

GoDaddy Venture Forward Report Summer 2022

This report is powered by the latest data from Venture Forward, a GoDaddy initiative to quantify the impact of 20 million online microbusinesses on the U.S. economy.

Venture Forward Introduction

Venture Forward is a GoDaddy initiative started in 2018 to measure the economic impact of over 20 million U.S. microbusinesses it supports, to better understand their needs and demographics. Our goal is to empower policymakers and economic developers with the data and insight to assist the microbusinesses in their communities and the everyday entrepreneurs behind them.

In this Summer 2022 Venture Forward Report, you'll find:



The latest quarterly data on microbusiness growth, trends, and areas of interest



National microbusiness survey results from February 2022 of over 2,300 entrepreneurs



Interviews with economic developers across three cities and the CEO of data-leader mySidewalk



New research on microbusinesses and the Great Resignation, Great Migration, and Best Performing Cities



A Guest Perspective: The Importance of Microbusinesses According to Policymakers



Keith Stokes

Business and Development
Director for the City of
Providence, RI



Jaime Cruz

Executive Director,
Nevada Workforce
Connections



Irene Bustamante Adams

Deputy Director & Chief
Strategy Officer, Nevada
Workforce



Jeff Seymour

Executive Vice President,
Economic Development at Greater
Oklahoma City Chamber

We recently interviewed **Keith Stokes**, **Jaime Cruz**, **Irene Bustamante Adams** and **Jeff Seymour** with three key questions:

Introduction



Question: What have you seen change in terms of what's top of mind for economic developers and policymakers when it comes to small and microbusinesses and local economies?

- **Stokes:** Economic development leaders are now reviewing ways to better elevate the microbusiness segment of small businesses. This new area of focus will include deploying additional data-driven research to better understand their unique business needs.
- **Cruz:** Traditionally economic developers in our region have not focused on microbusinesses. That has changed as more and more resources become available to help the micro business ecosystem grow and prosper.
- **Seymour:** In general we have shifted to include a lot more small/diverse business development efforts as part of our larger economic development strategy during the past three years. Not surprisingly, some of this work was borne out of the very visible disruption caused by COVID and the related economic insecurity. For Oklahoma City, that disruption really married up with a broader conversation that had been happening in the community about economic resiliency more widely. We knew our efforts needed to focus on economic mobility across economic spectrums but we didn't have the data to understand specifically what the disparities looked like and ways to create specific long-term interventions. I think for teams that had tended to focus on traditional "big picture" economic development efforts (business recruitment, business expansion support and research) there was sometimes a view that a better infrastructure existed to support small/diverse/microbusinesses than really did. Like many others, we have broadened the scope of our partnerships to include more of this work. In our case, we think we have specific opportunities to create better supply chain partnerships with corporate entities and small/diverse businesses, support a broader and more diverse leadership network throughout the metro and also do a better job of tracking longitudinal data around outcomes related to economic trends that include deeper dives around specific demographics and business types.

Question: Why is it important to support microbusinesses?

- **Stokes:** Microbusiness ownership offers a pathway to economic self-sufficiency, particularly for underserved people and neighborhoods.
- **Cruz:** Microbusinesses are necessary to the health of the U.S. economy. Much of the support for small, medium and large businesses comes from microbusinesses. Much of the innovation in commerce comes from microbusinesses.
- **Adams:** Economic ecosystems are evaluating their supply chains for long term sustainability. Investing in microbusinesses and helping those that want to grow is a strategy that is being considered by economic developers and policymakers.
- **Seymour:** I think we've seen (in some cases the hard way) that small/micro businesses really make up the fabric of a community. When we talk about the texture of our regional market (in our case the 10 county regional area surrounding and including Oklahoma City), we are very proud of the growth, economic diversity and success we've seen over the past 25 years. With that said, what really supports the overall texture of the market is the small and microbusinesses that really give Oklahoma City its neighborhood level character. These businesses are the ones that really define the culture of Oklahoma City but also represent a tremendous amount of entrepreneurship and growth potential, particularly in diverse parts of the community.



Question: What interests you about the Venture Forward data, and in particular at this time?

- **Stokes:** The Venture Forward data has validated the fastest growing segment of the U.S. population will be people of color. Advancing microbusinesses and entrepreneurship is a sure pathway to wealth creation, directly supporting a thriving local and national economy.
- **Cruz:** It is important to our region to identify, better understand and effectively support microbusinesses. The Venture Forward data can help us build and maintain a healthy ecosystem for microbusinesses to grow and prosper.
- **Adams:** In our Southern Nevada labor force data, we are uncovering that many workers are not returning to their hospitality jobs they once held for years. Instead they want options to be an entrepreneur. We need to figure out how to support their launch and evolution. I feel the Venture Forward data would supply the information we need to be intentional in our support.
- **Seymour:** One of our biggest interest in Venture Forward is having access to better and more real time data around small/minority/microbusiness trends. When we set out several years ago to start tracking trends in this space (particularly related to economic mobility and gaps in the ecosystem) a lot of the discoverable data had significant lags (4-5 years in some cases).

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Microbusiness Snapshot

02 | MICROBUSINESS SNAPSHOT

The State of Microbusinesses

A closer look at the latest (Q1 2022) numbers and trends of online microbusinesses, where they're located, and their outsized economic impact.

Behind Venture Forward

Venture Forward quantifies the impact of over 20 million online microbusinesses on their local economies, providing a unique view into the attitudes, demographics, and needs of these entrepreneurs.

GoDaddy has long believed that understanding the distinct behavior of small businesses and microbusinesses is important for government leaders who want to fully leverage their economic potential, especially as part of our mission to make opportunity more inclusive for all.

Since government metrics don't track online microbusinesses separately and because less than 20% of those surveyed have registered an EIN, they have been largely invisible to policymakers.

GoDaddy started Venture Forward in 2018 to make them visible, and to quantify their outsized economic impact. An entrepreneurial venture, or online microbusiness, is defined as a discrete domain name with an active website.

94% have less than 10 employees, a majority are commercial, and more than half have launched with less than \$5k in funding.

For more details on our research methodology and other findings, please read [About Us](#) on the Venture Forward website or see our [FAQs](#).

You can't create policy for what you can't see.

— Jim Hock, Chief of Staff, US Department of Commerce | January 2015-2017

Real Economic Outcomes

Impact of Microbusinesses



\$195

Each additional microbusiness per 100 people can increase annual median household income of an incremental \$195

Source: 2020 – American Community Survey



2 for 1

For each everyday entrepreneur, two or more jobs are created on top of their own

Source: 2021 – Bureau of Labor Statistics



0.05%

Each additional microbusiness per 100 people causes a 0.05 percentage point reduction in that county's unemployment rate

Source: 2021 – Bureau of Labor Statistics

Impact of Microbusiness Activity Index (MAI)



0.1%

Unemployment is reduced by 0.1% for every 1 point increase in MAI

Source: 2021 – Bureau of Labor Statistics

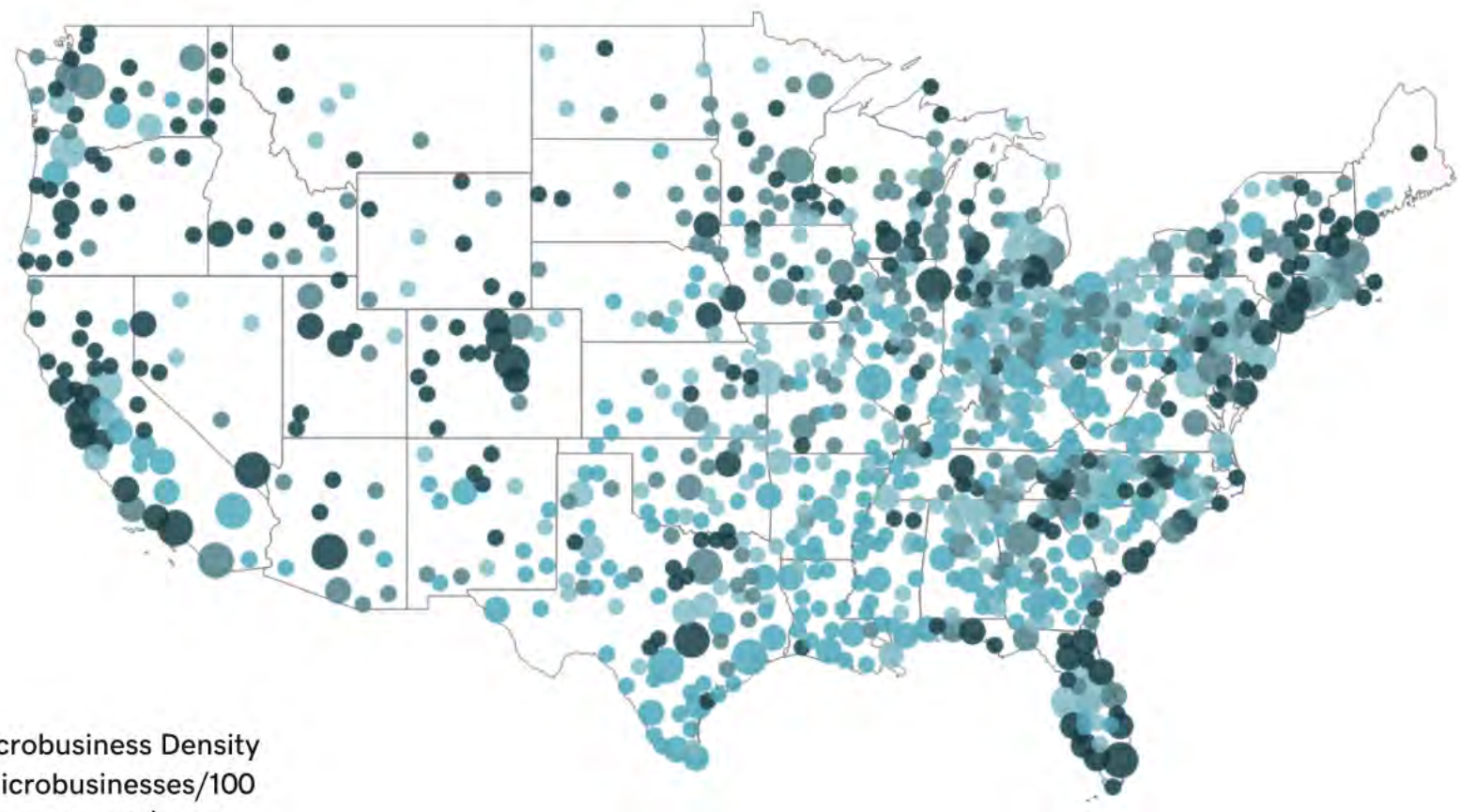


0.3%

The proportion of households in a community earning \$60k in household income increases by 0.3% for every 1 point increase in MAI

Source: 2021 – Catalyst

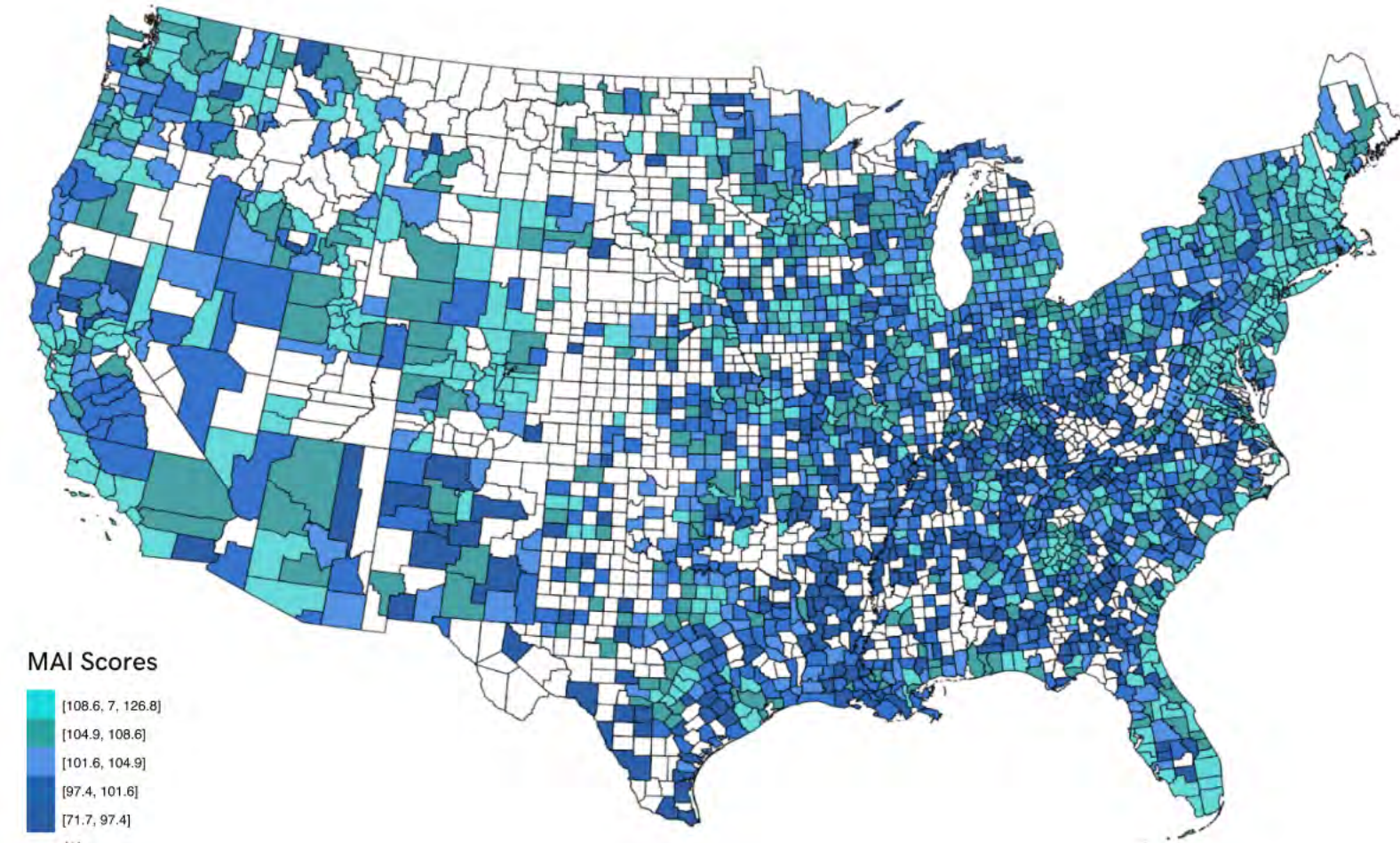
Microbusinesses thrive across all geographies



Microbusiness Density
(microbusinesses/100 people)

Low High

City Regions	Microbusinesses per 100 people (Q1 2022)	Min	Max	% All cities
Small Cities < 250k population	3	12,717	243,966	79%
Mid Cities 250k - 2m population	4	250,260	1,985,926	17%
Large Cities 2m+ population	6	2,050,933	20m	4%



MAI Scores

- [108.6, 7, 126.8]
- [104.9, 108.6]
- [101.6, 104.9]
- [97.4, 101.6]
- [71.7, 97.4]
- NA

Counties	MAI Composite Score (Q1 2022)	Min	Max	% All counties
Rural < 100 ppl./square mile	99.3	0.4	99	60%
Suburban 100 - 500 ppl./square mile	104.4	100	499	28%
Urban > 500 ppl./square mile	109.2	500	72,052	12%

Which industries saw the greatest change in number of online entrepreneurs?

A CLOSER LOOK

In the first quarter of 2022, as COVID restrictions were lifted, microbusinesses in different industry categories began to gain traction.

New industries are emerging as popular choices for entrepreneurs with an online presence.

The table presented here clearly shows strong growth among industries which require public gathering like Events, Transportation, Travel, and Entertainment.

Trends by Change in Number of Ecommerce Entrepreneurs per Industry (Q1 2021 - Q1 2022)

Top 5 Industries (by % Gain)		Top 5 Industries (by % Loss)	
Industry	Y/Y Change	Industry	Y/Y Change
Events	33%	Fashion	-22%
Transportation	26%	Personal	-18%
Travel	25%	Beauty	-15%
Public Space	19%	Food and Drink	-12%
Entertainment	18%	Religion	-11%

Industry Glossary



Events

Conferences, seminars and parties



Public Spaces

Parks, aquariums and art museums



Fashion

Clothes retailers, design services and personal stylists



Transportation

Commercial trucking, boating supplies and shipping



Entertainment

Clubs, amusement parks and playgrounds



Personal

Contract work, portfolios and more



Beauty

Salons/barbers, beauticians and make up sales



Food & Drink

Bakeries, confectioners and food manufacturers



Religion

Churches, spiritual events, faith-based books and merchandise

Which industries saw the greatest change in online revenue growth?

A CLOSER LOOK

As with entrepreneurs, online revenue surged in early 2022 in industries impacted by COVID lockdowns. Average revenue per entrepreneur doubled for consultants and significant gains were made in Travel, Events and Entertainment businesses.

On the other hand, Software Sales and IT Support saw the greatest year over year decline in total revenue (-39%). Other industries observed more modest declines, including Real Estate, Fashion and Restaurant businesses.

Ecommerce Growth in Average Revenue Per Entrepreneur by Industry (Q1 2021 - Q1 2022)

Top 5 Industries (by % Gain)		Top 5 Industries (by % Loss)	
Industry	Y/Y Change	Industry	Y/Y Change
Consulting	205%	Software/IT	-39%
Travel	88%	Personal	-37%
Events	76%	Real Estate	-27%
Entertainment	66%	Fashion	-25%
Media	66%	Restaurant	-18%

Industry Glossary



Events

Conferences, seminars and parties



Public Spaces

Parks, aquariums and art museums



Fashion

Clothes retailers, design services and personal stylists



Transportation

Commercial trucking, boating supplies and shipping



Entertainment

Clubs, amusement parks and playgrounds



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Contract work, portfolios and more



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Food & Drink

Bakeries, confectioners and food manufacturers



Religion

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Latest Findings

03 | LATEST FINDINGS - PART 1

2022 National Microbusiness Survey Results

A look at who is behind the growth of entrepreneurs and what's happened around the “Great Resignation”.

Over 17,000 entrepreneurs have been surveyed between both city and national surveys since 2019.

SURVEY BACKGROUND

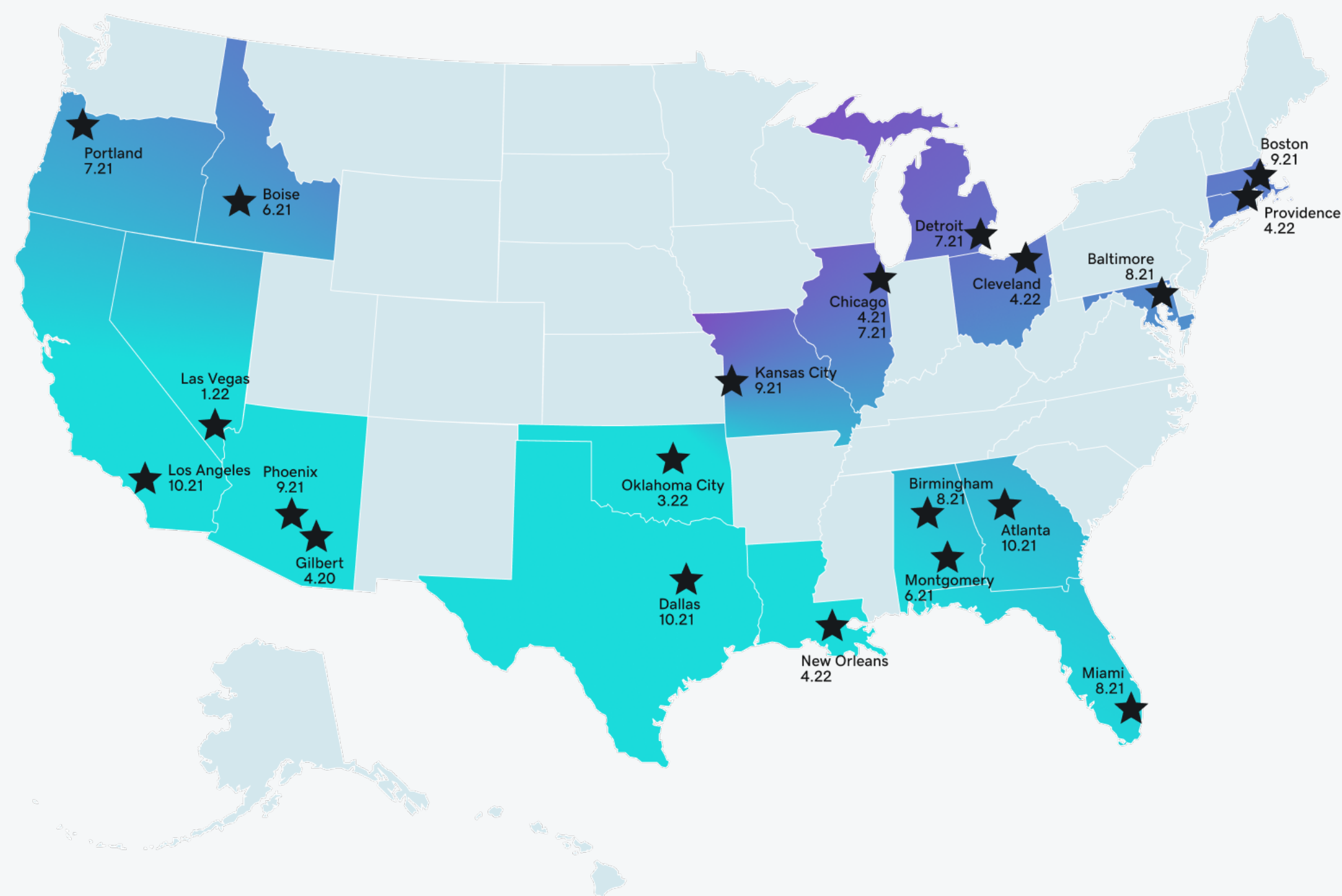
Venture Forward conducts monthly surveys of microbusiness owners around the United States to better understand their needs, aspirations, and the businesses themselves.

Venture Forward has surveyed over 17,000 microbusiness owners through 20 city surveys and four national surveys.

Questions from the surveys cover topics such as:

- Motivations for starting the business
- Income generated from the business
- Aspirations for business growth
- Challenges with running the business and how local government can help
- Demographics of microbusiness owners

Data from all of our city surveys is available for download on the VF [data hub](#).



National Survey Respondents by Zip Code

2022 NATIONAL SURVEY

Venture Forward conducted a national survey of 2,300+ microbusiness entrepreneurs in February 2022.

94%

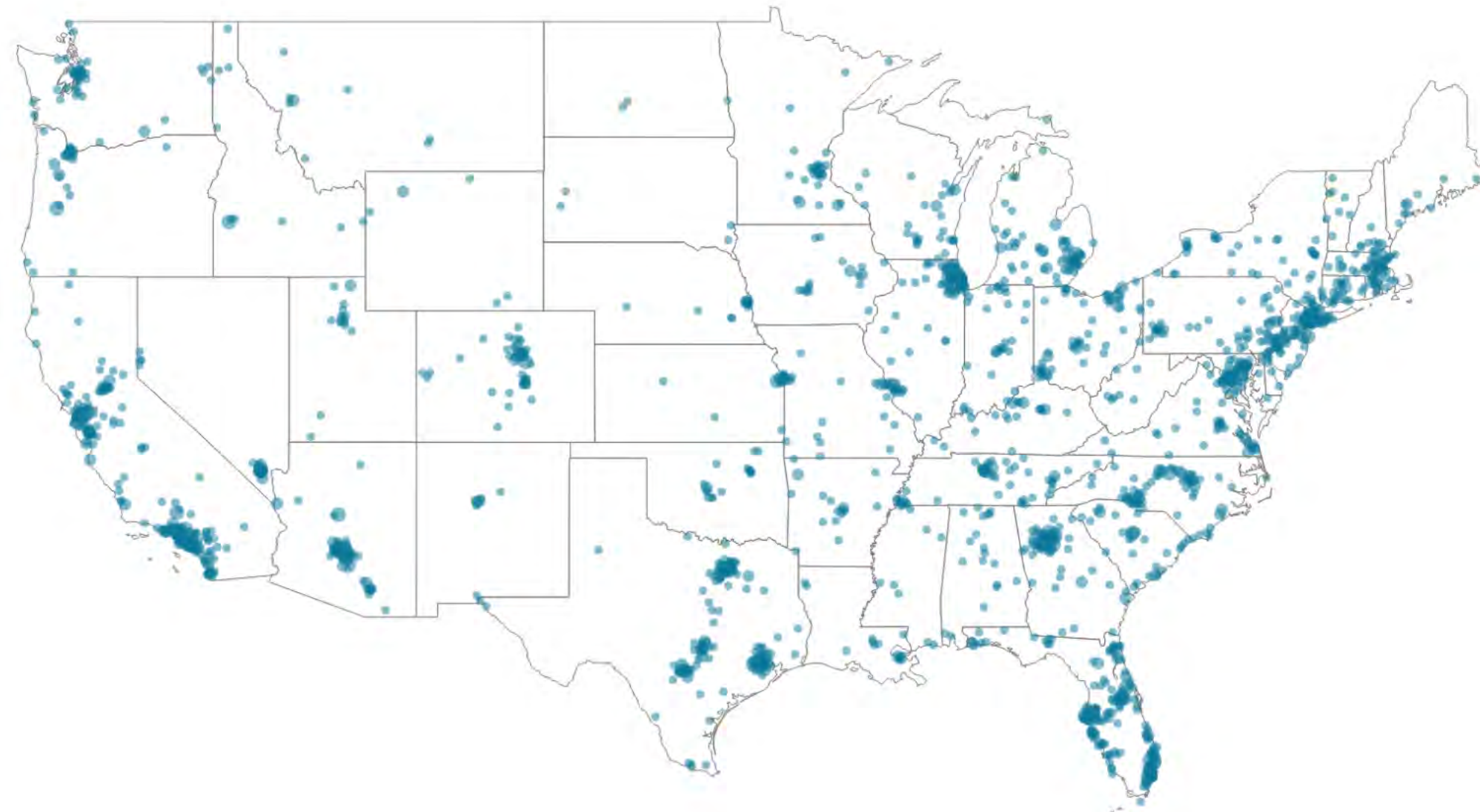
OF MICROBUSINESSES HAVE LESS THAN 10 EMPLOYEES

1 in 4

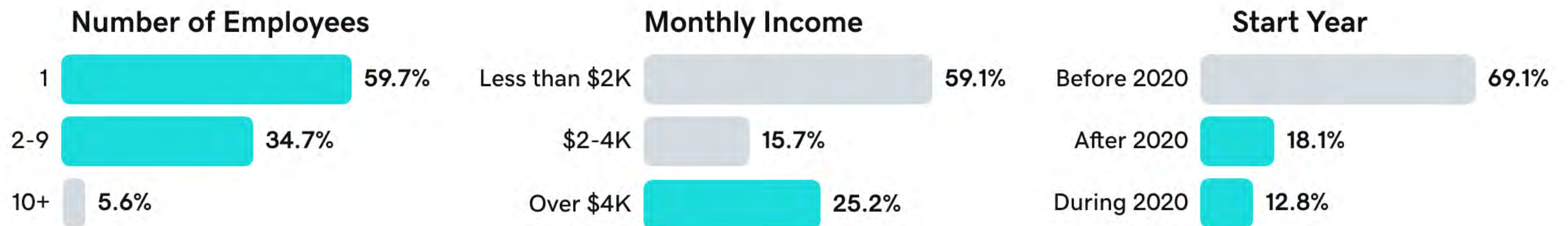
MAKE OVER \$4K PER MONTH FROM THEIR MICROBUSINESS

31%

WERE CREATED IN 2020 OR LATER



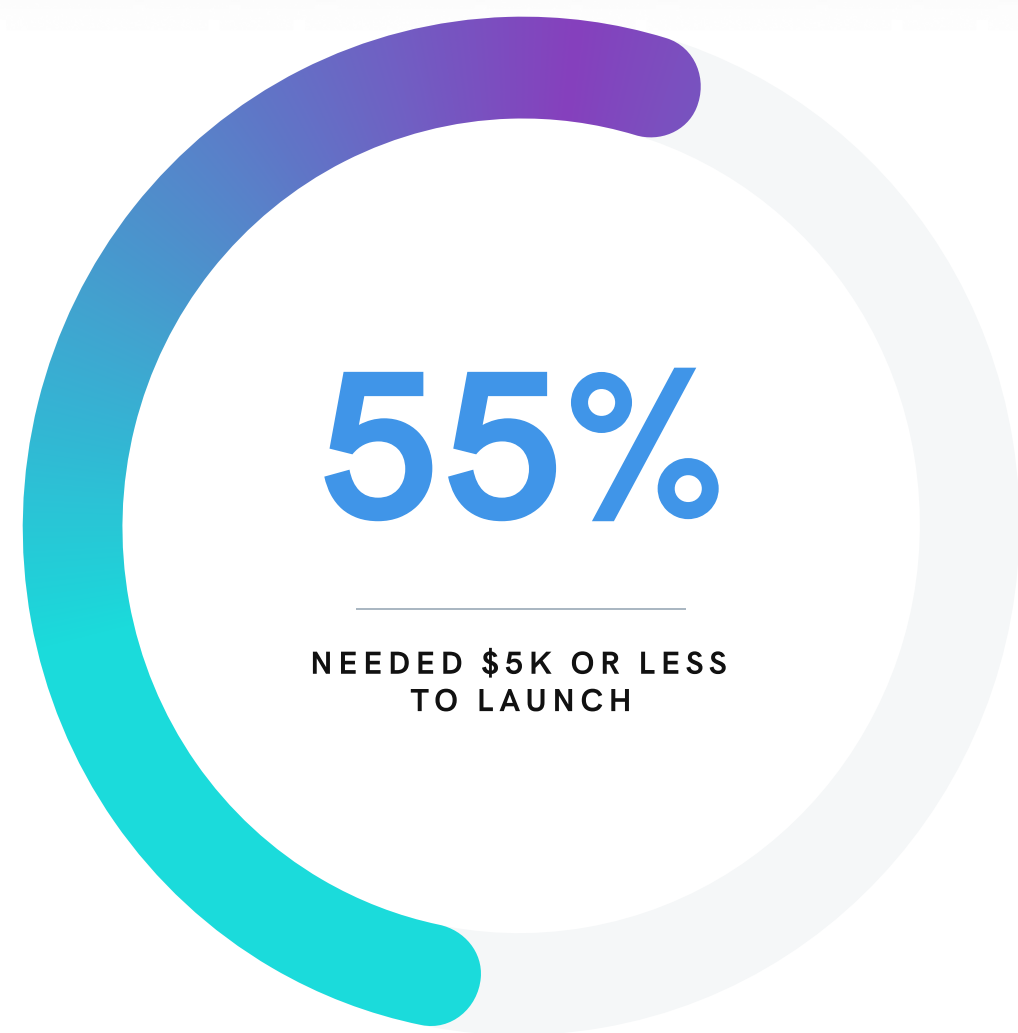
*not pictured: AK and HI



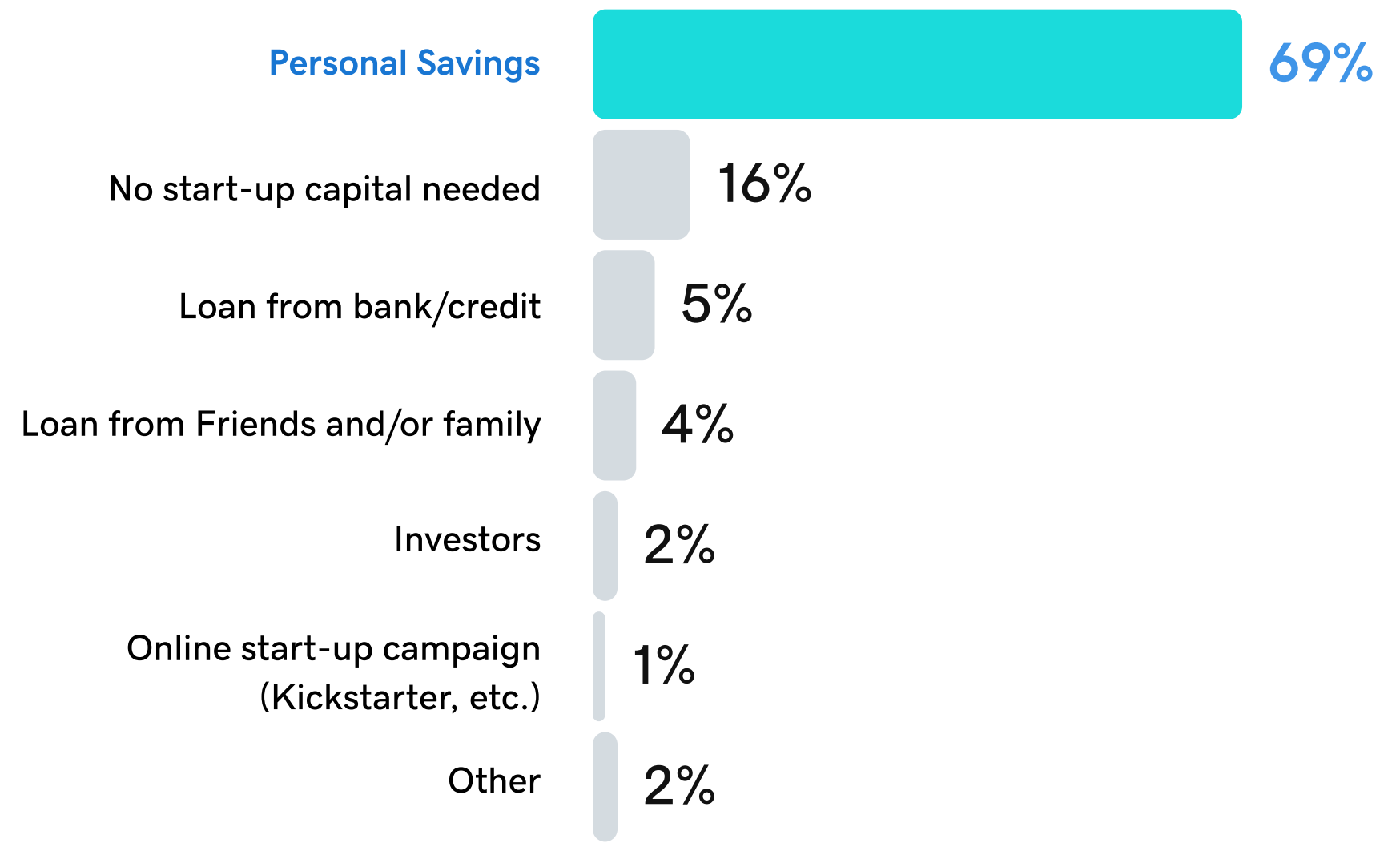
2022 NATIONAL SURVEY

Funding the Microbusiness

The vast majority of microbusiness owners used personal savings to get started, and more than half launched with less than \$5k.



When this business was started, what was the primary source of capital, if any, was needed?



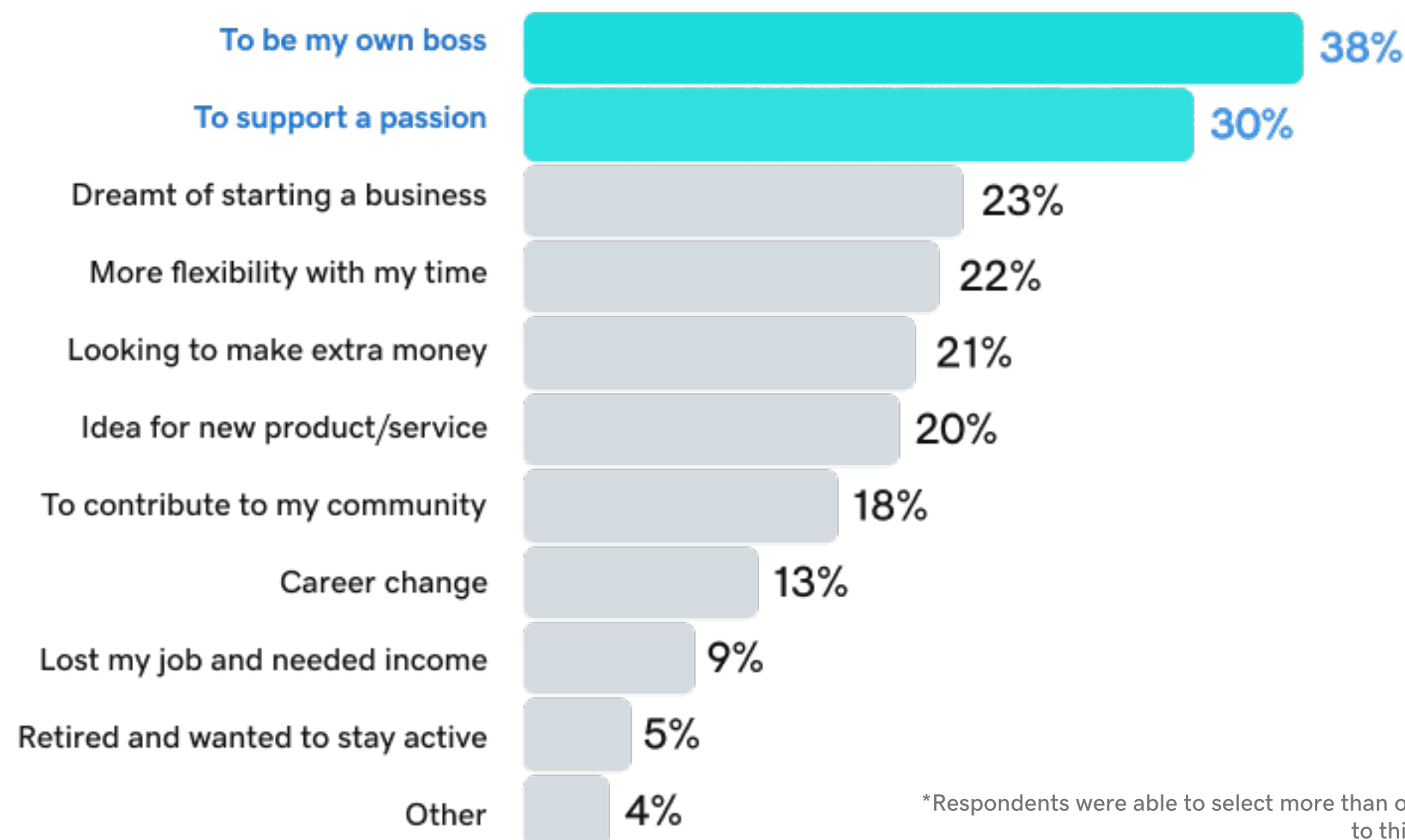
2022 NATIONAL SURVEY

Entrepreneurs created their businesses for a variety of reasons. Most commonly, people wanted to work for themselves or wanted to support a passion.

Motives also vary among demographics:

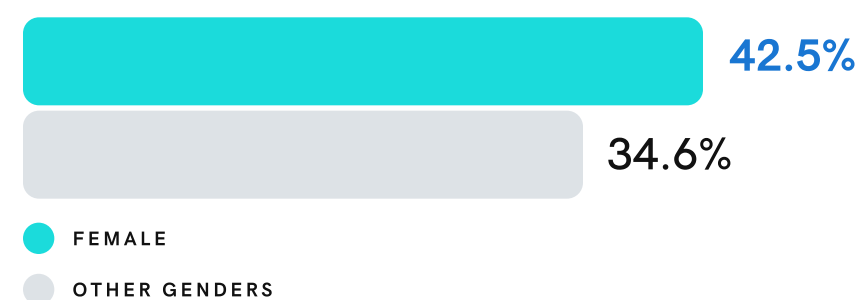
- Female microbusiness owners are more likely to start their business to work for themselves
- Black, Indigenous, and People of Color (BIPOC) microbusiness owners are more motivated by supporting their community
- Adults aged 30-49 are more motivated by a flexible work schedule

Entrepreneurs created their businesses for a variety of reasons.

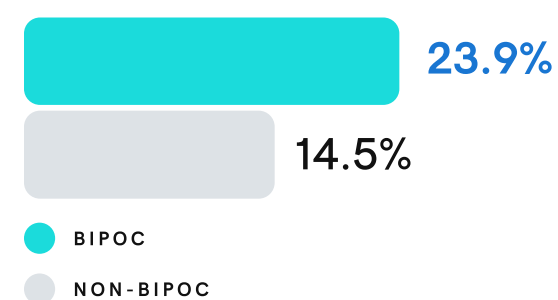


*Respondents were able to select more than one answer to this question

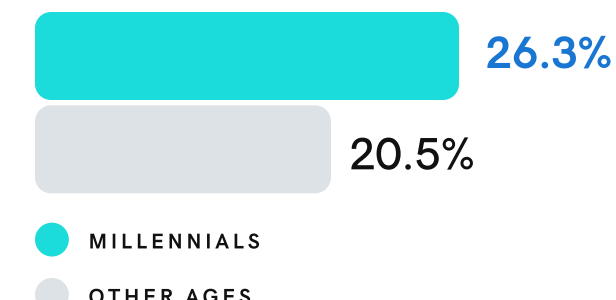
Female microbusiness owners are more likely to start their business to become their own boss



BIPOC microbusiness owners are more likely to start their microbusiness to contribute to their community



Millennials are more likely to start a microbusiness so they can have a flexible work schedule

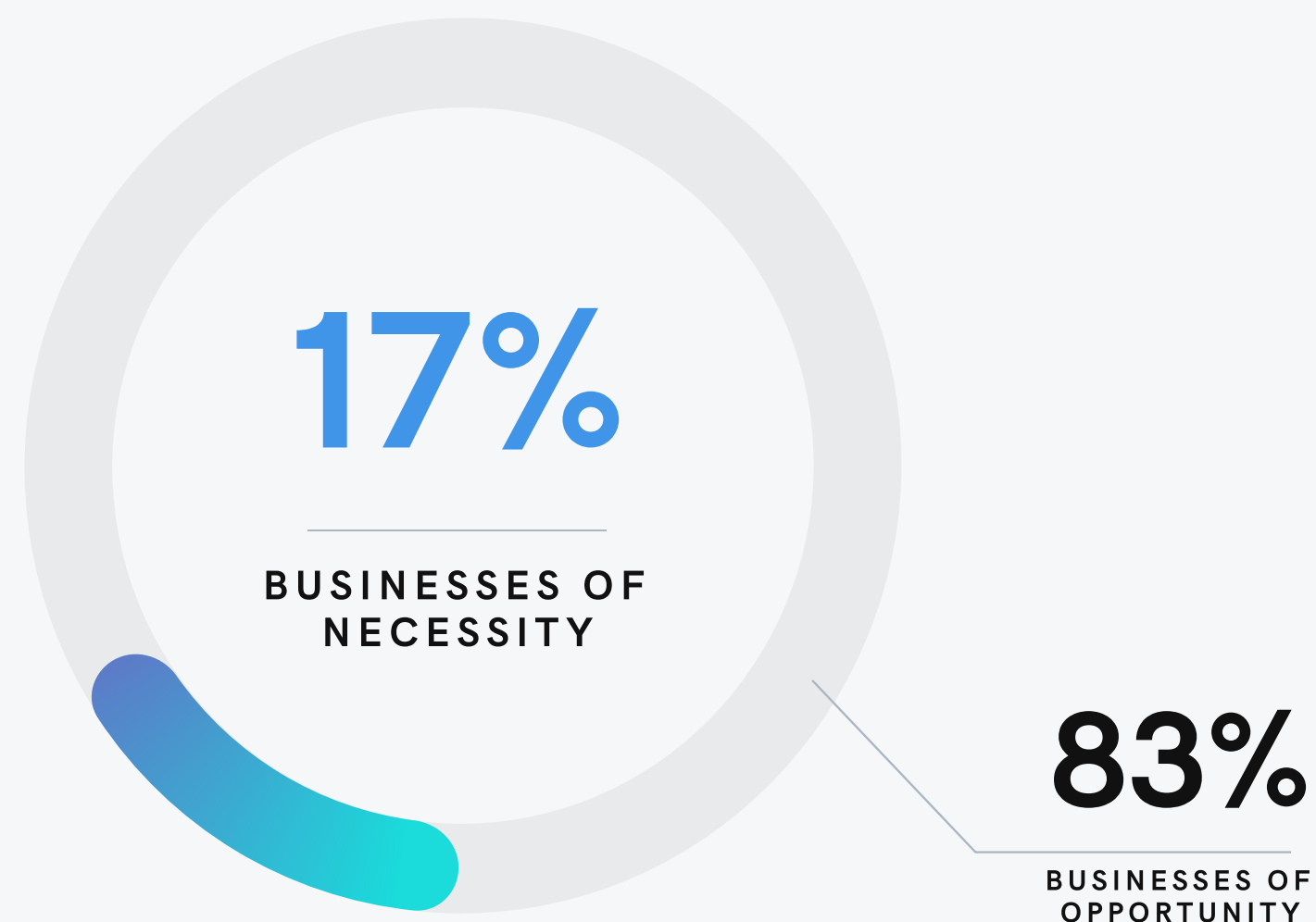


Businesses of Necessity vs. Businesses of Opportunity

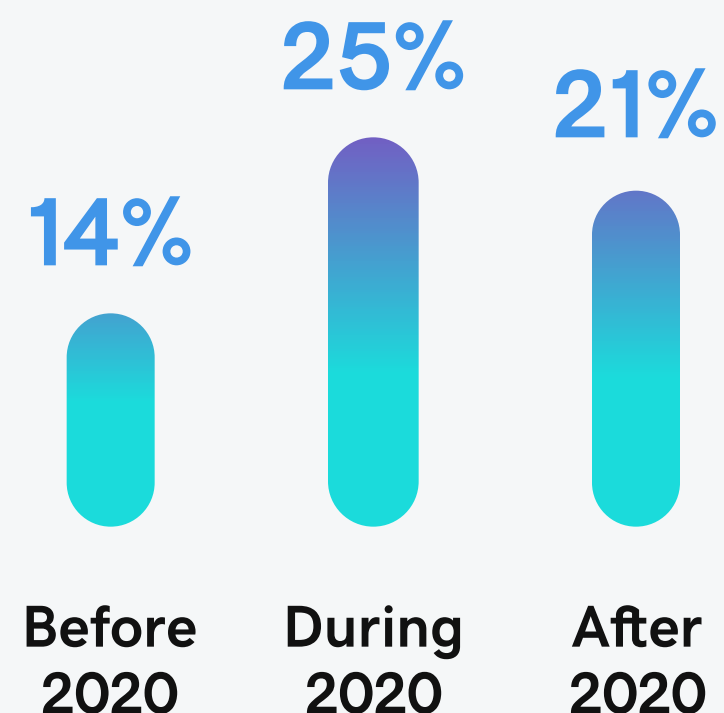
2022 NATIONAL SURVEY

17% of microbusiness owners started their business from a position of necessity, meaning that the owner was not earning any income at the time of inception (whether unemployed, previously retired, or disabled). Other businesses are considered 'businesses of opportunity.'

14% of businesses started before 2020 were businesses of necessity, but that number reached an all-time high of 25% in 2020. It dropped slightly after 2020 to 21%.



Businesses of Necessity by time period:



Regardless of motive for starting the microbusiness, most entrepreneurs **want to grow** in terms of revenue and employee count.

2022 NATIONAL SURVEY

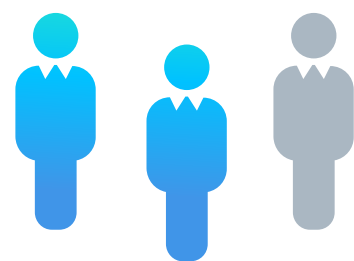
Desire to grow

Of the microbusinesses started in 2020 or later, 85% want to grow. More specifically, approximately two-thirds of entrepreneurs who currently generate supplemental income from their microbusiness want to turn it into their main source of income.

Only 31% hope to stay small as a solopreneur.

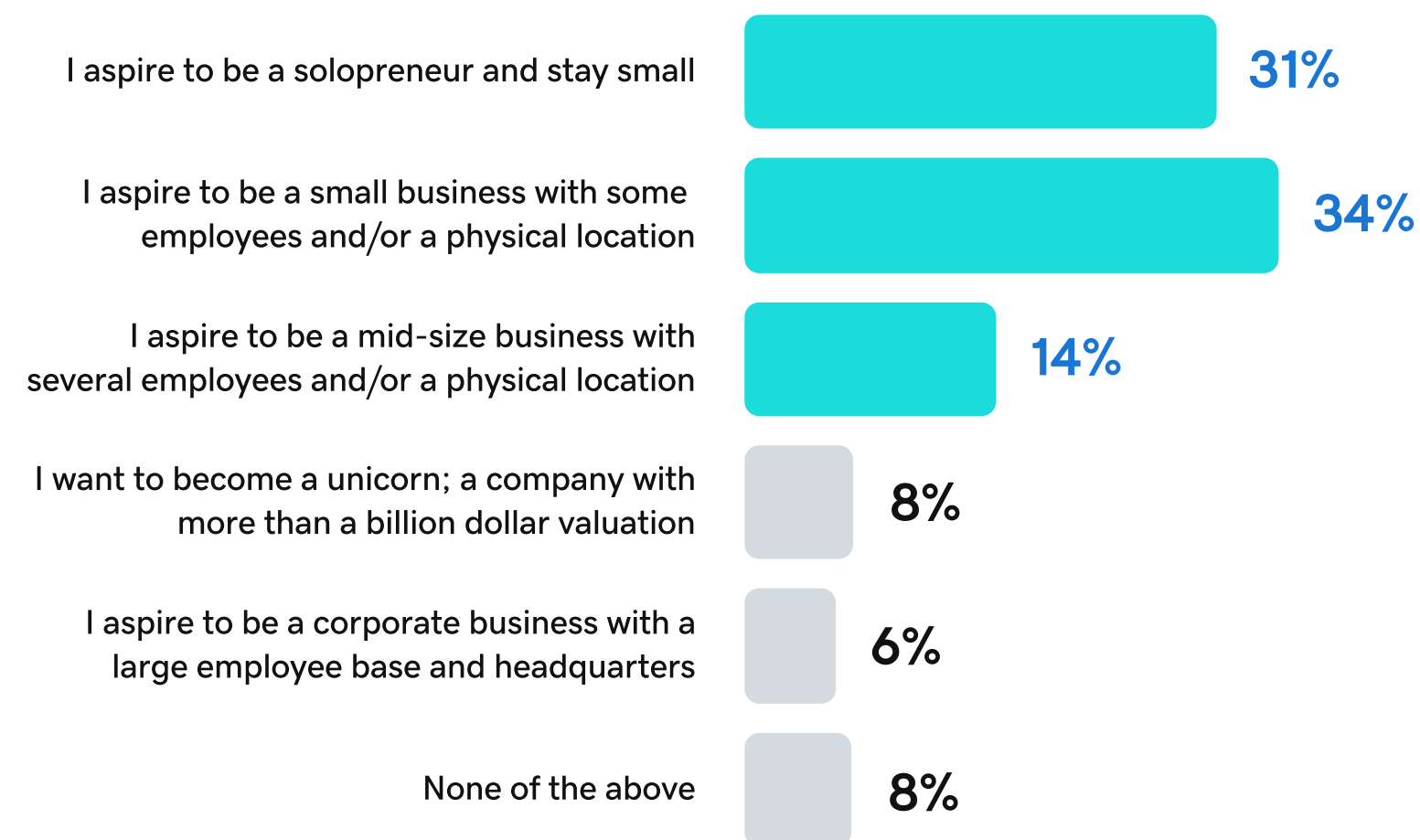


The overwhelming majority of businesses that started in 2020 or later **want to grow** within the next year.



Two-thirds of entrepreneurs want to convert their side business into their **main source of income**.

Which statement best describes your long-term ambitions for the business?



Most microbusiness owners don't know where to get help and most local governments don't know the scale of microbusinesses in their community

2022 NATIONAL SURVEY

Despite strong desires to grow their microbusinesses, approximately 70% of entrepreneurs reported being completely unaware of local government funding and resources.

Only 20% have an employee identification number (EIN) for their microbusiness, which means the government isn't seeing seeing them in reported statistics.

In all scenarios, utilization of available resources is low.

Most microbusiness owners are **unaware of the government resources** available to them.

ONLY
3 in 10

microbusiness owners are aware of local government assistance and funding.

Of those aware of local resources, only 46% have utilized them.

ONLY
2 in 10

microbusinesses are registered with an employee identification number (EIN), so **80% aren't showing up on their city's radar.**

Of those with an EIN, only 15% have used local resources.

Local governments are unaware of the microbusinesses in their communities.

Those who are aware of local resources are **twice as likely to feel positively** about their city's policies and programs.

2022 NATIONAL SURVEY

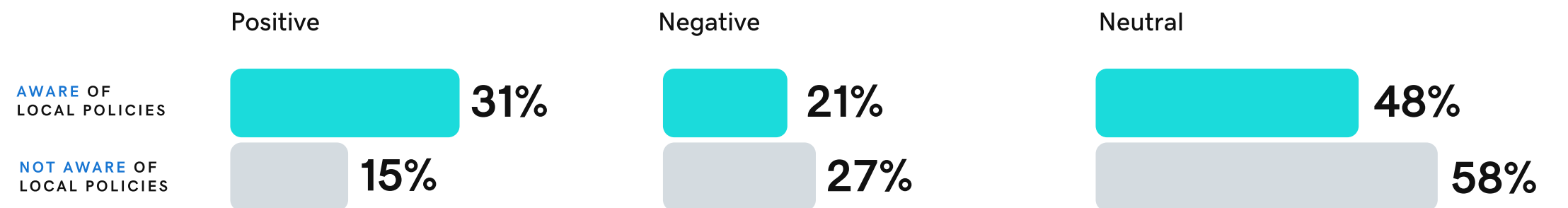
Entrepreneur sentiment about local policies and programs

Most entrepreneurs feel indifferent about their local government's policies and programs due to their lack of awareness in the first place.

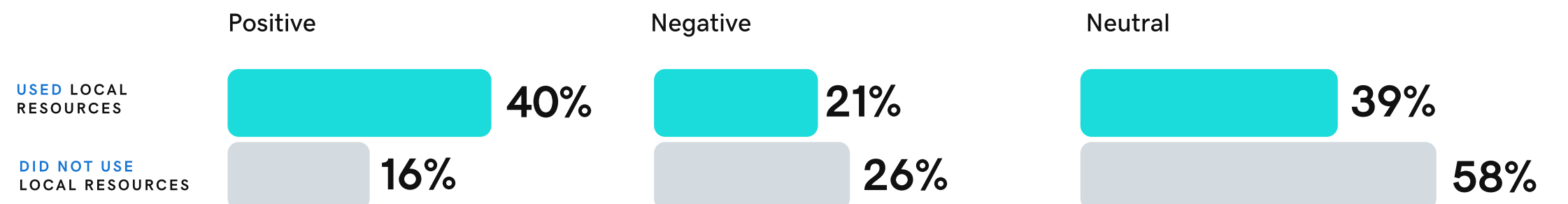
Those who are aware of the resources available report twice as much positive sentiment. Those who have used local resources tend to feel even more positive towards local government and report more positive business outcomes, such as higher average revenue, and optimism about their business.

Source: VF Feb '22 National Survey

What is your opinion about how effectively your city's policies and programs support businesses like yours?



What is your opinion about how effectively your city's policies and programs support businesses like yours?





03 | LATEST FINDINGS - PART 2

A look at the movement of talent and associated local economic impact

“The Great Migration” since the onset of the pandemic and its impact on the creation of microbusinesses.

Microbusiness entrepreneurship & mobility numbers move together

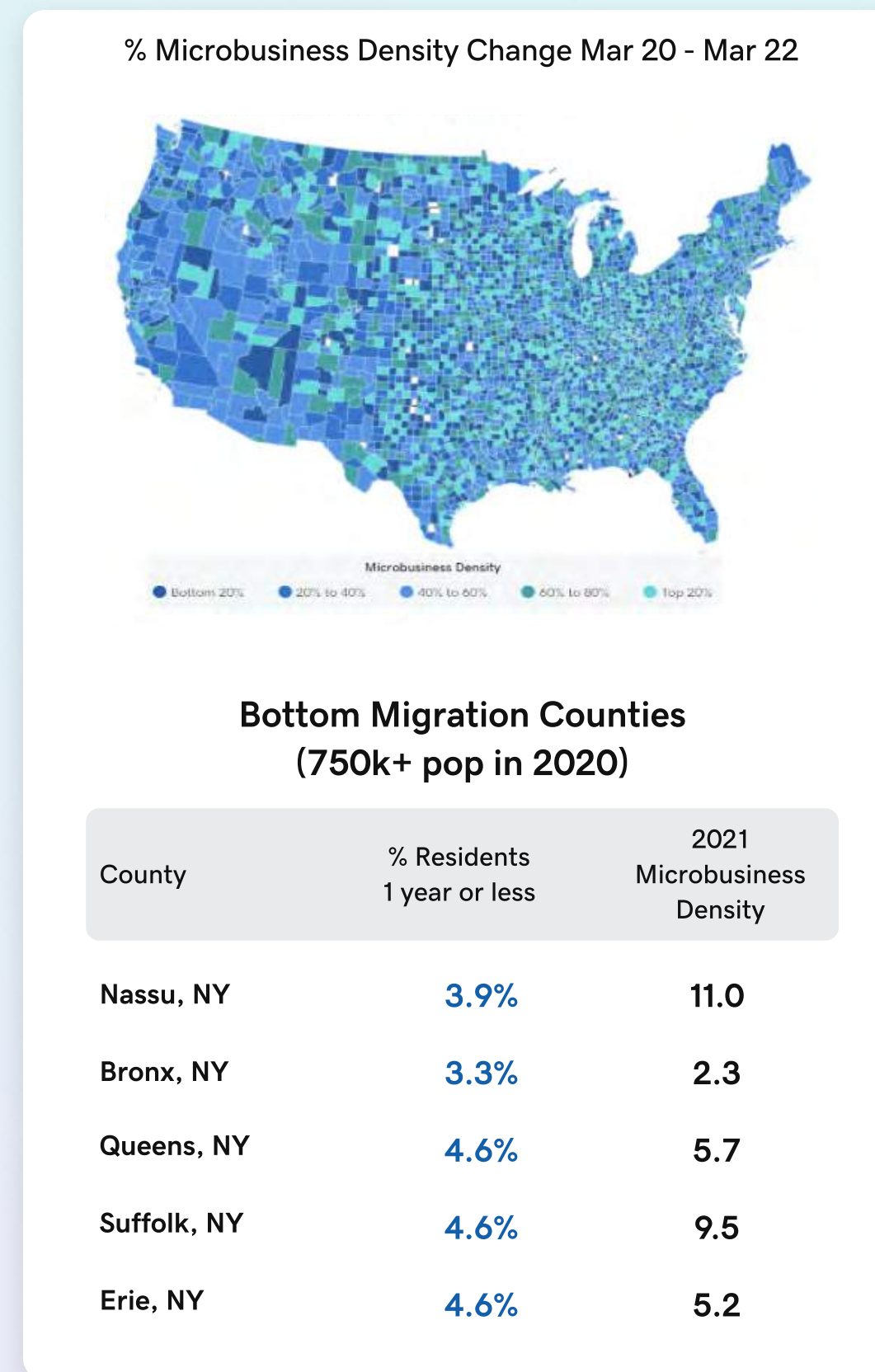
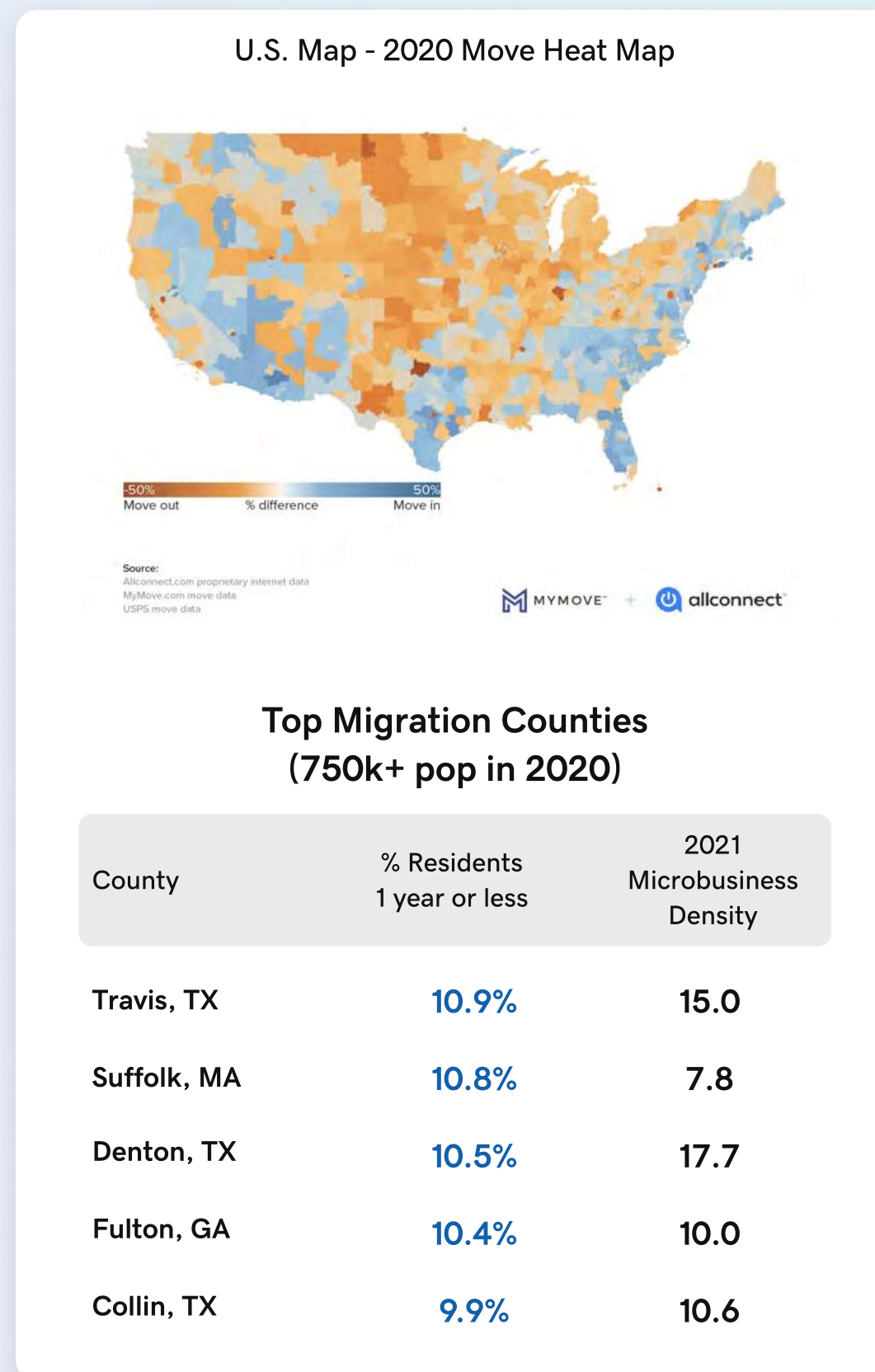
NUMBERS & TRENDS

Venture Forward recently studied the relationship of migration within the United States, curious if there was any relationship and impact on microbusiness activity in the areas seeing an influx of residents. The answer: yes!

Pictured on the right:

1. 2020 public data
2. 2021 microbusiness density (MD aka microbusinesses per 100 people)
3. 2020-2022 change in MD

The data shows that for every 1% increase in the share of county residents with less than one year's residency, there's an observable 0.32 increase in MD.



New residents and more microbusinesses lead to greater local economic performance

Breaking out the percent of new residents into quartiles, a trend emerges: where the average percent of new residents is higher, there are corresponding higher numbers of Microbusiness Density (MD) and Microbusiness Activity Index (MAI) scores.

Research shows that when MD and MAI increase, they each drive up household median incomes, lower unemployment, and create new jobs.

County new resident % range	Avg. % New Residents (2020)	Avg. MD (2021)	MAI (Q1 2022)	% Effect Size of Adding 1% New Residents on MD
(First Quartile) 1.7%-5.1%	4.36%	2.13	96.3	15.0%
(Second Quartile) 5.1%-5.9%	5.55%	2.37	100.4	13.5%
(Third Quartile) 6.0%-7.0%	6.49%	2.49	101.8	12.9%
(Fourth Quartile) 7.0%-12.5%	8.04%	3.17	106.3	10.1%

While the impact of additional new residents to a community is constant, as a percent of the microbusiness density already in-place, the impact is bigger in areas that have a lower starting point of new residents.

For example: in the first quartile the average MD is 2.13, so a .32 impact is roughly 15%. In the fourth quartile, the average MD is 3.17, so a .32 impact is roughly 10%.

New Research

04 | NEW RESEARCH

New Collaborative Insights

Insights based on the Microbusiness Activity Index that include applied data and research from our partners at the UCLA Anderson Forecast and the Milken Institute.

NUMBERS & TRENDS

New Reports from Venture Forward Partners

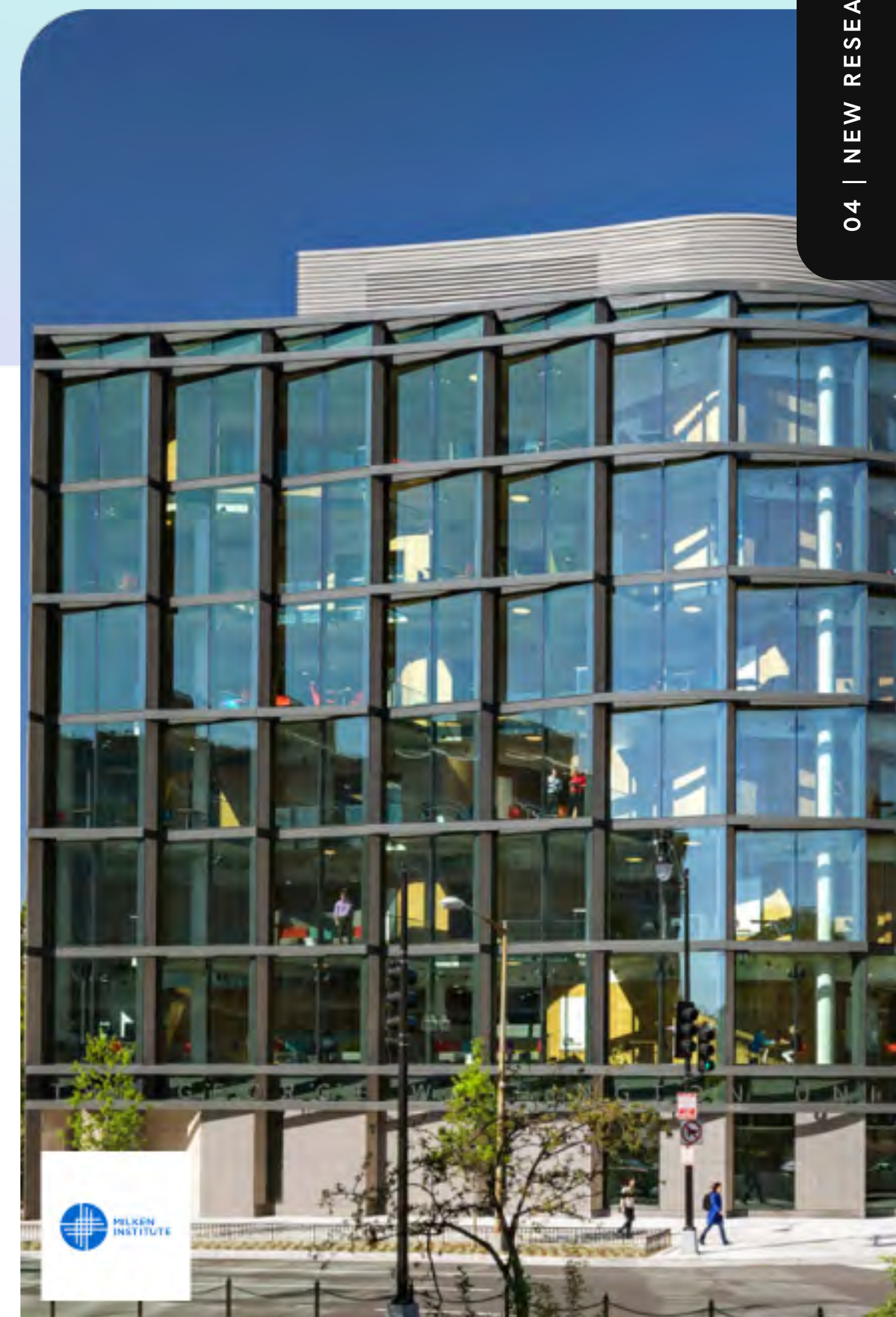
GoDaddy partnered with UCLA Anderson Forecast economists and the Milken Institute, applying the Venture Forward data sets to unlock economic insights.

Read reports [here](#) or see the excerpts and summaries ahead.



UCLA ANDERSON FORECAST

Q1 2022 Update on Microbusiness Activity Index



MILKEN INSTITUTE

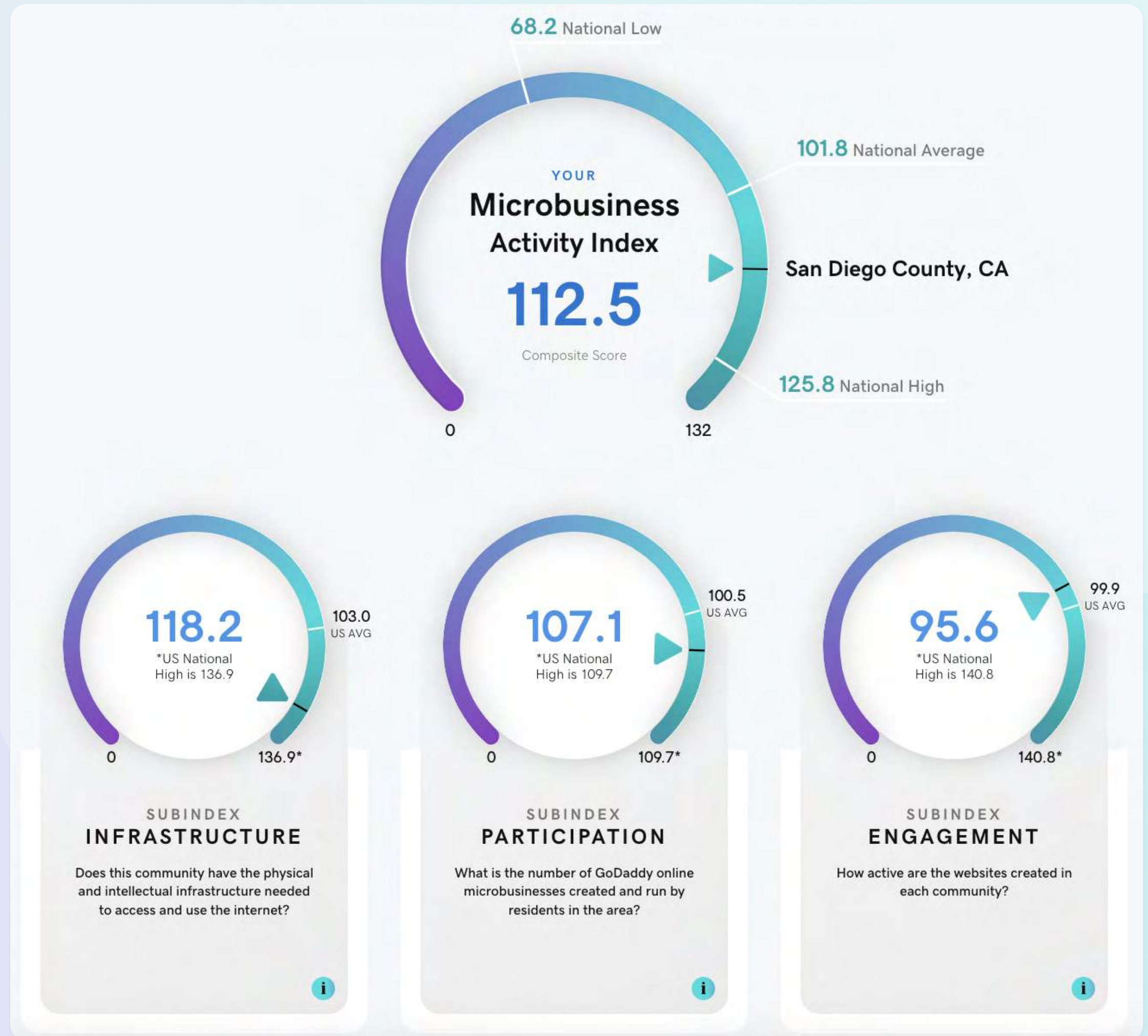
Best Performing Cities: An In-Depth Study of Digital Microbusinesses

BACKGROUND

Microbusiness Activity Index

Developed in partnership with UCLA Anderson Forecast economists, the Microbusiness Activity Index is a composite score that's updated quarterly. It's used by policymakers, academics, and economic development teams for tracking a healthy microbusiness ecosystem through one score made up of three subindexes:

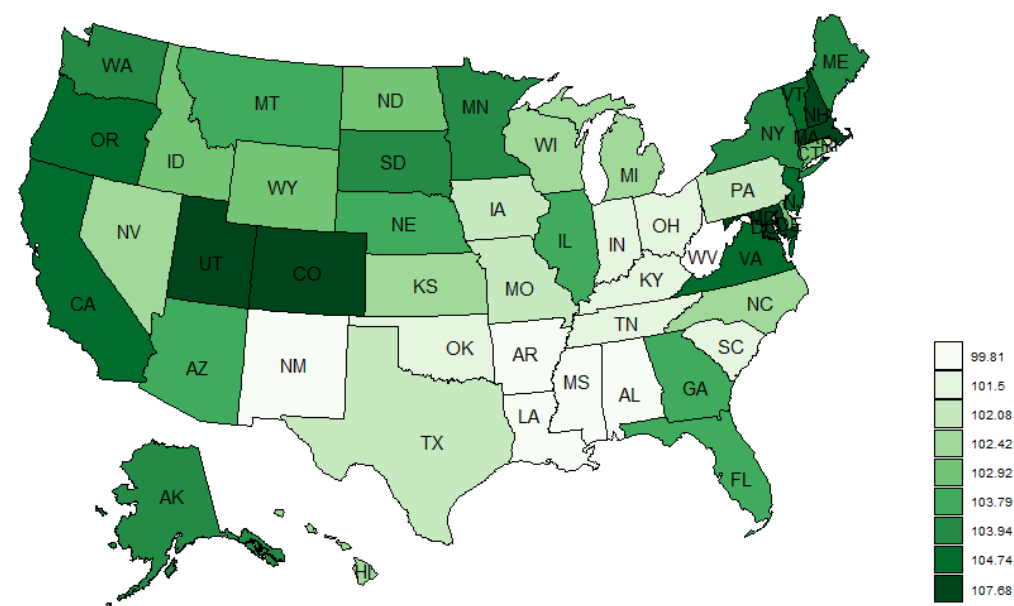
- INFRASTRUCTURE
- PARTICIPATION
- ENGAGEMENT



NEW INSIGHTS

UCLA's Quarterly Report on the Microbusiness Activity Index - Q1 2022

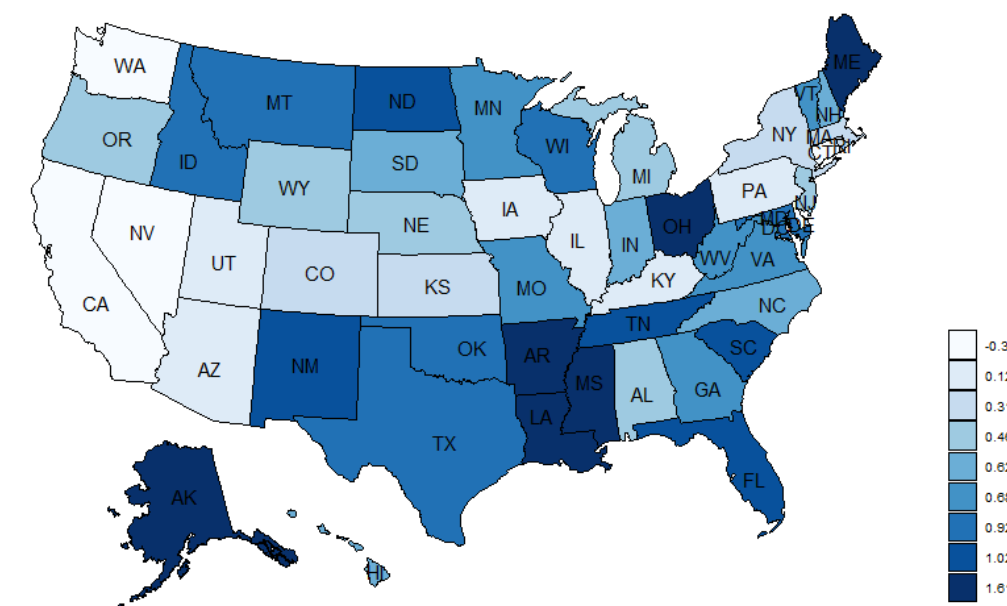
The information to the right summarizes how all 50 states are performing in the microbusiness space as well as how that performance has changed over the last year.



Top and Bottom States for Microbusiness Activity Index
March 2022/Q1 2022

Top 5		Bottom 5	
Washington DC	107.7	New Mexico	99.5
Colorado	106.6	Alabama	99.3
New Hampshire	106.0	Arkansas	99.2
Maryland	105.6	Mississippi	98.8
Massachusetts	105.3	West Virginia	97.5

National Average: +102.7



Top and Bottom States for Change in Microbusiness Activity Index
March 2021 - March 2022

Top 5		Bottom 5	
Maine	+1.61	Washington DC	-1.32
Alaska	+1.35	Connecticut	-1.21
Ohio	+1.17	Delaware	-0.69
Arkansas	+1.08	Nevada	-0.58
Louisiana	+1.05	California	-0.52

National Average: +0.42

NEW INSIGHTS

The Microbusiness Activity Index captured the surge in microbusinesses in cities across America during the pandemic with top cities averaging an MAI score of 108.33, jumping nearly two points to 110.61 just a year later in March 2021.

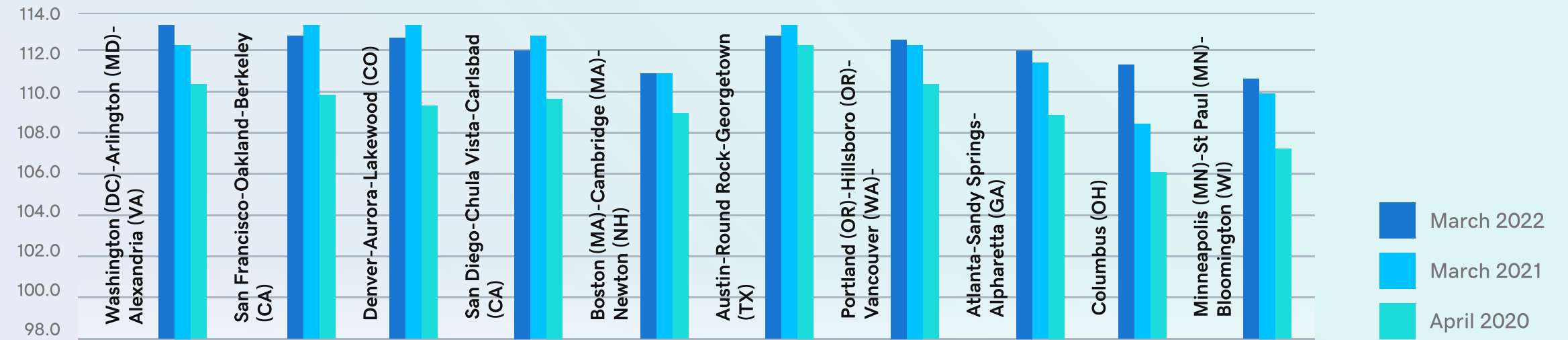
With local economies reopening throughout 2021, growth in MAI has generally leveled off, but at levels significantly higher than pre-pandemic.

From 2021 to 2022, the top cities in America added an average of 0.36 points to their MAI scores.

With every point increase in MAI score, these communities are building more resilient and prosperous economies.

Microbusiness Activity Index Scores

Top 10 Markets
3 Year Trend



Core-Based Statistical Area (CBSA)	March 22	March 21	Y/Y Change	April 20	2 Year Change (20-22)
Washington (DC)-Arlington (MD)-Alexandria (VA)	112.0	111.4	+0.60	109.1	+2.87
San Francisco-Oakland-Berkeley (CA)	111.5	112.0	-0.50	108.7	+2.77
Denver-Aurora-Lakewood (CO)	111.4	112.2	+0.17	108.2	+3.17
San Diego-Chula Vista-Carlsbad (CA)	110.7	111.2	-0.97	109.7	+1.05
Boston (MA)-Cambridge (MA)-Newton (NH)	110.1	111.7	-0.02	107.8	+2.33
Austin-Round Rock-Georgetown (TX)	110.0	110.1	-0.53	109.6	+0.43
Portland (OR)-Hillsboro (OR)-Vancouver (WA)	109.8	110.5	+0.13	107.8	+1.91
Atlanta-Sandy Springs-Alpharetta (GA)	109.6	109.6	+0.47	106.6	+2.94
Columbus (OH)	109.2	106.7	+2.51	103.7	+5.54
Minneapolis (MN)-St Paul (MN)-Bloomington (WI)	109.0	108.4	+0.59	106.5	+2.48
All CBSA Average (Mar 22)	103.2	102.4	+0.80	100.0	+3.20

NEW INSIGHTS

Executive Summary

Best Performing Cities: An In-Depth Study of Digital Microbusinesses

The Milken Institute and GoDaddy report combine results from the Best Performing Cities Index (BPC) and GoDaddy's Microbusiness Activity Index to examine what may be happening in the economies of a selection of cities.

We want to look at the impact microbusinesses are having in the economies we selected, and how that activity may or may not be captured in BPC, to better understand what is happening in these local economies. It's our hope that the findings can inform policymakers and local leaders in their understanding of economic trends, allowing them to better design programs with the circumstances of their unique economies in mind.

The Indices

Best Performing Cities

Milken's Best Performing Cities Index (BPC) is an annual index which compares economic activity across 400 large and small cities in the U.S. It ranks cities on measures including job growth, wage growth, high-tech GDP, high-tech industry activity, broadband access, and housing affordability.

Microbusiness Activity Index

GoDaddy's MAI comprises three subindices: infrastructure, participation, and engagement. The MAI was developed in partnership with UCLA Anderson Forecast economists, and providing a snapshot of microbusiness health and performance. One score distills over 15 signals measuring the infrastructure in place for businesses to take root and thrive, the participation of local entrepreneurs in creating these ventures, and the engagement levels of local entrepreneurs within their target markets.



Methodology

The analysis divided the cities in the BPC Large Cities index into four different segments, high rank and low rank (2022) and high change or low change (from 2021 to 2022). This report examines the results for a selection of cities in each of these four quadrants.

This report cross-examines Milken Institute's 2022 Best Performing Cities and GoDaddy's Microbusiness Activity Index. Our method relied on year-over-year change in BPC rankings between 2021 and 2022 to identify trending cities. Cities were divided into four segments: high rank and rising, high rank and falling, low rank and rising, low rank and falling. Specifically, this report examines a small selection of cities in each of these quadrants, identifies commonalities and differences, and makes policy recommendations for cities in those segments.

The top level results for the cities in this report are shown in the table on the right.

Microbusiness Activity Index – Subindices and averages

	MAI Index	Engagement	Participation	Infrastructure
Average	102.9	96.2	101.9	106.1

Cities Discussed in this Report

	BPC change	Quadrant	MAI result
Lubbock, TX	+91	High rank, Rising	109.7
Lincoln, NE	+54	High rank, Rising	113.0
Spokane-Spokane Valley, WA	+41	High rank, Rising	103.6
Deltona-Daytona Beach-Ormond Beach, FL	+30	High rank, Rising	103.7
Columbus, GA-AL	+39	Low rank, Rising	99.2
Detroit-Dearborn-Livonia, MI	+28	Low rank, Rising	103.9
Akron, OH	+26	Low rank, Rising	103.5
Atlanta-Sandy Springs-Roswell, GA	-26	High rank, Falling	108.2
Nashville-Davidson-Murfreesboro-Franklin, TN	-17	High rank, Falling	106.1
Asheville, NC	-92	Low rank, Falling	103.5
Tulsa, OK	-61	Low rank, Falling	104.9
Baton Rouge, LA	-36	Low rank, Falling	100.8
Pittsburgh, PA	-26	Low rank, Falling	104.9

City Profiles by Quadrant: High/Low, Rising/Falling

Full report available [here](#).

Cities: **Detroit (MI), Akron (OH), and Columbus (GA-AL)**

These are cities that have endured structural change, and have gone through periods of high unemployment. Slowly but surely, they are making a comeback by reinventing themselves and adapting to the new demands of the global, knowledge economy. These cities described here had low broadband access but ranked high in terms of housing affordability, particularly Detroit (8th) and Akron (15th). [Microbusinesses in this quadrant were important contributors to city growth.](#)

[Nearly 90% of online ventures were commercial in nature, higher than in any other city-type.](#) They were more likely to be registered as Limited Liability Corporations (LLCs) than anywhere else. And nearly 90% either started their microbusiness while working somewhere else, or left their job prior to starting their microbusiness.

Cities: **Lubbock (TX), Spokane-Spokane Valley (WA), Deltona-Daytona Beach-Ormond Beach (FL), and Lincoln (NE)**

Notably, cities within this quartile shared high rankings in four key categories: one year and five year jobs growth, one year wage growth, and broadband access. However, these cities shared relatively moderate rankings in high-tech concentration, LQ count (number of high-tech industries), and housing affordability.

It is interesting to note that while these cities showed higher-than-average infrastructure scores in the MAI, this score – which measures human capital and digital infrastructure access – did not translate into a high BPC score in high-tech concentration or LQ count. That is, [these cities have the digital infrastructure to support high-tech industry but have not yet capitalized on that opportunity.](#)

RISING

FALLING

Low rank

High rank

Cities: **Tulsa (OK), Pittsburgh (PA), Baton Rouge (LA), and Asheville (NC)**

[These are cities not known for a high-tech industry presence, and have gone through periods of high unemployment.](#) Three of the four cities described here had particularly low broadband access (around 25%), and microbusiness owners surveyed revealed that they did not view an online presence as essential.

[Microbusinesses in this quadrant were also more likely to be new, and to report licensing/permitting as the biggest hurdle they face.](#)

Cities: **Atlanta-Sandy Springs-Roswell (GA), and Nashville-Davidson-Murfreesboro-Franklin (TN)**

[Both of these are traditionally strong economies with a heavy dependence on tourism.](#)

It seems likely that the return of tourism will return these cities to their previously thriving state; however, working to improve industry diversity will improve both cities' future resilience and reduce the potential impact of a similar downturn in the future.

Assisting local businesses in setting up an online presence not only helps them grow their business, but also allows them to access customers further afield and reduces their dependence on the local economy, potentially improving their resilience in the face of another pandemic.

Resources

05 | TOOLS AND RESOURCES

Venture Forward Updates and Downloads

Introduction of the GoDaddy Open initiative, a preview of the new Microbusiness Data Hub, and the latest use cases, press, and FAQs.

WE WANT TO HELP

Built on decades of helping millions of microbusinesses and entrepreneurs succeed, GoDaddy Open is a new program partnering with cities to train and upskill local entrepreneur communities.

Over the last two years, as COVID has magnified the importance of microbusinesses, GoDaddy has shared our research on the needs and impact of microbusinesses with hundreds of local policymakers and economic development officials.

We know city leaders understand the importance of providing training to their microbusiness communities.

Email us: Open@GoDaddy.com



Introducing GoDaddy Open

How GoDaddy Open Works

GoDaddy Open brings our experience and resources in training entrepreneurs to your community. The program has three defining characteristics:

- 1 It's collaborative.**
Every city has their own unique needs and capabilities when it comes to supporting entrepreneurs. GoDaddy Open is built to partner with cities to fit within the structures and networks already in place. From hosting a session at an already established small business event to co-sponsoring bespoke events with local partners, we are showing up with one goal - unlock the enormous potential of microbusinesses in your community.
- 2 It's customized.**
GoDaddy Open is not a one-size-fits-all approach to training. We meet entrepreneurs where they are in the journey, and provide the training to get them to their next level, whether they are just opening their first e-commerce store or are opening their 3rd, 5th, or even 15th brick and mortar location. We provide GoDaddy tools & resources to help them upskill, grow, and achieve success, however they've defined it.
- 3 It's free.**
When entrepreneurs thrive, economies become more prosperous and inclusive, and everyone wins. GoDaddy is committed to providing our training and networking capabilities freely to the cities we partner with.

Reports, Profiles, and Use Cases

A few highlighted pieces from 2022 are below. Click [here](#) to see more.



PHOTO ESSAY

2022: National Survey Results



OPINION

Brookings Institute: Microbusinesses flourished during the pandemic. Now we must tap into their full potential.



NEWS

GoDaddy at the U.S. Conference of Mayors: Advocate for Microbusinesses in America



RESEARCH OVERVIEW

Unlocking the Potential of Microbusinesses in Your Community With the Microbusiness Activity Index (MAI)

Use Cases


NEW TOOLS

Introducing The Microbusiness Data Hub

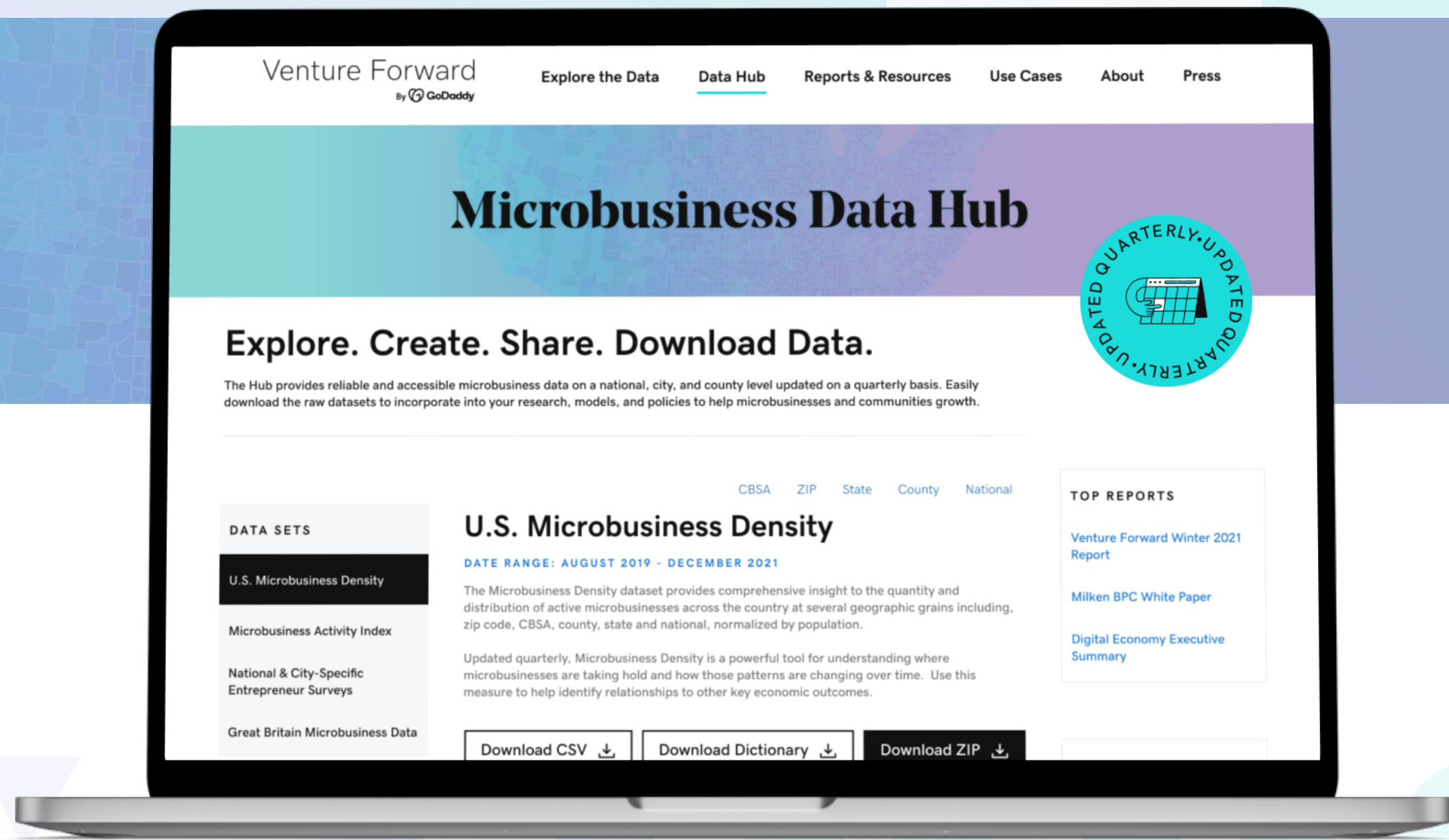
Your Source for Microbusiness Data

The Hub provides reliable and accessible microbusiness data on a national, city, and county level updated on a quarterly basis. Easily download the raw datasets to incorporate into your research, models, and policies to help advocate for microbusiness entrepreneurs and their communities.

godaddy.com/datahub

Visit Microbusiness Data Hub 

- DATA SETS
- U.S. Microbusiness Density
 - Microbusiness Activity Index
 - National & City-Specific Entrepreneur Surveys
 - Great Britain Microbusiness Data



NEW TOOLS

I left my job to start my microbusiness to be my own boss.

NEW TOOLS

Explore the Data & Entrepreneur Surveys

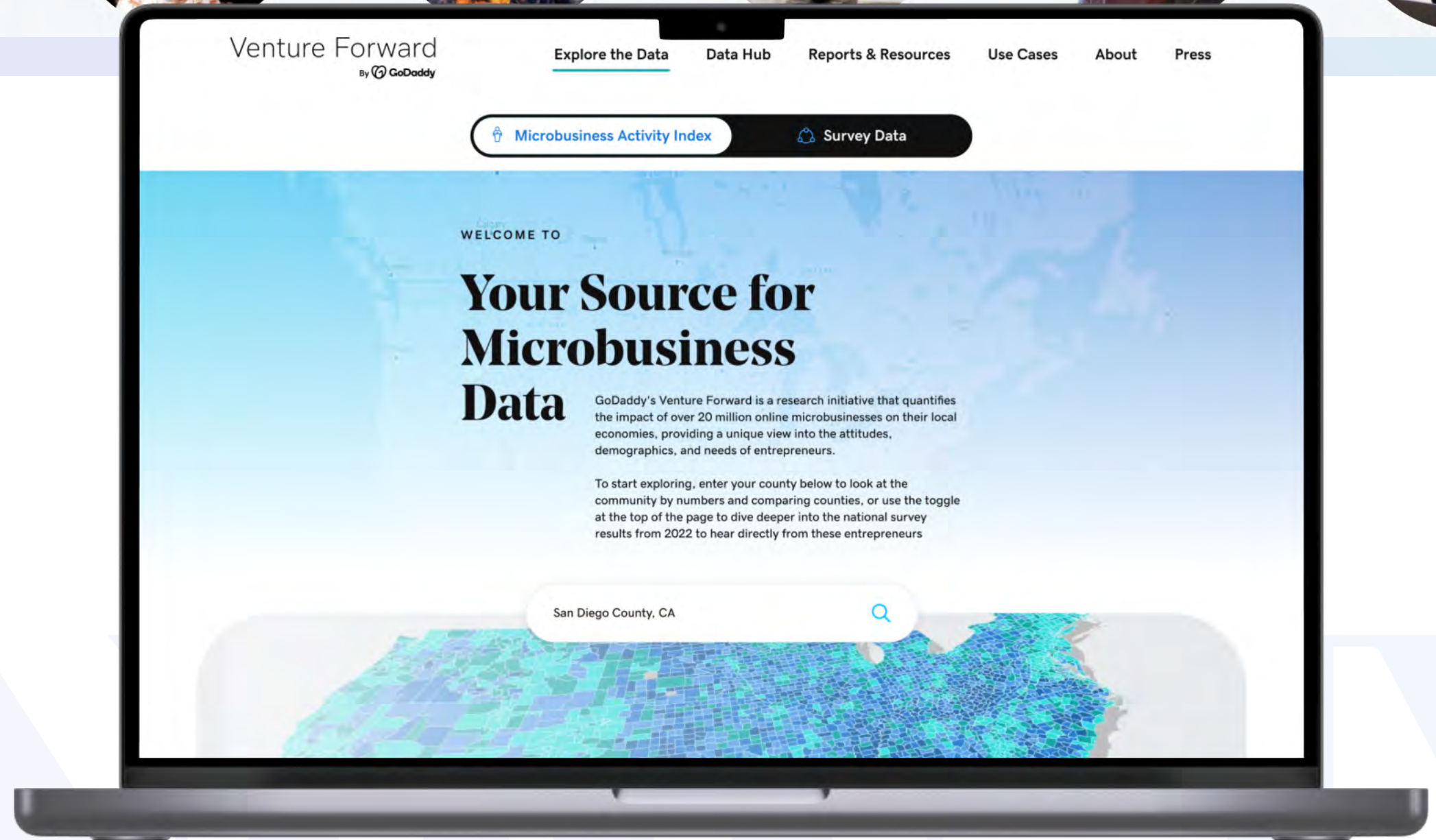
Interactive Experience

Start exploring by entering your county to see the number of microbusinesses compared to the national average and counties of a similar population. Or use the toggle at the top of the page to dive deeper into the national survey results from 2022 for unique insight from these entrepreneurs.

godaddy.com/exploredata

Explore the Data

San Diego, California

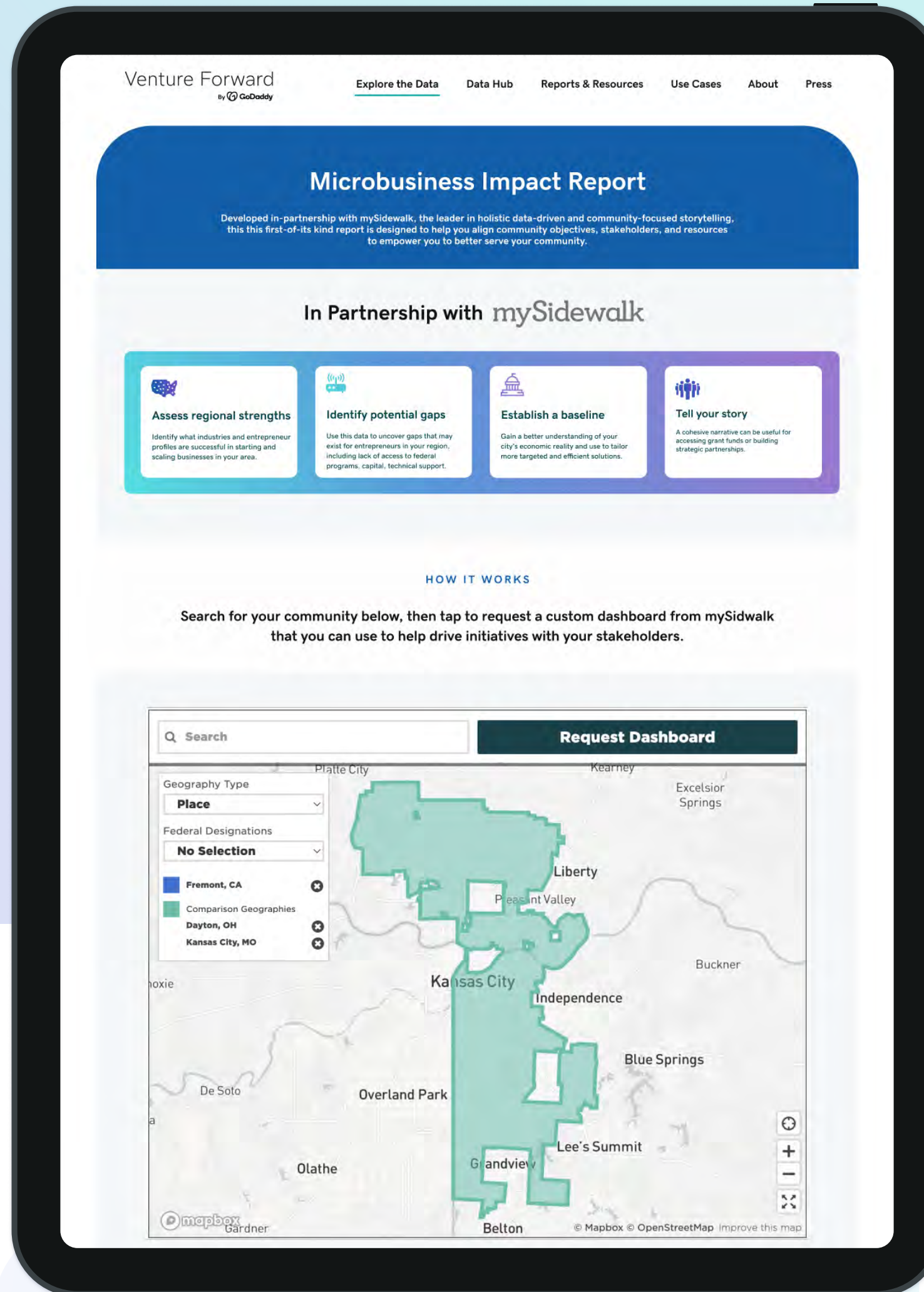


NEW TOOLS

A New Partnership with mySidewalk

Read the Q&A with mySidewalk's CEO on the next few pages to learn the background of this new data collaboration.

To generate a custom report visit: godaddy.com/exploredata



With mySidewalk CEO Stephen Hardy

On giving planners the tools they need to make best use of Venture Forward's data, combined for maximum effect with other data sources.

Q What was the motivation behind starting mySidewalk?

Businesses spend hundreds of billions of dollars a year to gather and analyze data about us as individuals — our heart rates, our credit-card spending, you name it. But there's not nearly that level of understanding of us as a collective. The data is out there, yet city planners know almost nothing about us at the community level. So our mission is to improve the tools that are available to make better decisions with data about how to invest in our neighborhoods.

Q You've described your mission as democratizing data for the public sector. Who controls the data now?

In many cities, there's a team of trained GIS experts who understand mapping and geospatial data, but there's often not a lot of healthcare or education or other experts who know how to make use of the data to understand the particular forces at play in those domains. When those experts do try to find data, they often have to go through the GIS folks who may not get back to them for weeks, often not with the information they need. So mySidewalk has created a data warehouse that draws on 65 sources including the Bureau of Labor Statistics, the CDC and the Census Bureau, and created tools that help non-technical people see trends in the data that had previously been invisible.

Q What's a good example of how your products are having real-world impact?

Many of our customers use our platform to help them compete for federal grants. Dayton, Ohio, for example, won \$138 million dollars in competitive grants last year. They used our data to make sure they understood their areas of greatest need, and then used our storytelling tools to state their case in an objective, powerful way that many communities weren't able to. This is important, because grants often go to the communities that can afford to have grant writers on staff. So those with more resources are better able to get federal dollars, which just increases their advantages over places that might need the help more.

Continued on next page...

With mySidewalk CEO Stephen Hardy

On giving planners the tools they need to make best use of Venture Forward's data, combined for maximum effect with other data sources.

Q What interests you about the Venture Forward data?

A revolution in economic development started after the sweepstakes over Amazon's second headquarters a few years ago, when there was one winner and a whole bunch of disappointed city leaders. Clearly, there had to be a better way. Then the pandemic accelerated the move to new ways of working, including more people starting microbusinesses. But cities had no way of knowing what was actually happening with microbusinesses in their communities. The Chamber of Commerce didn't know, nobody knew. With the Venture Forward data, cities can see where these entrepreneurs live, their education levels, their biggest challenges and opportunities. All of a sudden, they have the information to design programs to serve these peoples' needs.

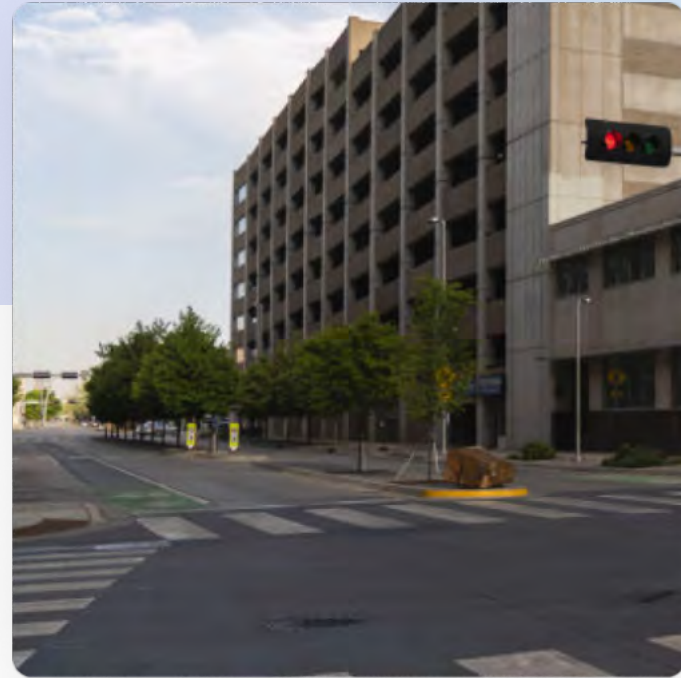
Q Who uses the mySidewalk platform, and how?

We have officials who use it, such as fire chiefs who use our fire prevention analysis tool to understand which parts of their community are most ripe for interventions to prevent fires, like understanding which neighborhoods take the longest time to reach from a fire station. Then there are the analysts across different fields and sectors who tend to do the most interesting research with our data. Healthcare is one sector I'm particularly excited about, to support a growing interest in using place-based data to learn more about patients. And our report generation tool lets government agencies, like Public Health, turn the data into stories for the general public, in a way that's understandable to the layperson.

Q How did you find out about Venture Forward?

One of our employees posted an article on our Slack channel, and it caught my eye for two reasons. One, it sounded like a unique dataset. And two, it was clear to me that there was a team of people there that cared about the same things we care about. So while I don't usually do a lot of our prospecting for new sources of data, I reached out to the Venture Forward team and it was immediately clear that this could be cool - that we had an audience that would be really interested in their data and could put it to good use.

Recent Press



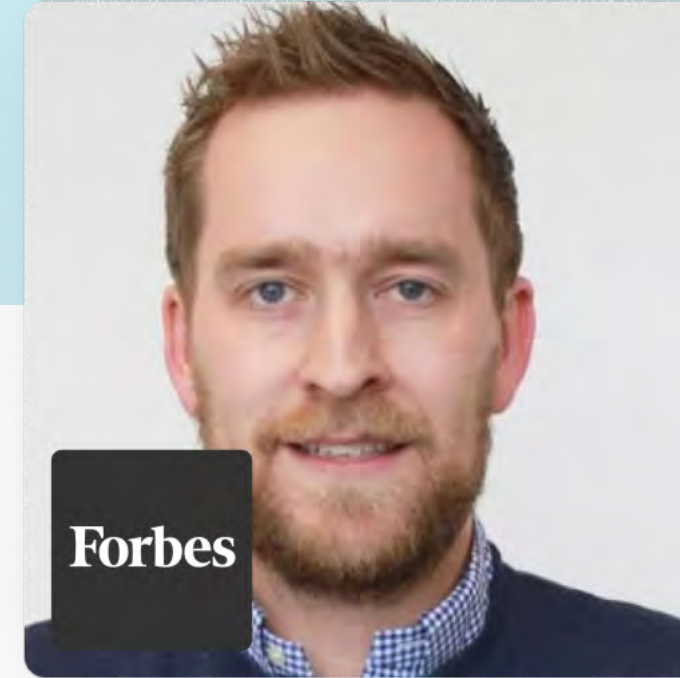
JANUARY 21, 2022

A Mayor Makes the Case for Investing in Micro-Businesses



JANUARY 26, 2022

Why More Americans Than Ever are Starting Their Own Businesses



MARCH 23, 2022

A Small World: Will Microbusinesses Help Level Britain's Uneven Economy?



APRIL 13, 2022

Why the Rate of Black Business Ownership is Going Up



JUNE 17, 2022

GoDaddy, mySidewalk Set to Share Microbusiness Data



JUNE 17, 2022

Microbusinesses Shake up the Economy in a Powerful Way

Resources

FAQs

Learn more about the research methodology, and terminology used by Venture Forward.

Previous Issues

Venture Forward, December (Winter) 2021 Quarterly Report

Venture Forward, July (Summer) 2021 Quarterly Report

Venture Forward, November (Fall) 2020 Quarterly Report

White Papers and Reports

Milken Institute Executive Summary, July 2022: [Best Performing Cities: An In-Depth Study of Digital Microbusinesses](#)

U.S. Conference of Mayors Business Council 2022 Best Practices Report, June 2022: [United States Conference of Mayors Business Council](#)

Kent Business School White Paper, March 2022: [Great Britain Microbusiness Study](#)

Small Business Advocacy Council White Paper, January 2022: [Microbusinesses and Their Role in Chicago's Changing Economy](#)

GoDaddy White Paper, December 2021: [Digital Entrepreneurship in Communities of Color](#)

Arizona State University White Paper, September 2021: [A New Measure of Digital Economic Activity and its Impact on Local Opportunity](#)

Milken Institute White Paper, July 2021: [Exploring the Role of Microbusinesses in Economic Growth and Recovery For US Cities](#)

UCLA Anderson Forecast White Paper, June 2021: [What drives microbusiness formation and growth?](#)

Data, Profiles, and Use Cases

Visit the [Venture Forward website](#) to explore and download available data for free

[Read profiles](#) of everyday entrepreneurs and city use cases

Access these reports and more at godaddy.com/ventureforward

We're here to help.

Venture Forward's mission is to bring into focus the benefits of building a more inclusive economy for communities by providing valuable information on the impact of microbusinesses, which are often too small or too new to show up in traditional methods of capturing economic data.

Since the launch of Venture Forward, we've talked to hundreds of policymakers and influencers — all of whom see how much more potential these everyday entrepreneurs have to positively impact their communities. We've worked with mayors and economic developers to inform programs and the allocation of funds.

This is the beginning of what we hope will be a long partnership between GoDaddy and American cities, making our communities more user-friendly to microbusinesses. Please reach out to our team if we can be of help at ventureforward@godaddy.com.

We'd love to work with you!

