



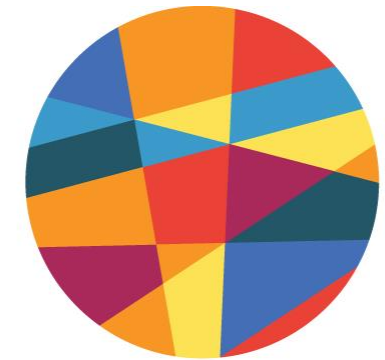
# Boston Main Streets Foundation – Technology Initiative

# Mission - Boston Main Streets Foundation



The Boston Main Streets Foundation (BMSF) is a public-private initiative established by the City of Boston in 2007, has been the driving force behind the revitalization of the City's neighborhood commercial districts. BMSF is committed to making Boston's neighborhood commercial districts thriving, vibrant centers of commerce and community.

The Foundation seeks to develop long-term strategies to increase the economic power and resources of neighborhood commercial districts while pursuing initiative that build knowledge and capacity for Main Streets programs and the businesses they serve.



BOSTON  
MAIN STREETS

# Guiding Principles – BMSF Technology Initiative



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The BMSF Technology Initiative began one year ago with the mission of modernizing Main Street districts with industry leading technology and businesses processes. In an economy defined by educated, customer centric demand we knew this to be the best path for small businesses to compete in an ever-changing marketplace.

COVID-19 has brought unprecedented challenges to the small business community, upending the lives of not only entrepreneurs but the families that rely on their existences. With resulting shifts in the consumer behavior, we positioned program objectives and technology to focus on ecommerce, online ordering and expense reduction.

Our program has proven to be a successful partnership between the BMSF, Boston Main Streets Program and technology providers willing to discount and adapt their solutions. **This honed, effective formula shapes more sustainable businesses and can be applied in any community during any economic period, across the United States.**

# Problem – Solution - Impact

## Problem

- COVID-19 has created unprecedented challenges to neighborhood small business and the families that rely on them. These businesses need to reduce costs and adopt technology to survive and succeed with the growing need to serve customers on-line.

## Solution









- A bundled Online Ordering and Point of Sale system developed via a Boston Main Streets Foundation/Citizens Bank pilot grant with low credit card processing and internet service fees supported by a team of retail and restaurant experts who are donating their time to support businesses. Implemented in partnership with twenty neighborhood Main Street non-profit organizations.

## Impact

- Sixteen businesses across seven BMSF districts have participated since the pilot phase. Our team has helped these locations implement better technology, offer opportunities for online sales all while reducing operational expenses (credit card fees, internet fees and POS fees).

# Program Promise

The value our program promises small businesses can be broken out into five parts with the associated partner organization

		<u>Partners</u>
Operation Cost Reduction	Internet and Credit Card Processing Expense	
New Point of Sale (POS) Systems	POS Hardware and Software for Retail or Restaurant	 
Business Coaching	1-Hour CRA Consultations and SCORE Mentoring	 
Online Ordering Integration	Buy online pickup in store (BOPIS Functionality) Buy online pickup at curbside (BOPAC Functionality)	 
Web Design	Secure Domain Name / Website Design / Photography / Social and Commerce Integration	

## **Outreach Phase (1 week)**

1. Town/municipality communicates program to small business community.
2. Listing of interested businesses is compiled and provided to CRA.

## **Discovery Phase (1 week)**

3. CRA sets up individual consultation with business owners that will be used to understand business needs and gather technology requirements (30-60 minutes).
4. Following the meeting, business will be extended a Program Offer to formally participate in the program.

## **Onboarding & Implementation Phase (4-5 weeks)**

5. Once accepted, CRA will introduce owner over to Technology Onboarding Team to finalize requirements.
6. CRA and Technology Partner will begin to gather retail inventory, set-up payment processing and complete other onboarding tasks.
7. CRA and Technology Partner will jointly install the Point-of-Sale and eCommerce solutions.
8. CRA and Technology Partner will test the system and train the retailer.
9. Introduction to SCORE and/or CRA Mentor.

## **Summary**

5-7 total weeks per business including multiple interviews, onboarding/installation and website design.

# Program Businesses – BMSF District/Sector Profiles

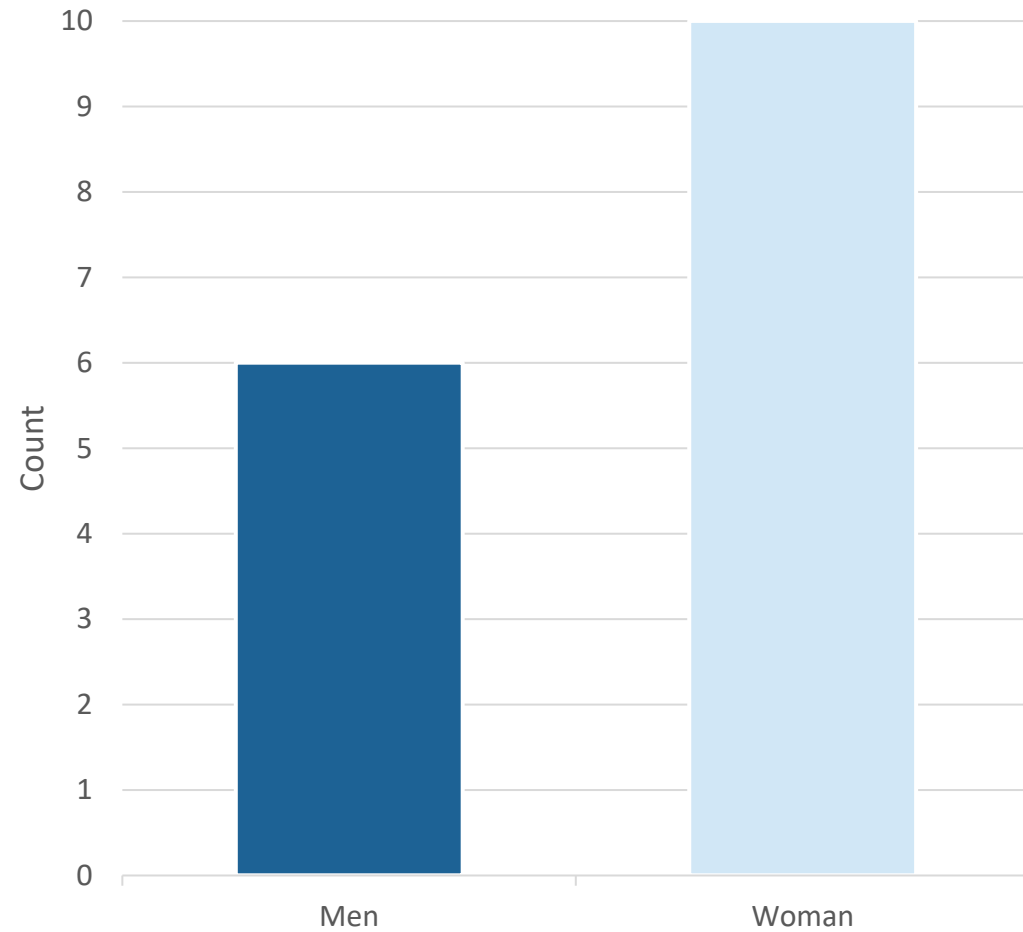


Business Name	District	Sector
Blue Nile	Centre South	QSR
Georges Shoes	Centre South	Retail
Toasted Flats	East Boston	QSR
Veronica Robles Community Center	East Boston	Other
La Martine Beauty Supply	Fields Corner	Retail
Princess Hair Palace	Fields Corner	Salon
Sam's Spot	Fields Corner	QSR
Yelus	Grove Hall	QSR
Fasika Café	Grove Hall	QSR
Food for the Soul	Grove Hall	QSR
Grove Hall Creamery	Grove Hall	QSR
Dress with Confidence	Hyde Park	Retail
Mission Hill Bar & Grill	Mission Hill	FSR
Jalloh African Market	Roxbury	Retail
Fort Hill Bar and Grill	Roxbury	FSR
El Barrio*	Greater Ashmont	FSR

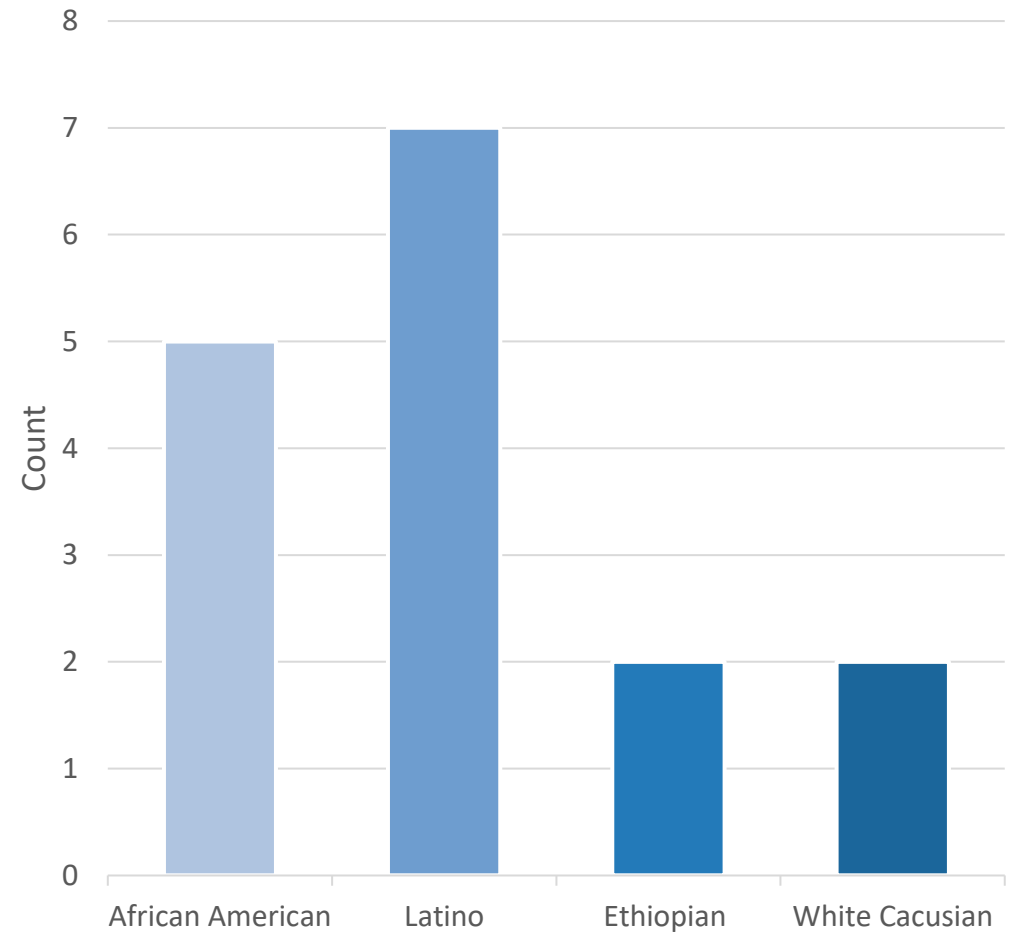
- Highlights
- 16 Businesses
  - 8 districts represented

# Program Demographics

## Gender of Initiative Participants



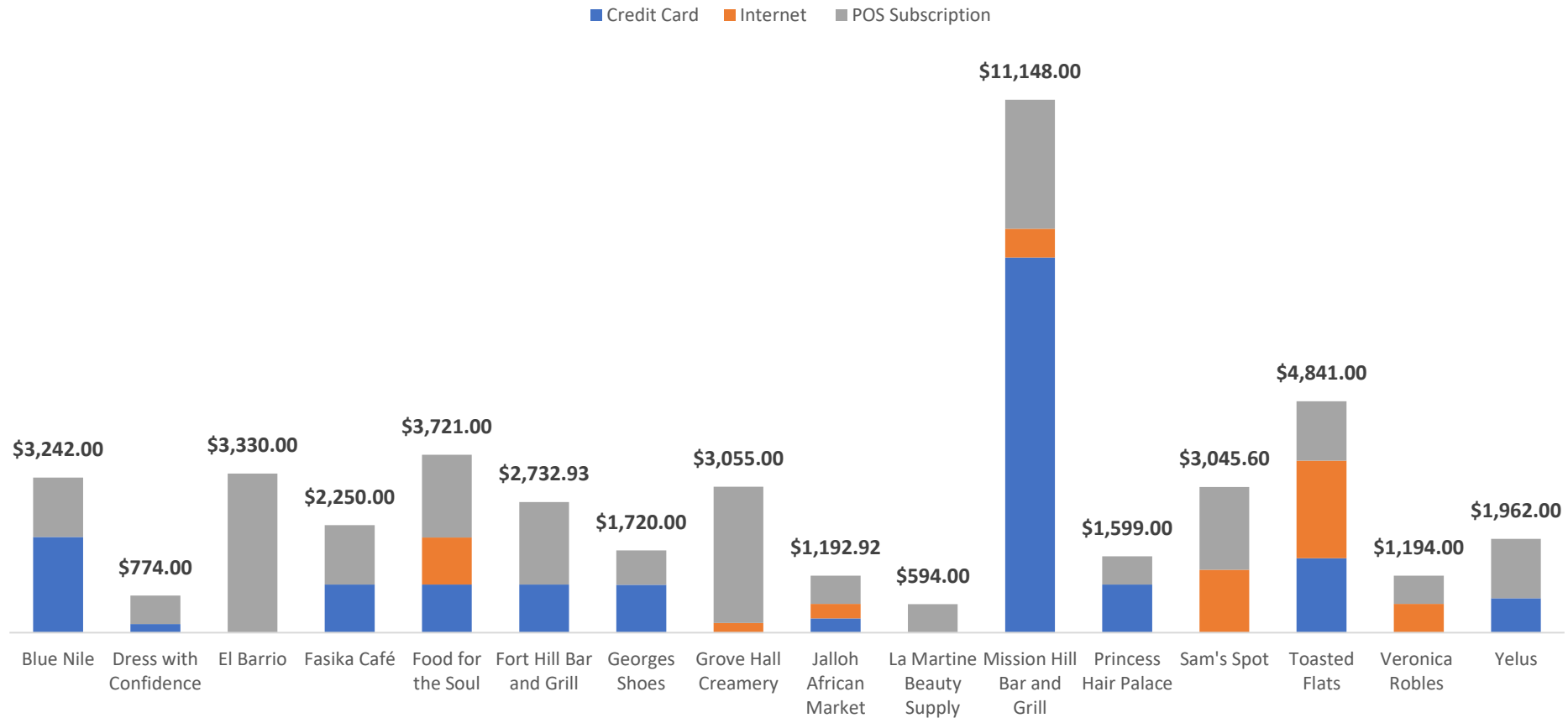
## Ethnicity of Initiative Participants





# Projected Savings

Projected Savings with BMSF Tech Initiative, 2020-21



## Highlight

~\$46k in savings over a 12-month period for 16 program businesses

# Online Ordering Impact

- Ordering through the client's website is paramount to staying open during the COVID-19 pandemic. Online menus and integration were created through the collaboration of our Technology Partners, CRA, and the merchant to create a streamlined experience on brand for their establishment.
- Through our efforts, we were able to deliver the following benefits to our program businesses:
  - Significantly reduce the expense of using 3rd party applications such as GrubHub and Uber Eats.
  - Develop a new sales channel (online ordering) from which customers can find their favorite neighborhood restaurants.
  - Further empathize online growth through focused SEO (search engine optimization).

Year-to-date online ordering restaurant sales totaled:  
**\$125,651 and growing every week!**




# Website Development

- Every website is a unique reflection of the business and its owner.
- After our initial consultation, we plan for a website to be up and running within 2 weeks.

## Website Creation Process

1. CRA explains the design process and benefits of the end website
2. Purchase the desired domain name
3. Set manageable goals with clear timeframes
4. Gather content for the website and determine look/feel  
*(see Free Website Design Form)*
5. Collect media such as photos / video *(Schedule photographer if required)*
6. Link Social Media *(if applicable)*
7. Link online selling platforms *(if applicable)*
8. Review website with business owner prior to publishing live
9. Publish site and encourage business owner to incorporate their new website into their marketing plan
10. Handoff website to business owner and encourage frequent edits!



**BMSF / CRA Tech Initiative – Free Website Design Form**

The next step of the project is designing your free website! Below is a list of the things we will need to make that happen. If you have any questions about one or more of the items please reply to this email with your inquiry, or email Joe Lavello [javello@cambridgeretailadvisors.com] directly.

**Website Domain**

- Please include your domain (website name), if you own the domain, and the hosting company. If you do not own the domain, we can purchase it for you.

Provide your response here:

Domain	Owned	Webmaster	Contact Info	Hosting
Example: www.alexandrhavedomain.com	Y	Joe	Joe@example.com	GoDaddy.com
Example: www.needadomain.com	N			

**Your Story**

- Provide two to three paragraphs on your business. Below are some ideas:
  - Why your business was started and your company mission
  - Your business' importance in the community
  - Inspiration or origin behind the flavors or products
  - People involved in getting product on the shelf
  - Be creative! This is your space to share your business with the world
  - If you are stuck, check out other websites with similar products or services to get ideas


Provide your response here:

**Special Services**

- What services would a customer not immediately know you offer?
  - Examples: Catering, Tailored Clothes

Provide your response here:

BMSF / CRA Website Design Form    Confidential    Page 1 of 3



**Contact Information**

Provide your response here:

Work Phone Number	6175168774
Work Email Address	marianajh50@gmail.com
Work Physical Address	173 Dudley street Roxbury MA 02119
Other	

**Days and Hours of Operation**

Provide your response here:

Day	Hours
Sunday	Close
Monday	SAM-6PM
Tuesday	SAM-6PM
Wednesday	SAM-6PM
Thursday	SAM-6PM
Friday	SAM-6PM
Saturday	SAM-6PM

**Vacation or Holidays Not Open**

Day	Hours
July 4th	All Day
December 24	Half Day
December 25	All Day
January 1st	All Day

**Menu**

- Email javello@cambridgeretailadvisors.com your menu
  - PDF or JPG file of your full menu

**Pictures**

- Email javello@cambridgeretailadvisors.com the following types of pictures
  - Inside and outside of your restaurant or store
  - Smiling Employees, including yourself!
  - Food (including Food Prep) or Products (including Crafting Process)
  - Happy Customers
  - Community Involvement
  - Phone photos will work fine, please send as jpg

**Social Media**

- We will tie this social media information into your website

Provide your response here:

Social Media	Web Address
Example: MySpace	www.myspace.com/example
Facebook	

BMSF / CRA Website Design Form    Confidential    Page 2 of 3

# Website Example



<http://jallohafricanmarket.com/>  
COTTON  
MAIN STREETS



- Above is a live website that we created with the owner of Jalloh African Market. The process from purchasing the domain, gathering photography, to site design and publishing took 1 week.
- All work is completed in house by the CRA ED team

# Business Spotlight

# Business Spotlight – Mission Hill Bar & Grill



“Our restaurant hesitated to change point of sale vendors due to the daunting time commitment and technically requirements. With CRA's help we selected and installed the Quantic POS solution seamlessly with our day-to-day operations. Our new system enables many new features like online sales, is super easy for staff to work with, and saved us thousands in fees. After 13 years with the wrong POS, CRA helped us make the change in less than 3 weeks.

From start to finish, everybody has been very helpful. This program has been very good for our business and comes at an important time. “

**Harry Walsh**  
Owner, Mission Hill Bar & Grill

<b>Background</b>	Family business operating since 2007
<b>What We Provided</b>	State-of-the-art Point of Sale system with strong business management features and integrated online ordering
<b>Major Benefits</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ \$11,148 in projected savings (credit card processing, internet discounts and POS subscription fees)</li><li>▪ \$109,375 projected savings (online ordering)</li><li>▪ PR publicity through Comcast</li></ul>
<b>Additional Support</b>	Menu optimization, marketing, custom development work

# Business Spotlight – Food for the Soul



“Having been born and raised in Boston, the community has done so much for me throughout my entire life. Now, it’s important that I give back to my community and set an example of what it’s like to be an entrepreneur. This program has not only given me the understanding of what I need to run a successful operation, but the confidence to do so. I truly appreciate the patience and support the team has provided me throughout the entire process. The relationship and commitment is priceless.”

**Donnell Singleton**  
Owner, Food for the Soul

<b>Background</b>	Two brothers, Donnell and William, established Food For The Soul in 2017. The business was started to fill a void that was absent in Boston: a ‘completely halal soul food restaurant.’
<b>What We Provided</b>	State-of-the-art Point of Sale system with strong business management features and integrated online ordering
<b>Major Benefits</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ \$3,721 in projected savings (credit card processing, internet discounts and POS subscription fees)</li><li>▪ Built a them an entirely new website<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>○ Bostonfoodforthesoul.com</li></ul></li><li>▪ PR publicity through Comcast</li></ul>
<b>Additional Support</b>	Menu optimization, professional photography, website optimization, marketing assistance

# Business Spotlight – Sam’s Spot



“I would like to thank you all from the bottom of my heart for allowing me and my brand to be a part of such an amazing organization. I am overjoyed and overwhelmed with emotions. I can't stress enough how grateful I am, but I will show you by working my hardest and achieving my goals with your assistance.

You guys have a life changing program, especially for people such as myself, so I would just like to wish you all the best, success and longevity! Anything you ever need from me in the future please don't hesitate at all.”

**Samantha Anson**  
**Owner, Sam’s Spot**

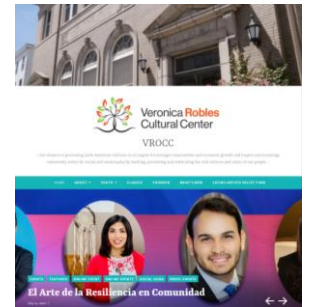
<b>Background</b>	Started in grandma's kitchen; put herself through culinary school and opened a successful catering business. Sam’s Spot, her first brick and mortar establishment, has been a lifelong dream.
<b>What We Provided</b>	State-of-the-art Point of Sale system with strong business management features and integrated online ordering
<b>Major Benefits</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ \$3,045 in projected savings (internet savings and POS subscription fees)</li><li>▪ Best-in-class credit card processing rates from business launch</li></ul>
<b>Additional Support</b>	Menu optimization, website optimization, marketing assistance



# Business Spotlight – Veronica Robles Cultural Center

“As a small non-profit corporation, we have limited funds and due to the current health crisis, we need to take immediate actions to streamline and improve our daily operations, finance and customer services to adapt to the new reality and reopen our programs and services. With our budget, we would not be able to have this new technology and these opportunities. We are quite grateful for this program. “

**Veronica Robles**  
Founder, Veronica Robles Cultural Center



<b>Background</b>	VRCC’s mission is promoting Latin American Cultures as an engine for stronger communities and economic growth and inspire and encourage community action for social and racial equity by teaching, promoting and celebrating the rich cultures and colors of our people
<b>What We Provided</b>	State-of-the-art Point of Sale system with strong business management features
<b>Major Benefits</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ \$1,194 in projected savings (internet savings and POS subscription fees)</li><li>▪ Best-in-class credit card processing rates; the VRCC had never taken credit cards before our initiative</li><li>▪ PR publicity through Comcast</li></ul>
<b>Additional Support</b>	CRA and Quantic team provided significant assistance during VRCC’s annual Day of the Dead celebration; our collective efforts allowed the event to run “extremely smoothly.”

# Business Spotlight – Toasted Flats



“It’s really important to me as a business owner that I balance a positive employee and customer experience. Technology has been critical to the success of being able to do so. Not only has this program allowed me to deliver an ordering solution that’s easy for my employees to use, but it’s also easy for my customers. The program has improved my quality of life and has ultimately allowed for the growth of my small business within our community.”

**Dalila Vargas**  
Owner, Toasted Flats

<b>Background</b>	Toasted Flat’s mission to provide healthy, fresh food quickly while taking the time to provide a welcoming, emotionally conscious, experience to all its customers. Found in 2017.
<b>What We Provided</b>	State-of-the-art Point of Sale system with strong business management features and integrated online ordering
<b>Major Benefits</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ \$4,841 in projected savings (credit card processing, internet discounts and POS subscription fees)</li><li>▪ Generated ~\$2,800 in new online ordering sales over six weeks</li><li>▪ Developed an enhanced ‘customer display’ that showcases tip amounts in larger font and auto-selects 15% for every transaction</li><li>▪ PR publicity through Comcast</li></ul>
<b>Additional Support</b>	Website optimization, menu optimization, marketing

# Survey Results & Testimonials



# Survey Results

Below are the results of our first benchmark survey of the expansion phase businesses, designed and distributed by CRA. We asked questions to weigh the value of current vendor relationships and gather feedback on specific areas of the program. The use of data gathered was limited to the express purpose stated above.

Would you recommend this program to other business owners in the community?

- *100% of respondents answered "Yes"*

Would you refer the POS system to a colleague?

- *100% of respondents answered "Yes"*

Is your business doing better operationally after participating in the BMSF Technology Initiative?

- *100% of respondents answered "Yes"*

Is your business doing better financially after participating in the BMSF Technology Initiative?

- *100% of respondents answered "Yes"*

Do you have a better understanding of operational costs associated with POS? (Ex. online ordering fees, credit card fees)

- *100% of respondents answered "Yes"*

# BMSF Executive Director Feedback



The coming together of Cambridge Retail Advisors with Greater Grove Hall Main Streets (GGHMS) to support the businesses in the commercial district of Dorchester, a community in Boston, during the pandemic is a momentous initiative that I, as a volunteer for GGHMS, can put my energy behind.

It is an awesome venture with low/no risk for businesses to remain financially engaged and be positioned to scale-up and grow after COVID-19. On behalf of the businesses in GGHMS, thank you for this unbelievable opportunity!

**Angela Williams-Mitchell**  
Community Empowerment Architect, Grove Hall

I think this is a great opportunity for the businesses here and truly appreciate the efforts that you are all putting into helping our small businesses. If they follow through, I am sure they will be stronger and survive the coming months.

**Ellen Walker, Mission Hill**

I am writing this letter to you, to let you know how grateful we are with your help and support to our District's small businesses. Thank you for bringing in your expertise to East Boston. We really need your technical assistance to support our small businesses. I heard really good comments from the business you spoke with and the owners are so happy to be connected with your Team. Again, we appreciate your services and expertise. Looking forward to keep working with you all. Gracias!

**Gladys Oliveros, East Boston**

We've been impressed with the communication and responsiveness of Cambridge Retail Advisors and are excited to see the BMSF Expansion become available to more businesses. In a moment when our Main Street restaurants and retail are under so much strain, the cost savings and support for online ordering is a tremendous value to stabilize struggling small businesses. Greater Ashmont Main Street looks forward to continued partnership with the BMSF Technology Initiative to get these vital resources to the vital small businesses in our district

**Josh Wilson**  
*Assistant Director*  
*Greater Ashmont Main Street*

# BMSF Leadership Testimonials

“This is one of the best programs I’ve seen during my tenure as Boston Main Streets Foundation Board Chairman. Cambridge Retail Advisors has been responsive, dedicated and easy to work with. This has been a transformational initiative that has provided a lifeline to retail and restaurant owners around the city of Boston during this COVID-19 pandemic.”

- **Joel Sklar, Chairman, Boston Main Streets Foundation**



“The BMSF Technology Initiative resulted in the creation of a valuable product to improve business management, reduce business costs and implement e-commerce.”

- **Karl Seidman, MIT Urban Studies Professor and Founding Member of the BMSF**



# PR Coverage

## Story featured on:

- Business.Comcast.com
- Comcast Business  
Twitter
- PR News Wire
- Small Business  
Report.com

## Comcast Business Establishes Technology Initiative with Boston Main Streets Foundation and Cambridge Retail Advisors to Support Boston-based Small Businesses

Program delivers technology solutions and consulting services, resulting in more than \$38,000 in savings to date

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BOSTON, Jan. 26, 2021 /PRNewswire/ -- [Comcast Business](#) today announced it has established a technology initiative with the [Boston Main Streets Foundation](#) and [Cambridge Retail Advisors](#) aimed at supporting local small businesses throughout the COVID-19 pandemic and beyond. Together, the three organizations are providing consulting services and technology solutions to local small businesses across a variety of industries, leading to improved business operations and transformation, and significant cost savings.



# BMSF Small Business Blog Series

- CRA and BMSF have created a blog series that highlights program participants, their stories and unique perspectives navigating the pandemic
  - Launching first week of October