



Mile High United Way

IMPACT REPORT  
2019-2020

# MILE HIGH UNITED WAY UNITED FOR BUSINESS

Mile High United Way's [United for Business](#) (UFB) program works to strengthen under-resourced communities by focusing on economic stability and mobility for businesses and startups. With an emphasis on women- and minority-owned businesses and entrepreneurs, we provide direct services and specialized assistance that help promote the attraction, retention, and expansion of quality jobs in the Denver Metro area. The program works collaboratively with individual business owners, many of whom are in the Globeville, Elyria-Swansea (GES) neighborhoods, to understand their needs and utilizes professional services, Business Advisors, and skills-based volunteers to help owners reach their goals.

Local businesses in areas like GES are the lifeblood of the community and contribute to their neighborhood's rich culture. Business owners, many of them minorities and women, often become the leaders and drivers of change in the neighborhood. Mile High United Way believes that by strengthening our local businesses we can, in turn, strengthen the entire community.

## CONNECTING BUSINESSES TO RESOURCES THAT MATTER

In its second year, United for Business (formerly known as United Business Advisory), supported:

- **31 Individuals (71% women and 100% minority)** that owned 26 local businesses across the Denver Metro area.
- **Our Business Advisors met one-on-one with owners**, investing their time and expertise into helping each business assess their top needs and connect to local resources.
- Throughout their one-year commitment, our **United for Business volunteers contributed 284 consultant hours in 54 sessions** to help businesses realize their growth potential.

# HELPING SMALL BUSINESSES REACH THEIR FULL POTENTIAL



Brittney (left) and Joslyn  
Photo credit: FIT & NU

Mile High United Way's United for Business program met Brittney and Joslyn at the right time, in November of 2019, as they were working to get their business, FIT & NU, off the ground. FIT & NU focuses on helping people create healthy and nutritious lifestyles by providing a safe space for women of color to focus on their physical and mental health. What started as a grassroots movement offering services at churches

within the community had finally evolved into their first commercial space when United for Business began working with them.

We worked alongside Brittney and Joslyn to create a one-year plan, addressing key strategies and accelerating the growth of their business. Through 65 hours of consulting, they have gained the knowledge and acquired the skills necessary in areas such as accounting, strategy, marketing, legal support, and more, to refine their business model.

In action, those consulting hours with United for Business have looked like:

- Conducting a focus group of women of color
- Developing new marketing videos for a national media opportunity
- Pivoting their business model to adapt to COVID-19
- Receiving a grant to develop curriculum for serving African American women at risk of diabetes.

As a result of this guidance, FIT & NU has hired one staff person and become local icons, but they're just getting started. We can't wait to see what Brittney and Joslyn accomplish next, and we are so proud to have a hand in helping aspiring business owners reach their full potential.

Special thanks to our volunteers and Business Advisor: Martha, Maluwa, Stella, Faye, Catherine H., and Vanessa.

## SMALL BUSINESS SUPPORT DURING COVID-19

As the coronavirus has caused daily life to change drastically, many small businesses find themselves faced with unprecedented challenges. In order to respond to these emerging needs, Mile High United Way has pivoted our UFB program with your support to help small, local businesses stabilize and focus on their recovery.

Through conducting personalized business consulting sessions, we are advising business owners on how to apply for financial assistance, negotiate with their landlords, and adapt their business practices. We are also expanding the program's skilled volunteer team to provide support through their long-term recovery.

We're diligently outreaching more than ever to the communities we serve to offer individualized support and help businesses re-position quickly to respond to the new, immediate needs of local business owners.

[Learn More.](#)

By engaging in our United for Business program, **87% of our clients have experienced growth in one or all of the following areas:**

- Increased revenue
- Hired new employees
- Net income
- Accessed capital if desired

**THANK YOU** for your investment in Mile High United Way. You've helped small businesses across Metro Denver and, in turn, strengthened the community.

**If you're interested in learning more or donating your time and expertise to help small businesses in our community thrive, visit [unitedwaydenver.org/united-for-business](https://unitedwaydenver.org/united-for-business).**