



Harvesting Our Legacy

Resilient Roots Bear Good Fruit — Strengthening Systems. Expanding Opportunity.

2025 Annual Report

Impact doesn't happen overnight.

It is cultivated through investment, strengthened through partnership, and realized through opportunity.



A Year of Transition

2025 brought leadership transition and strategic realignment — a pivotal moment to strengthen how impact is delivered across the community.



And Transformation

Rather than continuing the traditional model, we invested in building capacity, partnerships, and infrastructure first — setting the stage for lasting change.



Our Commitment

Opportunity existed. Access did not. Workforce gaps in Opportunity Zones were compounded by barriers — **transportation, childcare, access, and trust** — creating a disconnect between available jobs and community readiness.



We didn't just fund programs.

We strengthened the system. Instead of moving forward with a traditional model, we invested in building capacity, partnerships, and infrastructure first — creating conditions where impact could truly take root.

Listening Tour

Deep community engagement to understand real needs, gaps, and opportunities before committing resources.

1

Capacity Investment

Funding directed toward strengthening nonprofit infrastructure and building long-term organizational resilience.

2

3

4

Internal Restructuring

Strategic realignment of leadership and operations to better serve the mission and our partners.

System Building

Cross-sector partnerships and workforce pathways established as the foundation for scalable, measurable impact.

By the Numbers

In 2025, we made deliberate, strategic investments across the community — funding organizations positioned to create lasting economic mobility.

\$400K

Total Granted

Invested across community organizations and initiatives

61

Organizations Funded

Nonprofits and programs receiving direct support

129

Applications Reviewed

Rigorous evaluation of community proposals

34%

New Partners

First-time funded organizations joining our ecosystem

Investing Across Community Needs

Funding was directed across four core areas of community impact. Each reflects a strategic priority aligned with the conditions needed to support long-term economic mobility.



Basic Needs

Housing and essential services for stability



Workforce Dev

Training and job pathways in Opportunity Zones



Social Justice

Advocacy, prevention, and systemic change



Education

Youth programs and long-term opportunity

PROGRAM SPOTLIGHT

Equipping Organizations to Lead Workforce Change

The CDTO initiative — supported by \$350,000 in ARPA funding — represents our most significant capacity-building investment of 2025.

1

\$350,000 ARPA Initiative

A major public investment fueling workforce development infrastructure and nonprofit leadership capacity across the region.

2

200 Residents Served

Workforce pathways created for 200 Opportunity Zone residents, connecting training directly to career-readiness and job placement.

3

Leadership Training

Nonprofit leaders equipped with skills, tools, and strategies to design workforce programs and position their organizations for funding.

From Training to Transformation

Participants developed **capstone projects** and **workforce strategies** — positioning organizations for new funding, partnerships, and scaled community impact in 2026 and beyond.

CDTO organizations are now positioned to lead workforce pipeline development across Cleveland's Opportunity Zones.

PROGRAM SPOTLIGHT

Building the Pipeline for Black Entrepreneurs

Mortar Cleveland — a signature investee — supported 18 entrepreneurs through a dual cohort model combining coaching, community, and ecosystem support.



18 Entrepreneurs Supported

Dual cohort model introduced — pairing early-stage founders with growth-stage entrepreneurs for cross-cohort learning and ecosystem strength.



From Idea to Scalable Business

All participants completed pitch competition with funding. Business growth pathways were created for each entrepreneur, supporting long-term viability.



Coaching + Ecosystem Support

Hands-on coaching, access to professional networks, and wraparound support designed to remove barriers to Black business ownership.



WHAT WE BUILT

A Foundation for Long-Term Impact

In 2025, every investment was deliberate — building the infrastructure, relationships, and capacity that will activate measurable outcomes in 2026 and beyond.

What We Strengthened

Stronger Nonprofit Partners

61 organizations funded and equipped with tools, training, and capacity to deliver deeper community impact.

Workforce Training Infrastructure

CDTO and Mortar created replicable models for workforce and entrepreneurship pipelines in Opportunity Zones.

Cross-Sector Partnerships

34% new partners — expanding the network of organizations committed to equitable economic development.

Scalable Model

Systems and frameworks built in 2025 are designed to be activated, measured, and expanded in the years ahead.

The Shift: 2025 → 2026

2025: Build

- Systems
- Partnerships
- Capacity

2026: Activate

- Jobs
- Training Enrollment
- Measurable Outcomes

📌 The roots are in place. 2026 is about bearing fruit — job placement pipelines, workforce enrollment, expanded partnerships, and outcomes the community can see and feel.



We are not just funding programs.

We are building opportunity. Together, we are creating pathways that lead to lasting economic mobility and community strength — one investment, one partnership, one person at a time.

LOOKING AHEAD

2026: Activating the Work

The foundation is set. The partnerships are built. Now we activate — turning capacity into outcomes and systems into opportunity.

1

Job Placement Pipelines

Connect trained residents to employers in Opportunity Zones — translating workforce readiness into economic mobility.

2

Workforce Enrollment

Scale enrollment in training programs built through CDTO, Mortar, and partner organizations across the region.

3

Measurable Outcomes

Establish clear metrics — jobs secured, wages increased, businesses launched — so the community can see real results.

4

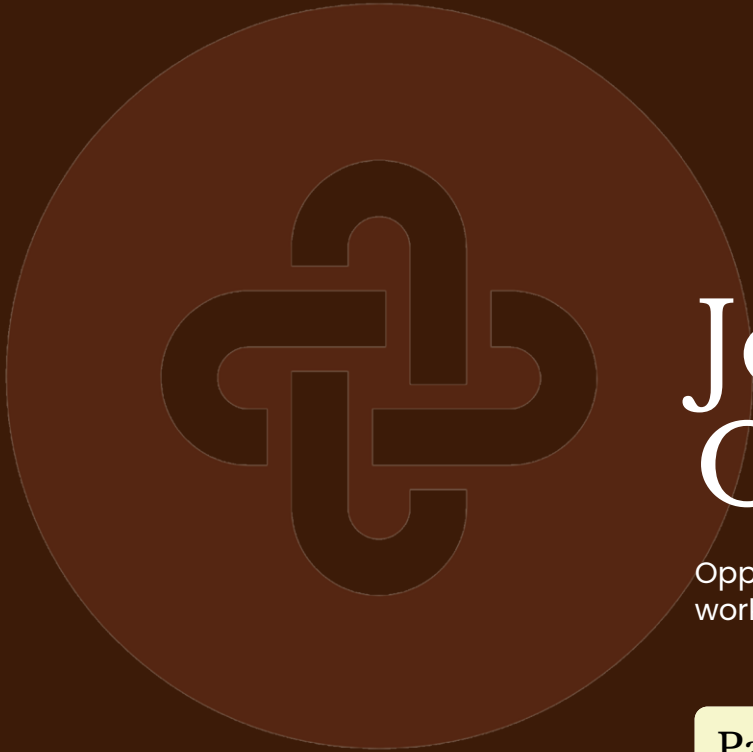
Expanded Partnerships

Deepen cross-sector relationships and bring new funders, employers, and institutions into the ecosystem.



Resilient Roots Bear Good Fruit

Everything built in 2025 — the listening, the restructuring, the capacity investments — was preparation. **2026 is the harvest.**



Join Us in Expanding Opportunity

Opportunity is not given — it is built, brick by brick, partnership by partnership. There is a role for everyone in this work.

Partner

Bring your network, expertise, and organization into the ecosystem.



Fund

Invest in the infrastructure that creates lasting community change.



Engage

Show up, advocate, and help amplify the work being done.

Get Involved