

# PRESIDENT'S REPORT 2020



West Philadelphia Corridor Collaborative

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# MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

Perseverance is defined as the persistence in doing something despite difficulty. This is the word I have chosen to begin my annual message because it has been a recurring theme of what I continue to see in our West Philadelphia district.

Throughout this year, we have been faced with a historic set of challenges. In ten months' time, an unprecedented pandemic swept across the world leading to government-ordered business closures. Civil unrest caused by police brutality and ongoing social injustices left physical scars on our most historic commercial corridors. Tropical Storm flooding changed the landscape of Southwest Philadelphia. Every businesses within every industry has had to learn to operate differently, creating a new set of guidelines for doing business.

But despite these challenges, the trains keep moving so to speak. And there is a level of hope and optimism around every corner. Despite months of no revenue, many small businesses retained employees and are optimistically in the process of reopening. Business and community members came together at the end of the civil unrest to sweep up broken glass and debris. Great corporate partners like the Barristers Association, AT&T and Drexel University stepped up their commitment to helping strengthen neighborhood corridors.

It is this optimism, this hope for the future, this perseverance has inspired us to work harder this year. As the needs of our community changed, so too, have we changed in our programming, our approach and focus. I invite you to learn more within about our story of perseverance and our work to continue to ensure West Philadelphia sees an inclusive recovery, leaving no corridor behind.



A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Jabari K. Jones". The signature is stylized and fluid.

**JABARI K. JONES**  
PRESIDENT

# OUR CORE MISSION

Despite the challenges of the year, The West Philadelphia Corridor Collaborative (WPCC) continued its core focus of building and maintaining the entrepreneurial ecosystem of West Philadelphia. Our core mission is to create, connect and advocate for resources to help residents start new businesses and help our existing companies grow, thrive and hire by providing the right representation, connection to opportunities and strategic support.

## \$23B

### IN LOCAL INVESTMENT

WPCC participates in oversight, advisory and consulting capacities on over \$23 Billion worth of spend and actively works to ensure local businesses are included in local investment.

## \$2B

### IN ANNUAL SPEND

Spend from local Universities and academic institutions within West Philadelphia that WPCC works to connect local suppliers to.

## 17

### VIRTUAL BUSINESS EDUCATION EVENTS

WPCC either hosted or participated in 2020, including the first virtual B-Smart Program

## 50+

### SMALL BUSINESS RELIEF APPLICATIONS

WPCC supported over 50 businesses in the application process for federal and other pandemic-inspired relief programs.

## 15+

### NEWS OUTLETS THAT COVERED US IN 2020

WPCC has been covered in more than 15 news outlets including The Wall Street Journal, NBC 10 and The Hill.



WPCC President Jabari Jones (far left) participates in the groundbreaking of Community College of Philadelphia's \$32 Million Career and Advanced Training Center.

## COVID-19 INCLUSIVE RECOVERY

On March 15, 2020 Governor Tom Wolf announced a state-wide shutdown of businesses deemed "non-essential" by the Commonwealth to take effect on March 16th.

The order directly resulted in small businesses going months without revenue.

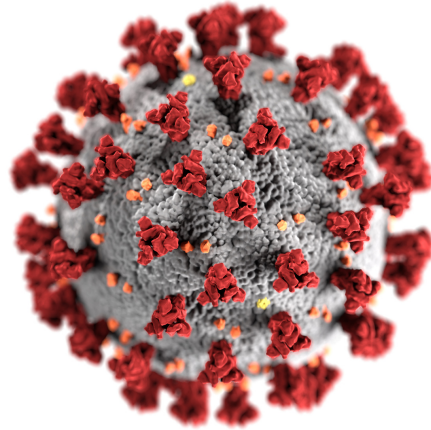
Our efforts around this included helping make sure that small businesses would be equally informed and able to participate in recovery programs.

**92%**

Estimated percentage of West Philadelphia firms ordered closed on March 16th



# OUR COVID-19 RESPONSE



**MARCH 12**

## **PRESIDENT'S STATEMENT ON CORONAVIRUS PRECAUTIONS**

Three days before Governor Wolf's announcement, The WPCC canceled all events and recommended cancellation of all "non-essential" gatherings of business associations or community groups. WPCC sponsored Go-To-Meeting software for business associations upon request.

**MARCH 19**

## **COVID-19 RESPONSE SITE LAUNCH**

WPCC launched a COVID-19 Response site at [www.westphillycc.org/covid19](http://www.westphillycc.org/covid19) with frequent posts of news, COVID-19 funding resources for small businesses, and legislative actions.

**APRIL 1**

## **BRIEFING ON THE CARES ACT**

WPCC provided small businesses with a federal briefing on the CARES Act, its provisions and how to access federal programs like the Paycheck Protection Program, Disaster Loans, and SBA Debt Relief.

# OUR COVID-19 RESPONSE

**APRIL 22**

## **PRESIDENT JABARI JONES TESTIFIES BEFORE CONGRESS**

President Jabari Jones testified before the U.S. House Space, Science and Technology Committee proposing bold new legislation that would make recoveries more inclusive and ensure that small, diverse companies benefit from stimulus money.



**APRIL 27**

## **OUR NOTES RELEASED ON CARES ACT**

Our notes on best practices in applying for federal aid programs, based on helping more than 50 small businesses to access the program become public.

## RESPONDING TO CIVIL UNREST AND SOCIAL INJUSTICE

On May 25, George Floyd was killed in Minneapolis by police. The video of his death sparked outrage and protests across the nation. The response was part of a larger problem of national social injustice and countless African-Americans that have been killed without consequence at the hands of police.

On May 31, civil unrest rocked West Philadelphia neighborhoods when some protests turned violent. The unrest left visible scars along commercial corridors as property was damaged, stores were looted, and fires set.

Our response emphasized rebuilding damaged commercial corridors and calling for more discussions on social justice.

72

Number of West Philadelphia Businesses Damaged in Unrest Reported by Business Associations

7

Number of West Philadelphia commercial corridors that sustained damage in civil unrest

1

Number of Days after Unrest that WPCC's response began.





West Philadelphia Corridor Collaborative

WPCCC & COUNCILMAN ALLAN DOMB PRESENTS...

## PHL EMERGENCY BUSINESS INSURANCE SUPPORT

**WE HAVE VOLUNTEERS!**  
**-INSURANCE PROFESSIONALS**  
**-LAWYERS**

- Provide help with looking at small business insurance policies.
- Provide assistance to file a claim.
- Review claims already submitted to ensure it is accurate.

PLEASE CONTACT THE OFFICE OF COUNCILMAN ALLAN DOMB (610)-304-8529, WHO WILL CONNECT BUSINESSES VIRTUALLY WITH INSURANCE PROFESSIONALS TO PROVIDE HELP WITH CLAIMS.

Thanks to our Supporters & Sponsorship:  
West Philadelphia Corridor Collaborative, Office of Councilman Allan Domb, Office of Councilmember Jamie Gauthier, Enterprise Center.

The Barristers Association of Philadelphia, Inc. City Council PHILADELPHIA NERDIT NOW THE ENTERPRISE CENTER

## PHL EMERGENCY BUSINESS INSURANCE SUPPORT

Within 24 hours of civil unrest, WPCCC created a virtual insurance clinic staffed with attorneys and volunteer insurance professionals with Philadelphia City Councilmember Allan Domb (D-At Large) and the Barristers Association.

Donations and volunteers powered 500 copies to be printed and disbursed to neighborhood corridors the next day.

## CITY COUNCIL ADVOCACY

The day after civil unrest, President Jabari Jones sent a memorandum to all members of Philadelphia's City Council advocating for what corridors and businesses would need to rebuild.

WPCCC successfully advocated for a storefront program that was created by PHL Commerce of \$1.4 Million for small businesses damaged and national guard protection for essential businesses.

President Jabari Jones also testified before City Council on ways to help businesses recover.



WPCCC President Jabari Jones' ten minute testimony before the Philadelphia City Council Committee on Commerce and Economic Development. [Listen to the testimony here.](#)



WPCCC President Jabari Jones speaks with business owners after civil unrest. Photo credit: Philadelphia Inquirer

## FEDERAL ADVOCACY

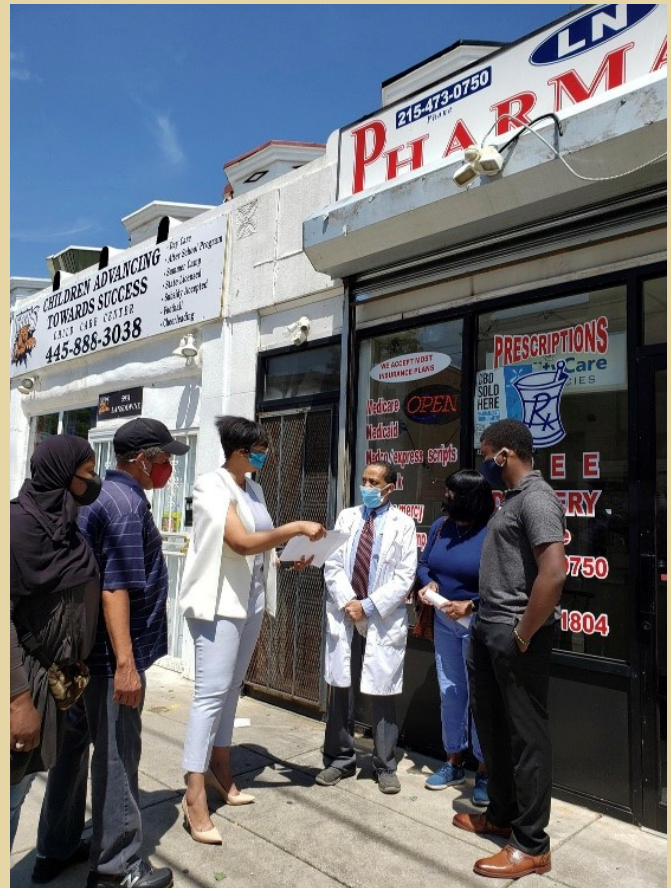
The WPCCC hosted a roundtable with small businesses and the office of U.S. Senator Pat Toomey (R-Pennsylvania) that culminated in the introduction of S. 4135 The HEAL Act. The proposed bill would create an \$80 Million allocation of forgivable loans to help small businesses that sustained damage.

The bill is pending in the Senate Committee on Small Business and Entrepreneurship.

## MONITORING COMMERCIAL CORRIDORS

The WPCCC remained in contact with member business associations, receiving frequent updates on the state of corridors throughout the civil unrest period.

WPCCC also directly toured damage after each day of unrest with local officials, often meeting directly with affected businesses and hearing what they needed to rebuild and reopen.



WPCCC toured the Lansdowne Avenue commercial corridor with State Representative Morgan Cephas (D-192), Reverend Lindsay (BOOST CDC), and other community stakeholders.



WPCC produced a virtual Small Business Grant Workshop for small businesses, going through the applications for several popular grant programs.

## SMALL BUSINESS GRANT WORKSHOPS

The WPCC hosted and recorded a grant workshop to help small businesses fill out grant applications for the PA COVID-19 Statewide Relief Grant, the Merchant's Fund Restore and Reopen, the PA 30 Day Fund, and others.

Grant workshops uniquely focused on where small businesses can access sometimes hard-to-locate paperwork required to apply for programs.

## OTHER MISC. ACTIVITIES

\*President Jabari Jones addressed the Philadelphia Police Department Advisory Commission Meeting with Police Commissioner Danielle Outlaw and City Councilmembers on June 4th, urging City Council to mandate civilian oversight of police misconduct.

\*President Jabari Jones participated in COVID-Calls, a series of conversations with disaster and crisis experts across the country on recovery and crisis mitigation.

\*WPCC amplified the voiced of West Philadelphia residents harmed by tear-gas from police intervention in protests through urging them to testify at Philadelphia City Council Hearings about the unrest.

## CORPORATE PARTNERSHIPS & BUSINESSES GIVING BACK

In 2017, WPCC created the Businesses Giving Back (BGB) Program - a concentrated effort to harness the innovation of our business community and power of the private sector to address community challenges.

Since the program's inception, we've negotiated partnerships that have created over \$500,000.00 in tangible investments in West Philadelphia.



Election Day Partnership - WPCC partnered with Coca-Cola, Business For America and Sharing Excess to deliver 50 cases of soft-drinks to polling locations for the General Election.

75+

Number of Businesses and Corporations we've partnered with since 2017 under BGB

9

Number of Fortune 1000 companies that have participated in BGB initiatives





(From left to right): Evan Ehlers, Founder Sharing Excess, Julie Kimelman Marketing Manager Lavazza, Victoria Wilson, Operations Director Sharing Excess, Donovan West, Culturally Congruent Solutions, Jabari Jones President WPC, and Diamonique Robinson, Chief-Strategist of WPC



## SHARING EXCESS AND LAVAZZA

The WPC partnered with local non-profit organization Sharing Excess and The Lavazza Group to help distribute 1,000 free premium coffee brewers, each coming with one year's worth of coffee to the businesses that keep our district moving forward.

## VIRTUAL HEALTHCARE ENROLLMENT

The WPC partnered with SVJ Insurance Advisors to create a virtual healthcare enrollment initiative to ensure that seniors can get virtual help to enroll in Medicare and residents can enroll in the ACA before critical healthcare deadlines.



THE WEST PHILADELPHIA CORRIDOR  
COLLABORATIVE  
&  
SVJ INSURANCE ADVISORS  
PRESENTS

## VIRTUAL HEALTHCARE ENROLLMENT

Schedule a **free** virtual appointment to  
get help enrolling in Medicare or the  
Affordable Care Act

NOVEMBER 18 - DECEMBER 7TH  
SCHEDULE YOUR APPOINTMENT HERE:

<https://register.insurewithsvj.com> or  
Call 1-866-985-8572





WPCC partnered with NerdiTNOW Foundation and the Office of State Representative Joanna E. McClinton (D-191) to donate 100 chromebook computers to District 1199C, Philadelphia's healthcare workers union's workforce development program.

## TACKLING TECHNOLOGY ACCESS

As the pandemic caused changes in how every business had to operate, one thing was remarkably clear, access to technology was key.

WPCC created two initiatives to help West Philadelphia residents, jobseekers, current employees, and students stay connected in the virtual age.

## TECHNOLOGY REPAIR POP-UP

The WPCC partnered with the **NerdiTNOW Foundation**, **Samuel Consultancy Group** for our first Technology Repair Pop-Up. Sponsored by **AT&T**. Through socially-distant repair event, we offered repair of phone, laptop and computer screens, software upgrades, camera and keyboard fixes, and even provided replacements for those with unfixable technology. Dozens of devices were repaired.



Click [here](#) to view Our Tech Repair Pop-Up Post-Event Highlight video

# LOOKING AHEAD: PRIORITIES 2021

1.) Promote an inclusive recovery of West Philadelphia neighborhoods through continuing advocacy for small businesses and organizing the private sector around community challenges.

2.) Support local firms' shifting in doing business due to the pandemic, by planning initiatives that will expand e-commerce and digital capacity of local companies.

3.) Build and support partnerships bringing new investment into West Philadelphia and connect investment to local firms to existing investment to help businesses generate revenue.

4.) Prioritize additional support to job creating businesses.

5.) Prioritize partnerships that will address the significant public-safety issues that disrupt commerce on corridors and plague neighborhoods.

