurship Ecosystems

*Accelerate the growth and improve outcomes
for entrepreneurs.*

Vanessa Wagner

Marketing Program Manager

Agenda

- Introduction
 - History and Disclaimer
- Factors of an Entrepreneurship Ecosystem
 - Successful Ecosystems
- Assessing Your Community
 - Prioritizing Your Assets/Gaps
- Resources to Build and Strengthen Your Ecosystem

Introduction: History of Ecosystems

“Just being young, innovative, and your own boss does not make you an entrepreneur.”

- Daniel Isenberg

“How to Start an Entrepreneurial Revolution.” Harvard Business Review, June 2010.

“Worthless, Impossible and Stupid: How Contrarian Entrepreneurs Create and Capture Extraordinary Value”, July 2013.



Introduction

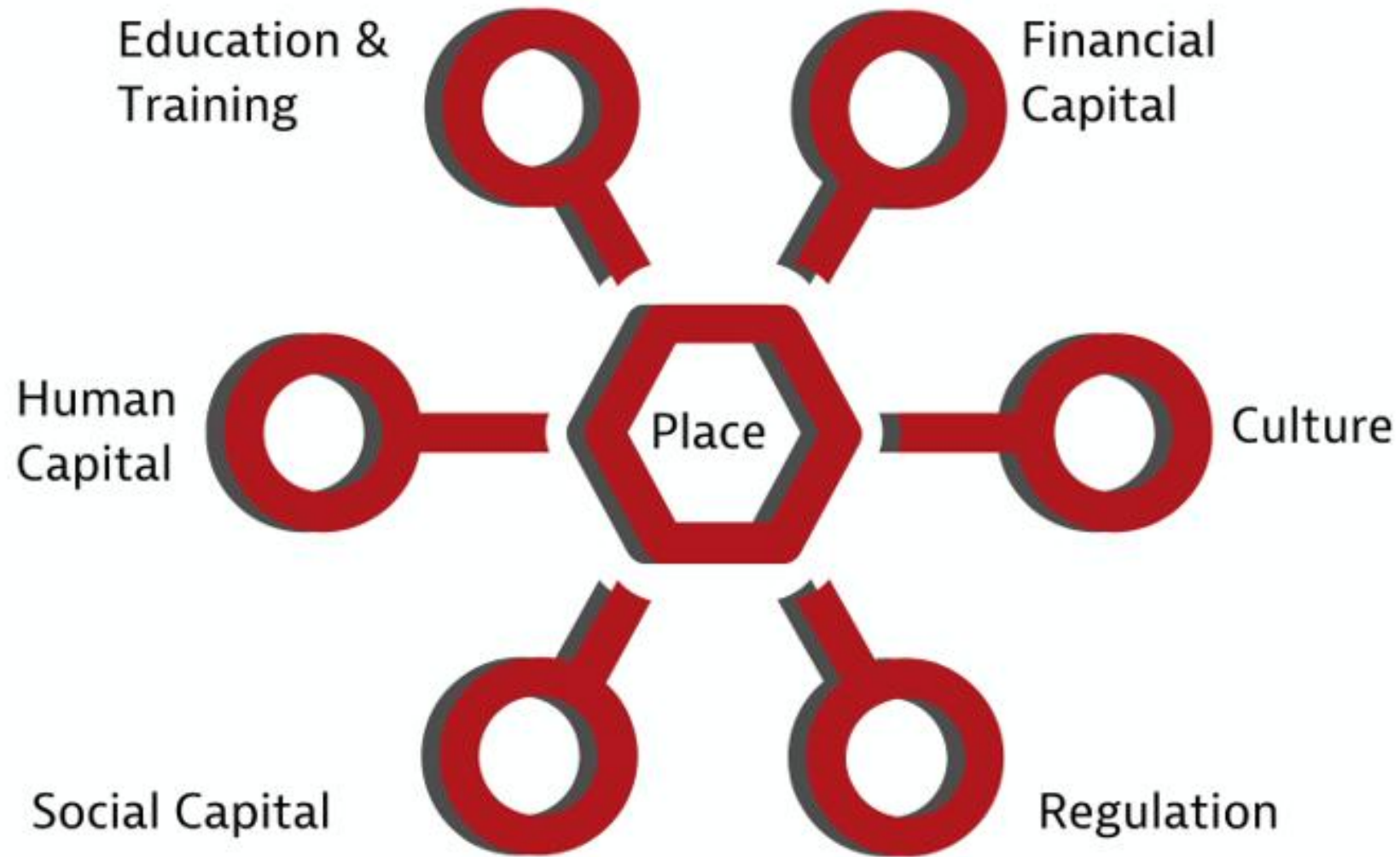
There are numerous theories, research, organization, and resources for entrepreneurship ecosystem building.

Explore and select what works for your community and customer's goals.

One size does not fit all.



Key Factors of an Ecosystem



Factors of an Ecosystem Examples

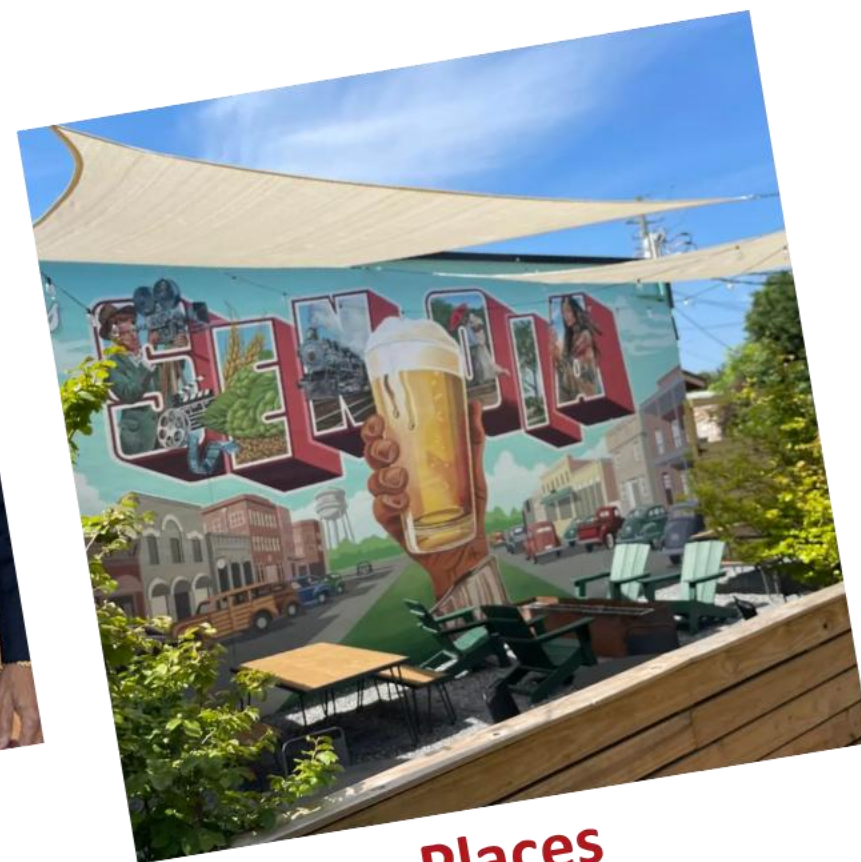
Factor	Examples
Place-Based	Co-working space, studio-office location, 3D printer in library
Regulations	County hires a permitting liaison to help small business navigate building, zoning, etc.
Financial Capital	Revolving loan fund, small business grant program
Social Capital	Chamber mixers, mentor program
Education & Training	“Start a Business in City, Georgia 101, “QuickBooks for Startups”
Culture	City procures services and products from small and local businesses
Human Capital	Work-based learning program that includes local micro-businesses for students to gain experience with



Programs



People



Places

....and a little funding too!

Exercise

Think about your city or town and write down:

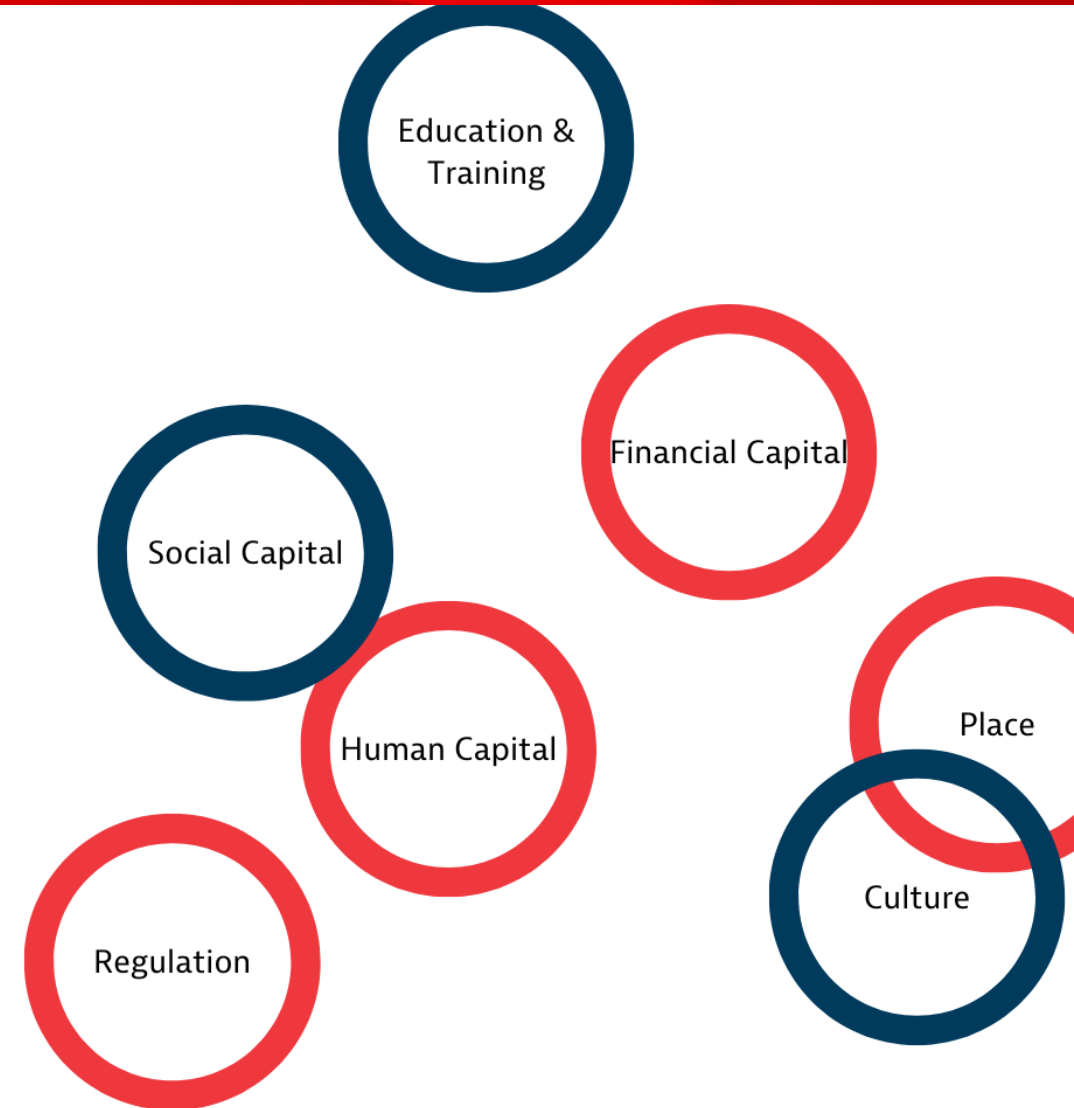
1. A program or organization you know that helps small business
2. A local person you know that has helped entrepreneurs.
3. Where do people gather in your community to work?



Connecting the Dots

Most “ecosystems” struggle or never form because they are:

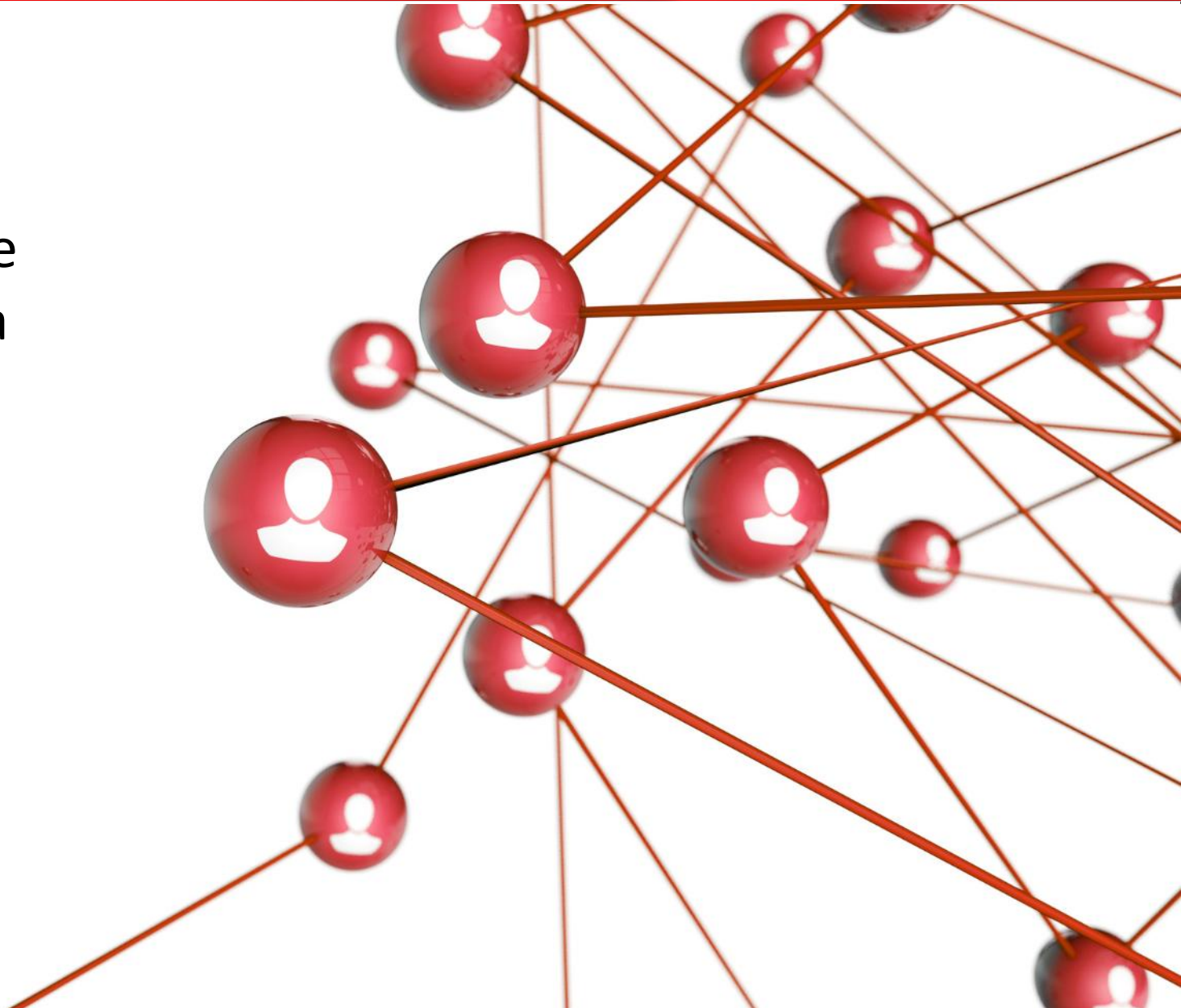
- Inefficient
- Incomplete
- Organization silos
- Not aligned with stakeholders
- Not driven by market strengthens
- Missing input from small business/entrepreneurs
- Lack a hub (a person or place)



Existence is Different Than Success

“Connections matter, and a dense network of connections, among a small number of programs, is arguably more important than a sparse network among a larger number.”

kauffman.org



Ecosystem Builder

“An ecosystem builder is a person that takes a comprehensive view of the entrepreneurial assets in a community, connects them, and fills in the gaps where necessary in order to help entrepreneurs and small businesses launch, grow, thrive and even exit.”

Kauffman.org/ecosystem-playbook



Assessing Your Community



Assessing Your Community

- Build Your Table
- Solve for Your Customers
- Ecosystem Self-Audit
- Review, Repeat, and Refresh



Build Your Table

Entrepreneurship ecosystem builder
is a FULL TIME JOB.

- If not designated to one FT employee, then who in your community can **champion** various responsibilities?
 - EX: Chamber employee commits to 4 hours per week to support entrepreneurship development.
- Consider how they are connected to or can support the ecosystem factors
 - EX: Local banker can help with finance resources and connections to lending partners



Solve for Your Customers

Who are your customers?



Solve for Your Customers

Entrepreneurs

Those launching, growing, or exiting a business and will use the resources in your community to achieve those goals.

Stakeholders

The organizations and people who benefit from a strong economy and vibrant business community.



Solve for Your Customers

Entrepreneurs at Various Life Cycles

- **Idea**
 - “I have an idea for a business.”
- **Startup**
 - Less than 5 years
- **Established**
 - 5+ years
- **Late Stage**
 - “I am getting ready to retire from my business.”



Solve for Your Customers

Stakeholders

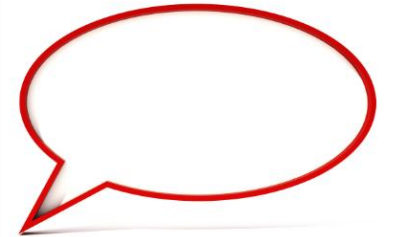
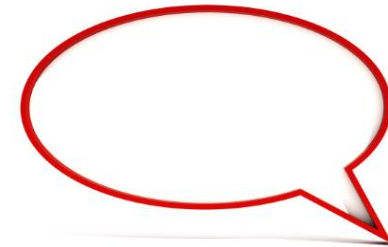
- City/County Leaders
- Large Employers
- Property Owners/Developers
- Chamber and Civic Organizations
- Educational Partners
- Development Authorities



Talk to Your Customers

Survey, focus groups, or 1:1 conversations to learn what their goals are and what resources they are using or missing to achieve those goals.

- What are their goals in one year? Five years?
- What barriers stand in the way of achieving their goals?
- What resources have they used that have been helpful?
- Have they used a resource that was not helpful?
- How are they finding resources/help?
- What resources do they need, but aren't able to find?
- What do they love about doing business in the community?
- What would make the community better for business?



Ecosystem Self-Audit

With Your Champions:

Review and organize customer feedback to answer the following about the factors in your ecosystem:

- What assets do you have?
- What gaps do you have?

Questions to Consider:

- Which assets/gaps are having the greatest impact on your customer's goals?
- Are there duplicate assets? If yes, are they helping or hurting customers?
- Can gaps be filled with a regional, state or national resource?





Ecosystem Self-Audit Tool

The audit provides an evaluation tool of 37 specific indicators that will help community leadership determine where they fall on a spectrum of support for local entrepreneurs and more importantly, where efforts can be made to strengthen that support.

mainstreet.org/resources/knowledge-hub/publication/building-a-community-entrepreneurial-ecosystem

FACTORS OF AN
ENTREPRENEURIAL
ECOSYSTEM

MAIN STREET
AMERICA

EWING MARION
KAUFFMAN
FOUNDATION

How is the Entrepreneurial Ecosystem Community Assessment Audit structured?

1. The Audit provides an evaluation tool of 37 specific indicators that will help community leadership determine where they fall on a spectrum of support for local entrepreneurs and more importantly, where efforts can be made to strengthen that support.
2. The Audit is divided into seven factors (financial capital, social capital, culture, human capital and workforce, education and training, government policy and regulatory, and place-based factors).
3. For each of the 37 indicators, participants should rate on a color scale of Orange (Low Performance), Yellow (Neutral Performance) or Green (High Performance).
4. After you have completed the template, for those indicators that are in "orange" decide whether the solution is one that is best served locally, or on a regional level. For example, under Financial Capital you may be low performing in having a local crowdfunding program. Given your priorities, capacity, potential volume of activity, resources, and availability on a regional level, tag with an L or R, to suggest where this programming is best positioned.

ORGANIZATION NAME:

	Performance Level				
	Low	Neutral	High	L or R	Notes
FINANCIAL CAPITAL FACTORS					
Does your district offer incentives to drive targeted new entrepreneurial investments (e.g., Grants, Micro Loans, Contests, etc.)?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Does your district operate a local crowdfunding program for real estate and/or small business investments?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Does your district have a group of local angel investors formed or other non-family equity sources available for entrepreneurial investments?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Does your local banking community offer SBA and any other federal small business development funding tools?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
SOCIAL CAPITAL FACTORS					
Are there district related clubs or networking activities for young professionals and entrepreneurs (i.e., the Kauffman Foundation's 1 Million Cups)?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Is there an active SCORE Chapter and/or other mentor program operating in your district?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Are current business owners supportive of entrepreneurs through relationshipbuilding, mentorship, referrals, etc.?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	

Resources for entrepreneurship ecosystem building and builders



Resources for small and locally-owned businesses in Georgia

- Supplier programs
- Networking and community hubs
- Loans, grants, and private equity
- Certifications and business education



Find Inspiration

- News and events
- Small business success stories
- Highlights entrepreneur-friendly cities



Grow Your Community, Strategically.

Georgia Power **Regional Economic Development Managers** can help you develop a plan that everyone will get excited about, using:

- Data-driven insights
- Community asset analysis
- Market trends and forecasts
- Improve Your Local Economy

Connect with your regional team at selectgeorgia.com



Visit Resource Partners



CREATE

Cultivating Resilient Entrepreneurs
and Transforming Economies

Entrepreneurs and communities are unique, and the solutions they need to grow should be too. Explore the partners from the 2025 CREATE (Cultivating Resilient Entrepreneurs and Transforming Economies) Entrepreneurship Summit that are fueling small business and community growth across Georgia. Find these and more at [GrowGeorgia.com](https://www.growgeorgia.com).

		Networking/ Mentoring	Funding	Training/ Classes	Community- Focused
Access to Capital for Entrepreneurs (ACE)	aceloans.com	✓	✓		
Foundational Leadership and Entrepreneurship Experience (FLEX)	georgiaflex.org			✓	
Georgia Center of Innovation	georgia.org/center-of-innovation	✓			
Georgia Department of Community Affairs	dca.georgia.gov		✓		✓
Georgia Department of Economic Development (GDcED)	georgia.org				✓
Georgia Downtown Association	georgiadowntownassociation.org	✓			
Georgia Municipal Association (GMA)	gacities.com			✓	✓
Georgia Power Economic Development	selectgeorgia.com			✓	✓
GT Advanced Technology Development Center (ATDC)	atdc.org	✓		✓	
Innov8GA	innov8ga.org	✓		✓	
Lucas Center for Entrepreneurship	lucascenter.com	✓	✓	✓	
Make Startups	makestartups.org	✓		✓	
Small Business Administration - SCORE	score.org	✓		✓	
SparkMacon	sparkmacon.com	✓		✓	
The Launch Room	thelaunchroom.org	✓		✓	
UGA Small Business Development Center	georgiasbdc.org	✓		✓	

The Entrepreneurs Experience

Jessica Walden

President & CEO

Greater Macon Chamber of Commerce

The Entrepreneurs Experience

Meet the speakers:

- Jessica Walden, President & CEO, Greater Macon Chamber of Commerce
- Jacob Patton, CEO, Allstate Electric
- Mena Teijeiro, Owner, The Florrest

Georgia Department of Economic Development

Allen Fox

Director

Entrepreneurial & Small Business Ecosystems

David Nuckolls

Executive Director

Georgia Center of Innovation

You CAN Do This!

Community leaders and entrepreneurship programs share how they overcame challenges to start and grow their programs.

Allen Fox

Director

Entrepreneurial & Small Business Ecosystems

You CAN Do This!

Meet the speakers:

- Allen Fox, Director, GDEcD
- Jason Ford, City of Hartwell Georgia
- Ande Noktes, Lucas Center for Entrepreneurship
- Michele Johnson, The Greater Vidalia Center for Rural Entrepreneurship
- Sierra Martin, SparkMacon

I Didn't Know They Did *That!*

Dive deeper with statewide resource partners to discover solutions available to entrepreneurs.

David Nuckolls

Executive Director

Georgia Center for Innovation

I Didn't Know They Did *That*!

Meet the speakers:

- David Nuckolls, Georgia Center for Innovation
- Tommie Beth Willis, Access for Capital for Entrepreneurs
- Melissa Dark, GA Foundational Leadership & Entrepreneurship Experience (FLEX)
- Matt McKenna, SBA SCORE
- David Canady, UGA Small Business Development Center

Accelerate Your Ecosystem with AI

Robbie Parks

UGA Small Business Development Center

Survey and Wrap Up

**Thank you for attending the CREATE
Entrepreneurship Summit**

Cultivating **Resilient** Entrepreneurs and
Transforming Economies

For communities > SelectGeorgia.com

For entrepreneurs > GrowGeorgia.com

SCAN HERE



RETAIL READY SUMMITS

The Retail Ready Summits help community leaders like you gain a deeper understanding of trends impacting retail location decisions and prepare your city or town for retail opportunities.

Join us for one of the sessions coming to a region near you.

August 28, Acworth, GA

October 23, Macon, GA

RSVP today for event updates and to save your spot!



CONTACT INFORMATION

Scott Purvis



Phone Number

(229) 881-1474



Email Address

mspurvis@southernco.com

CONTACT INFORMATION

Vanessa Wagner (she/her)



Phone Number

(770) 856-8486



Email Address

vmwagner@southernco.com



Georgia
Power