

Ann Arbor SPARK

Semi-Annual Report

City of Ann Arbor

July 1, 2022 – December 31, 2022



Ann Arbor SPARK will advance the economy of the Ann Arbor region by establishing it as a desired place for innovation, business location and growth, and for talented people to live and work. The Ann Arbor region will be recognized for its academic, business, and community resources, and its collaborative culture.

<https://annarborusa.org/>



Semi-Annual Report
City of Ann Arbor
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Ann Arbor SPARK | City of Ann Arbor

Semi-Annual Report

This report focuses primarily on activity completed and results achieved by Ann Arbor SPARK during 2022 within the City of Ann Arbor. We look forward to expanding our strategic vision in 2023.



Driving Smart Economic Growth in Service of Prosperity for All

The world is undergoing a sea of change of how people work, where they live, and what they value. The pandemic has exacerbated economic inequalities and made progress on environmental sustainability more difficult. A strategy of smart growth in service of prosperity for all will respond to these new challenges and create opportunities that will benefit our region. To deliver on this shared purpose with a strong commitment to equity and environmental stewardship, Ann Arbor SPARK will focus its efforts in the next three years on the four strategic directions below that have the potential to deliver value, mitigate risks, and are strengths of the organization. Our priorities include:



Customized Business Attraction, Expansion, and Retention Support in Your Backyard

Ann Arbor SPARK is proud to serve your community and provide real-time, relevant resources for whatever you need related to business attraction, expansion, and retention, when you need it. Our team can assist with feasibility studies, review available sites for projects of any size, provide economic and labor market data and analysis, industry sector analysis, compensation analysis, facilitate connections to regional, state, and national partners, and much more. Contact Phil Santer at phil@annarborusa.org to learn more.



Ann Arbor SPARK Business Development Mission

Maximize job creation and capital investment by growing the region's GDP through the retention and expansion of established driving industry companies that sell goods and services outside the Ann Arbor region, and through the targeted attraction domestically and internationally of similar companies that could succeed in our region.



AT A GLANCE | FY 2022



9

PROJECT
SUCCESSES



207

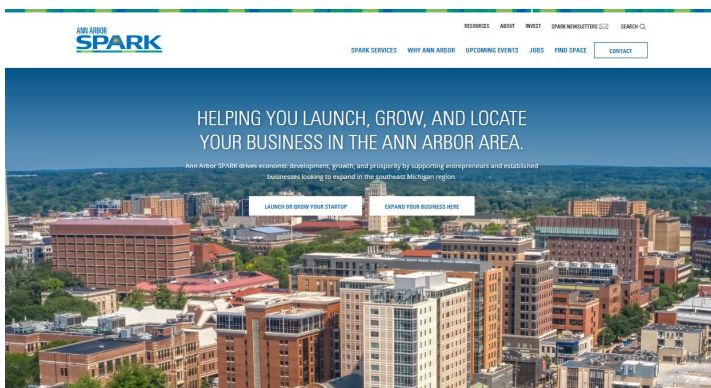
NEW JOB
COMMITMENTS



61.7M

TOTAL
INVESTMENT

NEW WEBSITE!



SPARK launched a beautiful [new website](#) in September 2022, which allows the marketing team to better track meaningful analytics and provides an improved user experience for visitors.

TESTIMONIALS



"It was my pleasure to work with Jennifer at SPARK. She always had the answer or knew how to find it when we were facing the problems which every startup would have."

"All of this had to have a major push from SPARK. We could not have done it without them."



55

GROWTH
CALLS HELD

of full-time staff at
companies called:

2,910.

5

POSITIVE MOMENTUM CONTINUES INTO THE SECOND HALF OF 2022

Early 2022 project successes in the City of Ann Arbor included ADASTEC Corp. continuing their investment in the region, DEO locating in Ann Arbor, and the groundbreaking at the new Sartorius Center of Excellence.

This momentum carried into the second half of 2022 and led to six additional project successes to round out the year. Buyutech, M-Vision, Intermodo, Deepen AI, and Better Frost all located in Ann Arbor with either physical or virtual office space at SPARK Central Innovation Center (SCIC) while Utilidata found office space at a tech brewery for ten people with plans to grow.

AT A GLANCE | July 1 – December 31, 2022

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION OF THE CITY OF ANN ARBOR (EDC/A2)

The Economic Development Corporation of the City of Ann Arbor (EDC/A2) was formed under Michigan's Economic Development Corporation Act in 1978. Its purpose is to assist in the attraction, relocation, retention and expansion of profit and non-profit organizations which provide employment, and which are considered desirable and beneficial to the City. It has carried this out primarily by its issuance of tax-exempt revenue bonds. This has permitted borrowers to realize substantial savings in financing costs due to the difference between taxable and tax-exempt interest rates.

The primary statutory purpose of the EDC/A2 is to help lower financing costs by issuing tax-exempt revenue bonds,, but the group has assisted the community in other ways. To date this assistance has included:

- Referral and ombudsman services to the public.
- Working cooperatively with the City, other area economic development corporations and similar entities involving matters of common interest.
- Encouraging programs that attract or retain businesses and employment.
- Subject to the availability of funding, providing loans and grants to assist companies and non-profits in the City.

Ann Arbor SPARK's President and CEO, Paul Krutko, remains actively involved in the EDC/A2 efforts and currently serves as a member of the board of directors.

STATE STREET INNOVATION COORIDOR: ONGOING WORK IN THE BUSINESS IMPROVEMENT ZONE

In May 2022, City of Ann Arbor officials approved the first phase of the State Street Innovation Corridor improvement efforts that will implement a new curbless street design. The \$9 million project will be underway for two years.

In 2023, the project moves northward where reconstruction will take place from North University Avenue to East Washington Street. East Washington to East Huron Streets will also be resurfaced.

State Street serves as a main gateway into Ann Arbor from I-94 and more than 37,000 vehicles travel through each day. This area is home to the largest office and retail market in the county and has the greatest potential of any market in the Ann Arbor area.

AT A GLANCE | July 1 – December 31, 2022

BUSINESS RESILIENCY INTERVIEWS

Phil Santer, Senior Vice President of Ann Arbor SPARK conducted interviews with Lisa McLaughlin, Co-Chief CEO of Workit Health and Danny Ellis, CEO of SkySpecs to learn more about how they managed to grow their businesses in recent years despite the pandemic. The interviews explore the impact of the pandemic, challenges faced by the businesses, critical support provided at different stages of their business growth, and recommendations for the City of Ann Arbor and the surrounding region to ensure a strong startup ecosystem.

Key takeaways from these meetings include the importance of retaining local talent as companies downsize, a renewed focus on maintaining the startup ecosystem in Ann Arbor by supporting and promoting programs for early-stage companies, universal internet access and the possibility of becoming a smart wired city, and the importance of embracing virtual/remote or hybrid work environments because they are here to stay. Contact [Phil Santer](#) for more information regarding these interviews.

ANN ARBOR SPARK'S ANNUAL BENCHMARKING REPORT AS A RESOURCE

In 2022, Ann Arbor SPARK released the fourth iteration of the [Benchmarking the Ann Arbor Region](#) report. The purpose of the report is to take the pulse of the Ann Arbor region in comparison to a specific competitive set of technology-driven communities and their economies on a regular basis. The objective is not to make policy recommendations, but to provide clear, unbiased data with regional analysis on a series of metrics that are often applied without context.

In addition to better understanding the metrics analyzed, the report also serves as a resources for understanding economic development efforts in other regions.

SAVE THE DATE: **a2tech360 2023**



Ann Arbor SPARK's a2Tech360 is a week of events celebrating Ann Arbor's spirit of innovation through experiences, conversations, and connections that strengthen and expand the region's vibrant ecosystem. The events are tailored to a variety of interests and audiences, including entrepreneurs, researchers, investors, businesses, academic institutions, non-profits, job seekers, and the general public.

AT A GLANCE | July 1 – December 31, 2022

ANN ARBOR ENTREPRENEURIAL ECOSYSTEM: STARTUP SPOTLIGHT SERIES

Ann Arbor SPARK has been working closely with companies in the Ann Arbor region that started as small startups and have since experienced success to offer advice to other startups. Danny Ellis from SkySpecs, Erin Milligan from P3Mobility, Frank LoScudato from Nostrum Energy/Nostrum High Performance, Natalie Fang from Nochi Studios, and Dr. Ali Pekar from ADASTEC have been featured in the series with plans for additional startup spotlights planned throughout 2023.

Startup spotlights can be found on all Ann Arbor SPARK social channels ([Instagram](#) / [Facebook](#) / [LinkedIn](#)).

STATE STREET DISTRICT INVOLVEMENT

According to their website, the State Street District has been a key player in creating a vibrant downtown community in Ann Arbor for over fifty years. Through the District partnership, entrepreneurs, building owners, national chains, non-profit organizations, University staff, and residents have all worked together to build a strong, service-oriented organization.

The District has represented their neighborhood to various governmental bodies and worked closely with public agencies, the University of Michigan, the Downtown Development Authority, and other downtown associations in order to sustain an economically strong environment for area businesses.

Ann Arbor SPARK's Director of Business Development, Jennifer Olmstead, serves as a board member for the District efforts.

ONGOING COMMITMENT TO CARBON NEUTRALITY

SPARK continues to be a strong partner for the city's A2Zero initiative that focuses on innovation to achieve carbon neutrality. SPARK staff have been actively engaged as part of the steering committee. SPARK staff are committed to providing sustainability resources to companies looking to locate or expand within the region. A great example of this is the new Sartorius site which will include many sustainable features, including capacity for electric vehicle charging stations, 200 kilowatt solar panels on the roof, utilization of MI Green Power via DTE, and the research park's first storm runoff pond to protect against flooding and erosion. The site is also seeking LEED certification for new construction and major renovation by the U.S. Green Building Council.

City of Ann Arbor Metrics

Companies Assisted	January 1 – December 31, 2022
Number of growth visits held	55
Number of attraction prospect site visits ¹	3*
Number of responses to attraction prospect or site consultant requests for proposals ²	8
Jobs	
Projected to be created (over the next 3 years) ³	207
Jobs projected to be retained	163
Investment	
Taxable value of new private investment	\$ 30,854,500
Total value of private investment	\$ 61,709,000
Miscellaneous	
Number and value of investments leveraged through and including federal and state grants and incentives, foundations and other sources that assisted businesses or organizations ⁴	1 Brownfield Credit Awarded: \$2,735,438 1 MBDP Grant Awarded: \$1,200,000

¹Number of discreet projects that were physically toured around sites in the City of Ann Arbor.

²Number of requests to which SPARK electronically submitted properties located in the City of Ann Arbor.

³These jobs are projected to be added over the next three years, we will update the numbers as we interact with the companies and determine progress.

⁴ [Michigan Economic Development Corporation Business Development Program Projects](#)

*The COVID-19 crisis limited our ability to physically tour space. This figure includes virtual visits done with site consultants that lead global site search projects.



SPARK celebrates all projects that may have an impact on our region. We do not count jobs and investments where SPARK was not directly involved.

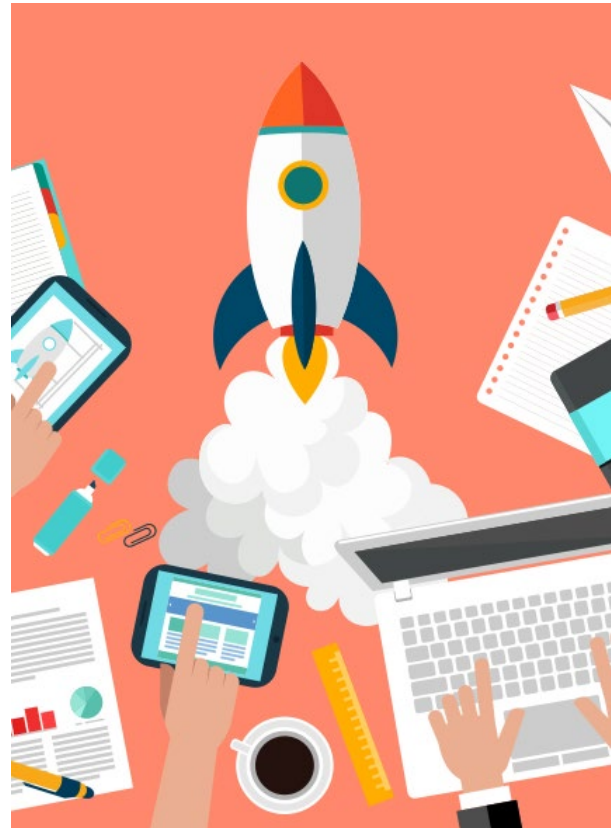
Ann Arbor SPARK Metrics:

JOBS

SPARK acts as project manager for both the communities it supports and the companies it serves. Our project management efforts can be fairly simple, such as conducting data analysis that a company may use in its business planning, or as complex as full project management for significant company expansions.

This would include everything from:

- Connecting them to proper resources
- Working with the site selection community to help determine a location for a project
- Fully managing the tax incentive paperwork and the process it may require
- Creating communication plans
- Traveling to company locations outside of the state
- Making presentations to key public and private decision makers
- Talent recruitment efforts



When companies apply for local or state incentives, they fill out applications that require both job creation and investment estimates. SPARK considers these projects a success after it is publicly announced, or when the proper approval process has taken place for the incentive sought by the company. SPARK's jobs and investments numbers are based on these project announcements provided by the companies. SPARK monitors actual job creation and those results are shown in this report.

SPARK supports a company directly or it supports the consultants the company utilizes during its expansion. Whatever role SPARK might play, we capture jobs and investments for projects that we have played an active role in helping a company make a decision to move forward.

SPARK celebrates all projects that may have an impact on our region. We do not count jobs and investments where SPARK was not directly involved.

July 1 – December 31, 2022

COMPANIES VISITED

Growth calls are a core economic development strategy that involve proactively outreaching and engaging with the existing employer base in our region to determine where they face opportunities and challenges. Growth calls recognize that businesses are dynamic entities that involve constant change. These calls allow SPARK to:

- gather information about local businesses that can be aggregated to reveal trends,
- determine valuable resources that could assist in the company's development,
- identify growth projects that require assistance, and
- serve as an ombudsman between businesses and government.

SPARK conducts hundreds of targeted growth calls each year that result in numerous referrals to resources, services and opportunities of which companies are often unaware. The most common referrals involve accessing talent, access to capital or business development/sales opportunities. Proactive outreach helps companies address challenges before they become problems, supports their continued growth and helps them see that this region is invested in their success.



SPARK HELD GROWTH VISITS WITH

27 COMPANIES

July 1 – December 31, 2022

These companies ranged from 1 to 228 employees and encompassed a diverse range of industries including Advanced Materials, Alternative Energy, Advanced Information Technology, Homeland Security and Defense, Education, Healthcare, Life Sciences, Business Services, and Banking and Finance.

Together, companies contacted represent 1,364 full-time employees.

July 1 – December 31, 2022

COMPANIES VISITED

Company Name	Current FTE (as of growth visit)
Applied Dynamics International Inc.	40
Backyard Brains Incorporated	8.5
Culturebie LLC	2
Everergi USA	1
Everactive	15
Fifth Eye, Inc.	15
FreightVerify, Inc	170
GDI Infotech, Inc.	50
Genomenon, Inc.	58
Human Element, Inc.	50
InfoReady Corporation	21
ITHAKA	150
Kennedy Care, LLC	40
MACOM Integrated Circuits-Ann Arbor	50
Metric Marketing	22
NETSCOUT Systems, Inc.	140
Nokia Deepfield	100
PeoplePlus Software, Inc.	7
Pure Visibility, Inc.	15
Q LTD	12

July 1 – December 31, 2022

COMPANIES VISITED

Company Name	Current FTE (as of growth visit)
Ripple Science Corporation	13.5
Rydberg Technologies Inc.	7
SensCy Inc.	6
SkySpecs, Inc.	228
Solar Tonic LLC	3
TD Ameritrade	120
UPLAND	20

FY 2022

PROJECT PIPELINE

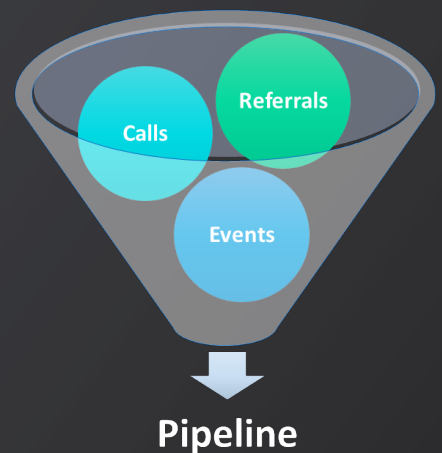
SPARK's project pipeline is a tool that enables our business development team to monitor the status of all active calls, referrals, events, and more. Our pipeline keeps us ahead of the game and allows our team to quickly prioritize high-impact projects and identify and address any issues in collaboration with our partners along the way.



CURRENT PIPELINE AT A GLANCE

73 PROJECTS

SPARK's current pipeline represents the potential for 6,950 new jobs, 2,851 retained jobs, and more than \$4.4 billion in total investments in the region. Projects represent a variety of industry sectors, including Research and Development, Life Sciences, Advanced Information Technology, Alternative Energy, Advanced Manufacturing, Advanced Materials, Food and Beverage, and Business Services.



City of Ann Arbor Pipeline Update

Sites within the City of Ann Arbor continue to be of interest to companies in our project pipeline. Over the past year, several companies in the R&D space have expressed an interest in being close to the University of Michigan North Campus. Fifteen companies associated with projects in the pipeline have expressed interest in locating in the City of Ann Arbor. These projects represent the potential for 3,285 new jobs, 262 retained jobs, and more than \$2.2 billion in total investments.

As SPARK's Director of Business Development in Washtenaw County, Jennifer Olmstead has been instrumental in keeping Ann Arbor sites at the forefront for companies when helping with attraction, retention, and growth activities.

City of Ann Arbor Business Attraction

Sartorius to Open Center of Excellence, Add Jobs in Ann Arbor

June 2022 | [Crains Detroit](#)

Sartorius, an international group that develops products for life science research and the biopharmaceutical industry, is breaking ground on a new Center of Excellence in Ann Arbor.

The building will be located at 3874 Research Park Drive in the Tech Loop at the Ann Arbor Research Park.



Construction is expected to finish in December 2023, and occupancy is expected to begin in June 2024, Mary Lavin, President of Sartorius North America, said in a statement.

The cost of the project is \$60 million, plus the cost of purchasing the 16 acres of land. Sartorius did not disclose the purchase price of the land. The space will be used for laboratory research, focusing on providing solutions to customers, and developing drugs that cure, prevent and halt the progression of diseases, according to the press release.

Sartorius, based in Göttingen, Germany, has four existing sites in Ann Arbor that procure cell analysis, microcarrier, and particle separation products. Sartorius supplies to Kalamazoo-based Pfizer and Germany-based BioNtech, as well as Massachusetts-based Moderna for the development of the COVID-19 vaccines.

Sartorius' North American headquarters is located in Long Island, New York, and the company has a presence in Massachusetts, California, New Mexico, Colorado and Puerto Rico. The Center of Excellence in Ann Arbor will take over cell analysis and laboratory support services from the New York and New Mexico plants.

"We will be adding between 100 and 130 jobs here into the region...in addition to retaining the existing workforce we have here," Lavin said in an interview with Crain's. Sartorius already has 140 employees at its locations in Ann Arbor. Sartorius hired Lansing-based Hobbs + Black Architects and J S Vig Construction Company for the project.

"The city of Ann Arbor and the state of Michigan really worked closely with us to make this happen and we really appreciate their contribution to keep these jobs here and in Michigan and also to bring new jobs to Michigan," Lavin said. "So, I really appreciate doing business with the state of Michigan and the city of Ann Arbor."



GLOBAL EPICENTER OF MOBILITY

REVOLUTIONIZING THE DETROIT REGION

Build Back Better Regional Challenge: \$52.2 Million Grant to Bring More Auto Investment and Jobs to Southeast Michigan

The United States Economic Development Administration recently announced that the Detroit Regional Partnership and its coalition of partners — **including Ann Arbor SPARK** — were awarded a \$52.2 million Build Back Better Regional Challenge Award (BBBRC). The grant will fund five unique projects that will help the region and country maintain its global automotive leadership.



The Detroit Regional Partnership (DRP) submitted the initiative under The branding of the Global Epicenter of Mobility (GEM). GEM recognizes the world is experiencing a once-in-a-century mobility revolution, and the greater Detroit region is poised to ensure the U.S. leads the way.

In a communication distributed by the DRP, its president and CEO Maureen Donohue Krauss stated, "Simply put, [the grant] will support workers, startups, and companies as they adapt to the new high-tech advanced mobility industry as it rapidly evolves."

Through an inclusive and equitable lens, GEM will help southeast Michigan redefine every aspect of mobility — from the cutting-edge technology that moves people and goods in new and exciting ways, to creating quality new jobs and readying new sites for business.



"Our organization is excited to join the Detroit Regional Partnership in this initiative," said **Komal Doshi, Ann Arbor SPARK director of mobility**. "We look forward to contributing to GEM by providing executive recruitment and retention as well as administering high-tech internship programs for mobility companies in southeast Michigan. Through these efforts, the region will further develop a talented workforce resulting in smart economic growth in service of prosperity for all."

Led by one of the most diverse regions in the U.S., GEM offers the opportunity to create a national model for equitable economic growth and help secure the nation's advanced mobility leadership – for generations to come.

[Read the full American Rescue Plan Regional Challenge Awards press release.](#)



Ann Arbor SPARK Talent Engagement and Marketing the Region

For more than 15 years, SPARK has served the greater Ann Arbor region as a catalyst for economic development. We accomplish this by building awareness of the region as a destination for business and manufacturing development and growth. Our team of knowledge experts attracts, develops, strengthens, and invests in driving industries to help our communities prosper.

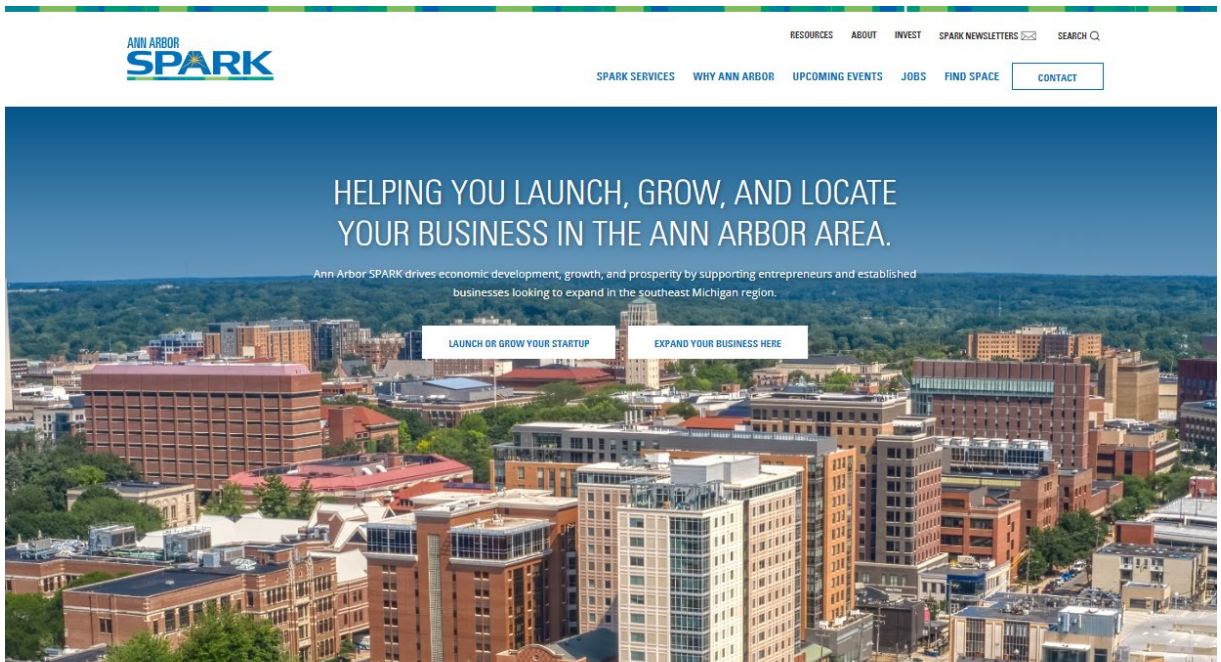


A BRAND-NEW WEBSITE!

SPARK launched a beautiful new website in September 2022, which allows the marketing team to better track meaningful analytics and provides an improved user experience for visitors. The overall structure of the site, navigation, and content of the homepage all align with the strategic plan, providing opportunities to highlight our work/partnerships/the region.

The site was built using responsive design and search engine optimization best practices. A few of SPARK's favorite features include:

- A refreshed [home page](#) highlighting the services and resources available to our clients.
- Keyword search functionality for the entire site.
- Access to [on-demand webinars](#) featuring programming from the past two years.
- Refreshed [staff photos](#) that were taken throughout Washtenaw and Livingston counties.



FIND OR POST A JOB >

SPARK's dedicated source for local talent and opportunities.



ATTEND AN EVENT >

Community and SPARK events – business, jobs, networking.



LOCATE >

Business expansion, available office space, and site selection.



LEARN ABOUT FUNDING >

Early-stage investing, angel groups, and venture capital.



STARTUP SERVICES

Supporting new tech and life science companies at Michigan's most successful startup incubator.

- ENTREPRENEUR BOOT CAMP >
- STARTUP ACCELERATION >
- INCUBATOR PROGRAM >
- COACHING & MENTORSHIP >



BUSINESS EXPANSION

Connecting existing companies to the critical resources they need to locate, stay, and grow here.

- SITE SELECTION CONSULTING >
- STATE AND LOCAL INCENTIVES >
- TALENT ACQUISITION >
- INDUSTRY CONNECTIONS >
- MUNICIPALITY SUPPORT >



FIND SPACE

Helping businesses discover their next office, R&D center, and lab space in the Ann Arbor region.

- COMMERCIAL LISTINGS >
- SITE SELECTION CONSULTING >
- SPARK & INCUBATOR SPACE >



FUNDING

Investing in early-stage tech startups and helping grow the state's angel investor community.

- IDEA STAGE >
- STARTUP STAGE >
- GROWTH STAGE >
- MATURE STAGE >

WORLD-CLASS AMENITIES TO SUPPORT YOUR THRIVING BUSINESS

Home to the University of Michigan, the greater Ann Arbor region has much to offer the people and companies that establish roots here. Explore the different features and resources that will make your move here a welcoming one.



QUALITY OF LIFE >

Discover top-rated dining, arts and culture, recreation, and schools.



YOUR PERFECT SPACE >

Live and work in deeply connected communities and walkable downtowns.



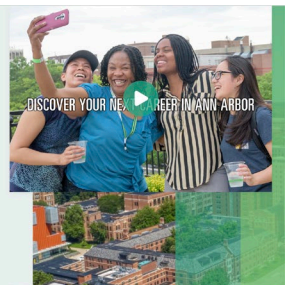
LOCAL INDUSTRIES >

Work alongside global brands and pioneering startups.



BUSINESS CULTURE >

Leverage support for strong business growth and collaboration.



JOB SEEKER NEWSLETTER

Ann Arbor SPARK Job Seeker Newsletter, September 2022

SEPTEMBER 15, 2022

READ MORE >

Ann Arbor vs. Storr's Mansfield - How Do We Compare?

SEPTEMBER 16, 2022

READ MORE >

TECH talk

10.14.22 @TECH150

Ann Arbor SPARK Presents Sixth Annual Tech Talk on October 14

SEPTEMBER 8, 2022

READ MORE >

Ann Arbor vs. Honolulu - How Do We Compare?

SEPTEMBER 9, 2022

READ MORE >

www.annarborusa.or



2022 Registrations



13,532+
Total Registrations



25
Events
Even more than 2021!



2,868 SPARK Event Registrations



2.1M
Social Media Impressions



10,664* Partner Event Registrations



70+
Companies Represented



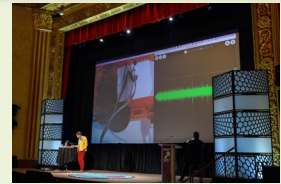
118K
Emails Sent



70.4K
Website Visits



5 Countries
25 Different States
235 Unique ZIP Codes



*Artoberfest organizers reported 10,000 registrants.

tech home coming

CONNECT WITH COMPANIES HIRING IN THE ANN ARBOR REGION.

Tech Homecoming offers job seekers a unique opportunity to network with area companies looking to hire in a happy hour setting. The goal of the event is to connect talented professionals with Ann Arbor and its vibrant tech ecosystem, which has produced hundreds of startups and billions in enterprise value in the past five years. In 2022, the event was hosted by Cahoots with more than 20 participating companies and nearly 250 registered job seekers.

PARTICIPATING COMPANIES



build create



SPONSORS



Inclusive Workplace Series

DEI Awareness

Ann Arbor SPARK launched its new Inclusive Workplace Series of educational events on Wednesday, January 19, at 11:30 a.m., with [DEI Awareness](#). This free online event series is designed for small business owners and will cover a range of topics: DEI awareness, unconscious bias training, navigating workplace harassment, building a diverse workplace, and cultural competency. Each session will drill down into a specific topic and participants will benefit from the event’s interactive format.

The Inclusive Workplace Series provides training and guidance to growing companies in the greater Ann Arbor region who want to incorporate various aspects of diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) as they grow and develop their business. The series helps executives, HR professionals, team members, and all champions and allies learn how to build a more inclusive workplace culture that can result in improved hiring, employee retention and engagement, and deliver ROI in terms of innovation, performance, and growth. “Given our work with startups, we know that the seeds of future success are planted early on,” said Paul Krutko, Ann Arbor SPARK president and CEO. “The Inclusive Workplace Series is designed to help early-stage businesses incorporate DEI principles into their company culture and practices from the start, so that they are part of standard operations as they grow. The more that DEI is reflected within our business community, the more successful we will be in attracting and retaining both job seekers and companies looking to start and grow here.”

INCLUSIVE WORKPLACE SERIES SCHEDULE

SESSION	DATE
DEI Awareness	January 19
Unconscious Bias Training	January 26
Navigating Workplace Harassment	February 9
Intro to Building a Diverse Workplace	February 16
Cultural Competency	February 23
DEI Awareness	March 9
Unconscious Bias Training	March 16
Navigating Workplace Harassment	March 23
Intro to Building a Diverse Workplace	April 13
Cultural Competency	April 20
DEI Awareness	April 27
Unconscious Bias Training	May 11
Intro to Building a Diverse Workplace	May 18
Navigating Workplace Harassment	May 25
DEI Awareness	June 8
Unconscious Bias Training	June 15
Intro to Building a Diverse Workplace	June 22
Navigating Workplace Harassment	June 29

2022 Washtenaw County Initiative



Accelerating Company Excellence (ACE) is designed to help small business owners learn new skills and reinforce best business practices by learning from subject matter experts in finance, sales, marketing, and accounting. ACE also offers the opportunity for in-person networking where business owners can share tips, challenges, and opportunities with each other.

Each ACE session is distinct and business owners do not need to attend all sessions to benefit from the curriculum.

The events will feature a deep dive on specific skills necessary for businesses to accelerate their growth. Topics include best financial practices, do-it-yourself marketing, online sales, and team building and leadership.

ACE is sponsored by Fifth Third Bank, UHY, and the Ann Arbor/Ypsilanti SmartZone Local Development Finance Authority (LDFA) and is presented in partnership with the Michigan Small Business Development Center and Washtenaw Community College.

SPONSORED BY



BROUGHT TO YOU BY



July 1 – December 31, 2022

Ann Arbor SPARK Press Releases

[Ann Arbor Tech Companies Think Creatively About Compensation](#): Ann Arbor continues to receive accolades as a great place to live and work. When it comes to attracting and retaining high-performing talent, the results from a recent survey of the region's technology and software companies highlight compensation practices, trends, and opportunities that are common here.

Ann Arbor area technology companies responded to a survey conducted by Ann Arbor SPARK. The survey covered topics such as company size, employee roles, worker compensation, compensation of executive talent, and employee turnover. SPARK used the results of the survey to draw conclusions on salaries in the tech industry, which can inform compensation decisions at the individual company level. Job seekers may also find the data useful when evaluating offers and during compensation negotiations. 7/3/2022

[Ground-breaking Ceremony for Center of Excellence in Ann Arbor](#): Sartorius, a leading international partner of the life science research and the biopharmaceutical industry, announced today it is breaking ground on its new 130,000-square foot Center of Excellence for BioAnalytics at 3874 Research Park Drive in the Tech Loop at the Ann Arbor Research Park.

The company has purchased 16 acres of land which provides sufficient space for further expansion. Currently, there are about 140 employees in the Ann Arbor area, and this project is expected to increase that number to about 300 within three years. These jobs will include product development, operations, and other support functions. 8/2/2022

[Ann Arbor Mobility Innovation on Display at the 2022 North American International Auto Show](#): One of the world's most prestigious automotive industry events, the [North American International Auto Show](#) (NAIAS), returns to the heart of Motor City this September. Ann Arbor SPARK is excited to join exhibitors on September 14 and 15 as part of [AutoMobili-D](#), presented by the Michigan Economic Development Corporation (MEDC) and the Michigan Office of Future Mobility and Electrification. On display in SPARK's booth will be 13 companies representing regional electric, autonomous, and connected vehicle innovation. 8/2/2022

[Ann Arbor SPARK's a2tech360 Returns for a Week-long Celebration of Technology and Innovation](#): Ann Arbor SPARK's [a2Tech360](#) will be held October 7 through 14, 2022, online and in various in-person locations throughout the city. Highlighting the contributors and influencers who enrich Ann Arbor's innovative community, a2Tech360 is a week of experiences, conversations, and connections designed to strengthen and expand the region's vibrant ecosystem. Entrepreneurs, researchers, investors, businesses, academic institutions, non-profits, job seekers and the general public can all explore Ann Arbor's extensive tech culture through a broad spectrum of programming. 8/16/2022

July 1 – December 31, 2022

Ann Arbor SPARK Press Releases

[Check Out Where Female Founder Fundraising is Growing Fastest in the US](#): For female founders, San Francisco and New York City have long been the places to be. The cities are home to startups that have raised more than \$93 billion over more than 4,700 deals since 2008, according to PitchBook data.

However, while these two metro areas, along with Los Angeles and Boston, remain major players in startup fundraising, other cities – including Ann Arbor - have seen more significant growth in capital raised among female founders since 2020. 9/6/2022

[Global Epicenter of Mobility Awarded \\$52.2 Million by the Build Back Better Regional Challenge](#): The United States Economic Development Administration recently announced that the Detroit Regional Partnership and its coalition of partners — including Ann Arbor SPARK — were awarded a \$52.2 million Build Back Better Regional Challenge Award (BBBRC). The grant will fund five unique projects that will help the region and country maintain its global automotive leadership.

The Detroit Regional Partnership (DRP) submitted the initiative under the branding of the Global Epicenter of Mobility (GEM). GEM recognizes the world is experiencing a once-in-a-century mobility revolution, and the greater Detroit region is poised to ensure the U.S. leads the way. 9/7/2022

[Ann Arbor SPARK Presents Sixth Annual Tech Talk on October 14](#): This October, as part of the [a2Tech360](#) series of events, [Ann Arbor SPARK](#) will present the sixth annual [Tech Talk](#). Featuring TED-style talks from some of Ann Arbor's most innovative and effective business leaders, the popular series promises origin stories, behind-the-scenes accounts of technologies being developed in the region, and firsthand accounts of how speakers have achieved success throughout their careers. 9/8/2022

[Ann Arbor-based Voxel51 Raises \\$12.5M In Series A Funding](#): [Voxel51](#), an Ann Arbor, MI-based data-centric machine learning software company, raised \$12.5 million in Series A funding. Backers included Drive Capital, Top Harvest Capital, Shasta Ventures, and existing investors. The round follows the company's \$2.875M Seed round from eLab Ventures, ID Ventures, and the University of Michigan. The company intends to use the funds to expand its diverse team committed to shaping the future of machine learning in roles focused on product, engineering, community, and more. 9/22/2022

July 1 – December 31, 2022

Ann Arbor SPARK Press Releases

[Ann Arbor: Best Place to Live For Families](#): Today, Fortune Well launched the inaugural [Fortune 25 Best Places to Live for Families](#) ranking, highlighting areas in the U.S. where multigenerational families are most likely to have access to critical resources, community support, and financial well-being.

The winning city, [Ann Arbor](#), is a midsize community that is home to top-ranked University of Michigan, and its educational prowess extends across the spectrum with the vast majority of the district's [K-12 schools ranking above average](#). The proximity to the university also delivers a big wellness benefit, with the University of Michigan's health system and academic medical center [earning top marks for patient safety since 2012](#) — one of only 23 U.S. hospitals to do so. 9/28/2022

[Michigan Angel Summit Provides Valuable Information on Angel Investing to Newcomers and Existing Angels](#): The fifth annual [Michigan Angel Summit](#), hosted by Ann Arbor SPARK, will take place on Monday, October 10. Part of SPARK's annual a2tech360 program, the summit is an opportunity for individual investors to meet like-minded people from around the state and learn more about angel investing. 10/5/2022

[Mobility Industry Leaders Gather at Ann Arbor SPARK a2tech360 Mobility Summit](#): Mobility visionaries and leaders from public, private, nonprofit, and academic spheres will come together for the fifth annual [Ann Arbor Mobility Summit](#) on Tuesday, October 11, 2022, as part of Ann Arbor SPARK's annual a2tech360. Over the course of the summit, speakers and participants will share, learn, inspire, and advance mobility in Michigan and around the globe. 10/7/2022

[Ann Arbor SPARK Presents FastTrack Awards to 22 Organizations with Impressive Growth Records](#): Ann Arbor SPARK celebrated 22 of the Ann Arbor area's fastest-growing "gazelle" organizations with its 24th annual FastTrack Awards. The awards concluded the first day of [a2Tech360](#), a week-long series of events promoting the Ann Arbor area and its ecosystem of innovation.

Ranging from small companies to large enterprises, "gazelles" are defined as high-growth companies with an average 20 percent increased revenue for three years, beginning with a revenue base of at least \$100,000. Of this year's 22 award recipients — the second-largest group in the award's history — 16 were multi-year winners. 10/10/2022

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Ann Arbor SPARK Press Releases

[Denovo Fertility Wins \\$25,000 Ann Arbor SPARK Entrepreneur Boot Camp Celebration](#)

Prize: Denovo Fertility, an online platform that considers an individual's in-depth personal history and journey from a biochemistry perspective to increase fertility and fecundity, was the Best of Boot Camp winner and received a \$25,000 prize at the 2022 [Entrepreneur Boot Camp Celebration](#). The [a2Tech360](#) event was hosted by Ann Arbor SPARK and sponsored by [Varnum Attorneys at Law](#). 10/17/2022

[Jottful Wins \\$100,000 Ann Arbor SPARK Invest360 Award](#): As part of its a2Tech360 week-long series of events, Ann Arbor SPARK awarded \$200,000 to startups during Invest360, a pitch competition that recognizes promising emerging companies in the mobility, healthcare, and information technology sectors. The winners, Functional Fluidics, Jottful, and M-Vision were each awarded \$50,000 on Friday, October 7 during the first part of the Invest360 event.

The three finalists then went on to compete for an additional \$50,000 People's Choice prize, which was held after Ann Arbor SPARK's Tech Talk event on October 14 at the Michigan Theater. Audience members selected Jottful, which makes and manages professional, affordable, and hassle-free websites for small businesses. 10/18/2022

[Michigan STEM Forward Program Exceeds 500 Placed Interns](#): The [Michigan STEM Forward](#) internship program recently placed its 500th intern — a significant milestone for the statewide service that launched in March 2021. Since then, it has continued to pair Michigan students and companies, providing a much-valued resource designed to retain top talent in the state. 10/25/2022

[Ann Arbor SPARK Brings Job Seekers and Employers Together with Tech Homecoming](#)

Event: Ann Arbor SPARK's annual Tech Homecoming event returns this year to connect growing companies with job seekers. The free, annual event will be held in person on Wednesday, November 23, from 4 to 7 p.m. at Cahoots in downtown Ann Arbor. 10/28/2022

[Michigan Life Sciences Establishments Grow at Rate Higher than the National Average](#)

The [Biotechnology Innovation Organization](#) (BIO) released its tenth biennial report, [The U.S. Bioscience Industry: Fostering Innovation and Driving America's Economy Forward](#), with new employment and economic impact data (through 2021) for the nation's biosciences industry.

"Michigan's ranking of total bio-industry employment remains in the upper tier nationally, and notably, the state outpaced the nation in the establishment of new organizations in several sectors." – Stephen Rapundalo, Ph.D., MichBio President and CEO

Notably, Ann Arbor ranks 11th across the U.S. in the concentration of medical devices and equipment employment, and 13th in research, testing, and medical laboratories employment. 11/9/2022



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Ann Arbor SPARK will advance the economy of the Ann Arbor region by establishing it as a desired place for innovation, business location and growth, and for talented people to live and work. The Ann Arbor region will be recognized for its academic, business, and community resources, and its collaborative culture.