



Song Foundation invests \$200K to accelerate Urban Entrepreneurship Initiative's Urban Innovator Platform

Funding will support hiring, platform expansion, and transition toward a self-sustaining model

Contact:

Anshiqā Miskowski
Urban Entrepreneurship Initiative
anshika@urbanei.org
+1 (734) 383-5935

or

W. David Tarver
Urban Entrepreneurship Initiative
davidtarver@urbanei.org
+1 (313) 457-2050

Detroit, MI – April 20, 2026 — The **Urban Entrepreneurship Initiative (UEI)** today announced a \$200,000 grant from the Song Foundation to support the continued development and expansion of its Urban Innovator Platform (UIP), a digital ecosystem designed to connect innovators, entrepreneurs, and organizations working to improve urban communities.

The investment will enable UEI to accelerate platform development, hire dedicated staff, and expand services to its growing member base as it works toward a sustainable, scalable operating model.

Development of the Urban Innovator Platform began in late 2023 with seed funding and in-kind research support from the University of Michigan College of Engineering and Center for Entrepreneurship. Early strategy support was provided by the Detroit office of McKinsey & Company.

The Urban Innovator Platform provides essential information, inspiration, and connections for urban-focused innovators and entrepreneurs. Designed as an “operating system” for urban

innovation, the platform brings together a community of professionals committed to improving quality of life in cities via sustainable, scalable business solutions.

Key platform components include:

- Business Profiles and Proposals -- a database of established and proposed businesses to gather community feedback, inform aspiring entrepreneurs, and provide pedagogic support for hands-on learning
- Problem Statements -- an open forum to collect and categorize issues reported by community members
- A curated Knowledge Base -- a compendium of resources and references to educate members on urban innovation
- A Resource Organization Finder -- a directory of organizations dedicated to supporting entrepreneurship across in top US metro areas and across the globe
- An Events Calendar -- featuring local, regional, national and international events of interest to the community
- The Urban Game Changers podcast -- conversations with exemplary urban entrepreneurs and innovators

Since its launch, the Urban Innovator Platform has grown to more than 250 members and features over 80 urban-focused business profiles.

“With support from the Song Foundation, we are accelerating the scale and impact of the Urban Innovator Platform,” said W. David Tarver, UEI founder and president. “This is a pivotal moment for urban communities. Rapid technological change, environmental pressures, and cultural tensions are reshaping cities in real time. Our platform equips entrepreneurs and innovators to develop solutions that strengthen community vitality, resilience, and long-term prosperity.”

Song Foundation Executive Director Khalilah Gaston added: “We are pleased to support the continued growth of the Urban Innovator Platform. UEI’s work aligns closely with our commitment to strengthening communities and building inclusive innovation ecosystems.”

UEI plans to build on this momentum by expanding platform capabilities and welcoming additional partners and supporters interested in advancing innovation in urban communities.

About the Urban Entrepreneurship Initiative

Detroit-based but globally minded, the Urban Entrepreneurship Initiative (UEI) provides the Urban Innovator Platform, a membership-based ecosystem that connects innovators, entrepreneurs, and organizations working to improve urban communities.

Through its platform, UEI provides access to knowledge resources, networks, technology tools, and funding opportunities that support the development of scalable solutions to critical urban challenges.

Learn more at urbanei.org.