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Entrepreneurs find success thanks to Greater West Dayton Incubator program

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- [News](#)
- [Entrepreneurs find success thanks to Greater West Dayton Incubator program](#)



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With support and funding opportunities through a Greater West Dayton Incubator program, Tastee Smith grew her non-emergency medical transportation business into a profitable venture, including hiring its first employee.

Smith was among the first participants of the [Urban Elevation Accelerator program](#), a Greater West Dayton Incubator initiative to help underserved and under-represented entrepreneurs kick-start or develop a venture through access to networking and funding, among other resources.

She utilized the majority of these tools, including six weeks of business skills training, three months of free mentorship from business owners and entrepreneurs, UD student project consulting and working space at The Hub powered by PNC Bank.

"Without the program and the support of outside funds, I would not be able to grow my business at the pace I've been able to over the last 12 months," said Smith, founder of Care Task LLC. "So far, I am on track to double the revenue I've made from last year."

Care Task LLC was one of seven ventures to find success by maintaining six months of continued profit, a key metric for building a sustainable business. The Urban Elevation Accelerator program is aiming for another positive cycle with 19 new participants who started in July.

"The first year was great. We learned a lot about the businesses we serve and how to tailor the program to their specific needs, and I look forward to working with the new group," said Whitney Barkley, director of the Greater West Dayton Incubator. "We've seen the benefit of the accountability and community the entrepreneurs gained from this program. If you don't have people around you, it can be hard to stay motivated when building something from the ground up, but with the Greater West Dayton Incubator staff and volunteers, the UD community and external partners, we can provide the support they need through the process."

The Urban Elevation Accelerator was financially assisted by the Fifth Third Foundation. Donors and community partners of the University also helped support the program and provide additional funding opportunities to participants.