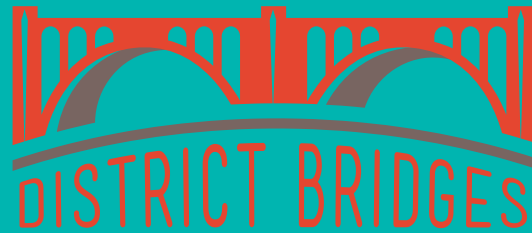




2019 ANNUAL REPORT



A LETTER FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Dear Friends,

I am pleased to present the District Bridges 2019 Annual Report. As an organization, we strive to serve our neighborhoods and business community with passion, consistency, and innovation. In this year's report, we are highlighting many, though certainly not all, of the organization's accomplishments and activities that advance our mission to *enrich neighborhood vitality by bridging community engagement and economic development opportunities so individuals, businesses, and organizations can thrive together.*

Over past year, we have continued to build strong and trusted relationships with the 420 businesses in our two Main Street corridors, Columbia Heights | Mount Pleasant and Lower Georgia Avenue. Through these programs, we were able to provide small business grants and direct technical assistance to our businesses. We pioneered in developing an online technical assistance in partnership with Rhode Island Avenue Main Street that will enable businesses to access valuable training resources 24/7 from any data connected device.

We hosted multiple community events that brought together our neighbors to celebrate the dynamic communities we serve while supporting small businesses. One such event was DC Open Streets which drew over 35,000 people to Georgia Avenue and gave us an opportunity to partner with Mayor Muriel Bowser and the DC Department of Transportation.

I hope you enjoy reading this report and that it gives you further insight into the work that we do. As we enter 2020, I would like to take a moment to thank all of our businesses, partners, volunteers, patrons, and community advocates for the time, commitment and kindness you show us and one another everyday!

Here's to a great year!



Brianne Dornbush, Executive Director

INVESTING IN COMMUNITY + SUPPORTING LOCAL BUSINESS DISTRICT BRIDGES

Our Mission > District Bridges is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization with a mission to enrich neighborhood vitality by bridging community engagement and economic development opportunities so individuals, businesses, and organizations can thrive together.

Community Built. Community Driven. District Bridges was born out of a collaborative grassroots effort, known as the Columbia Heights Initiative (CHI). CHI started as a group of neighbors who shared a vision of building inclusive relationships and having fun! In 2005, these founding members organized the first Columbia Heights Day Festival. After ten years, the CHI board built the foundation for an organization that would serve the community year-round. With this broader vision, we changed our name to *District Bridges* and expanded to serve the neighborhoods of *Columbia Heights, Mount Pleasant, Petworth, Park View, and Pleasant Plains.*

OUR VALUES

RELATIONSHIPS + ACTION-ORIENTED + DIVERSITY + STORY
FUN + INNOVATION + INCLUSION + COLLABORATION

THE DISTRICT BRIDGES MODEL

As the first multi-Main Street organization, District Bridges has set out to develop a model that makes creating new Main Street programs in DC a turnkey operation, streamlining the operational setup of a new program, creating economies of scale, increasing staff capacity, and most importantly developing a strategic approach to community development that looks at the holistic needs of the city to create collaborative solutions to address our most pressing and critical needs.



WHY DISTRICT BRIDGES?

- 1 Fully built-out operating systems ready to be deployed for new programs.
- 2 Creates economies of scale & capacity by centralizing the administrative functions such as accounting, payroll, insurance, systems and data management, ect.
- 3 Built sustainability and capacity through a scaled staffing model which ensures program success even if staff leave or change.
- 4 Robust financial system in accordance with GAAP standards.
- 5 Standardized approach to data collection creating more accurate reporting and analysis.
- 6 Customized Sales force platform designed for urban Main Streets that:
 - + Integrates with our website, maintaining our customer-facing online business directory
 - + Stores comprehensive business data and case notes, accessible from a phone
 - + Creates/ensures institutional knowledge is maintained
 - + Supports a robust fundraising strategy
- 7 Stronger fundraising ask and broader donor pool.
- 8 Broader community engagement through volunteers, action teams, neighborhood strategy councils and the executive board of directors.

DISTRICT BRIDGES WAS THE FIRST MULTI-MAIN STREET ORGANIZATION IN DC AND IS NOW A MODEL THAT IS BEING REPLICATED BY OTHERS IN THE CITY.

OUR MAIN STREETS

We manage the Columbia Heights/Mount Pleasant and Lower Georgia Avenue Main Street Grant programs funded in part by the DC Department of Small and Local Business Development (DSLBD). Through these programs, we support community-based economic development across five neighborhoods in Wards 1 and 4.



DID YOU KNOW > DISTRICT BRIDGES SERVES SOME OF THE MOST DIVERSE AND DENSELY POPULATED NEIGHBORHOODS IN THE CITY?



NEIGHBORHOOD STRATEGY COUNCILS

The Neighborhood Strategy Councils (*NSC*) provide leadership on neighborhood priorities for community-based economic development through District Bridges Main Street programs. Each Main Street program develops an *NSC* that works as a team to apply their experience and local understanding of community needs to support the designated Main Street neighborhoods. Specific activities of individual members may vary based on expertise, capacity, and availability.

ACTION TEAMS

Action Teams are volunteer working groups that enable volunteers to work together in support of community building and local business support that leads to inclusive, prosperous and fun places to live and work.

The Action Teams allow District Bridges to expand its capacity and *directly involve the community in the programmatic work of the organization*. Each team focuses on a specific priority area, within each team, there are a variety of projects that team members can support. Two co-chairs are selected for each action team. They are responsible for convening and leading the team to accomplish their workplan projects. The Action Teams span all of our neighborhoods allowing for collaboration, coordination, and expanded capacity. Each team meets on the schedule that works best for their team and the activities they are working on. Once each month all the co-chairs convene with District Bridges staff to report out the activities of their team and cross-collaborate with other teams.

INVESTING IN COMMUNITY + SUPPORTING LOCAL BUSINESS



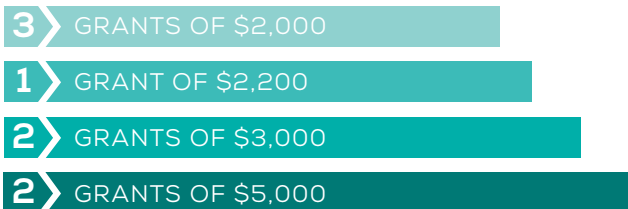
COLUMBIA HEIGHTS | MOUNT PLEASANT MAIN STREET (CHMPMS)

In its third year (FY2019), the *CHMPMS* supported local small businesses through direct grants, technical assistance consultancies, training workshops, advocacy with DC policymakers, and events that attracted neighbors and visitors to the Columbia Heights and Mount Pleasant neighborhoods.



SMALL BIZ GRANTS

CHMPMS made *8 grants*, totalling *\$24,200*. These grants allowed businesses to complete small interior and exterior improvements, equipment purchases or training and consulting services.

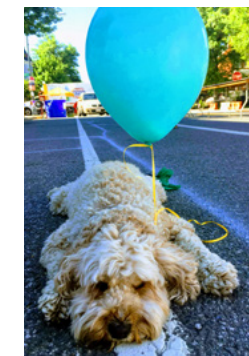


SMALL BIZ SUPPORT

We conducted *2 marketing workshops* supporting *8 businesses*.

EVENTS & ENGAGEMENTS

- › Columbia Heights Reads
- › Two Yoga in the Plaza Events
- › Fiesta Del Barrio
- › Columbia Heights Tree Lighting Extravaganza
- › Movie Nights
- › Community Happy Hours
- › Annual Halloween Parade & Fun Night
- › Annual Gala



INVESTING IN COMMUNITY + SUPPORTING LOCAL BUSINESS



LOWER GEORGIA AVENUE MAIN STREET (LGAMS)

In its second year (FY2019), the Lower Georgia Avenue Main Street program (LGAMS) supported local small businesses through direct grants, technical assistance consultancies, training workshops, beautification efforts, advocacy with DC policymakers, and events that attract neighbors and visitors to the Lower Georgia Avenue corridor.

SMALL BIZ GRANTS

In 2019, LGAMS conducted 2 Small Business Grant application processes, leading to 5 grants of \$2K each (\$10K total) for small interior or exterior improvements or equipment purchases. In addition, we contracted with a grant writer to help businesses apply for the Great Streets grants through DMPED.

\$100,000 IN GREAT STREETS GRANTS AWARDED

We helped 4 businesses with applications, 3 were submitted, and 2 awarded for \$50,000 each.

SMALL BIZ TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE

LGAMS hosted *Marketing for Small Businesses* on May 8 and 15, and July 18 serving 21 businesses, as well as hosting an OTR & DCRA Info Session in partnership with LEDC, Think Local First, Greater Washington Hispanic Chamber of Commerce that served 15 businesses. LGAMS also provides support especially relevant to small businesses along the Lower Georgia Avenue corridor, including providing 20+ hours of free consultation to 10 businesses through LEDC's Pro Biz program, helping businesses with OTR, DCRA and ABRA licensing and permits, and sending out a regular business newsletter provides notifications of small business grant funding, new regulations, and technical assistance support.

EVENTS & ENGAGEMENTS

- › Celebrate Petworth
- › Holiday Activation
- › Chili Cookoff
- › First Fridays
- › Community Happy Hours
- › Monthly Community street clean-ups with Georgia Ave Thrive
- › Traffic box paintings by local artists



WE DO MORE THAN MAIN STREETS

CORNER STORE CONVERSION

We piloted the Corner Store Conversion Project in LGAMS's first year with an assessment of 7 businesses. LGAMS wrote a grant resulting in a \$10K grant to one store for equipment that increased the production of sambusas. The project continued into FY19 with the following activities:

5

stores were provided additional consultation on diversifying their product mix to appeal to a broader customer base and increase marginal returns on per item sales.

\$50K

Two stores received grant writer support for a \$50K grant from Great Streets. One was awarded for equipment purchases and facade improvements.



3

stores received marketing plans to increase their customer base.

BUSINESS PRESERVATION ASSISTANCE PROGRAM

The Business Preservation Assistance Program (BPAP), BPAP is an initiative designed to help DC's culturally-vital small businesses avoid displacement as neighborhoods across the city continue to gentrify. In February, we convened a diverse stakeholder group to better understand the threat and opportunity at hand. We are currently working with five businesses on Lower Georgia Avenue to pilot this model. The approaches under investigation are integrating commercial properties into the community land trusts, master tenancy agreements to accommodate shorter term flexible leases at more affordable rates, and commercial condos in mixed use redevelopments.

If successful, this model could be applied across the District and in other cities facing the challenges of commercial displacement.

FINANCIALS

FY 2019 > OCTOBER 1, 2018 - SEPTEMBER 30, 2019

ASSETS

Current Assets	\$91,385.66
Cash Assets	\$23,043.51

LIABILITY & EQUITY

Current Liabilities	\$44,064.73
Accounts Payable	\$59,758.92
Equity	(\$41,735.97)
Unrestricted Net Assets	\$9,607.03
Net Income	(\$32,128.94)

TOTAL LIABILITIES & EQUITY

\$120,337.29

INVESTING IN COMMUNITY + SUPPORTING LOCAL BUSINESS



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