

## Dayton, OH – Urban Elevation Accelerator (UEA)

**Location:** Dayton, OH

**Venue:** Greater West Dayton Incubator / University of Dayton

### Intro to the City, Distinctive Aspects and Demographics:

Dayton, Ohio, known as the "Birthplace of Aviation," is a mid-sized city in the Midwest with a rich history of innovation and resilience. Home to a population of approximately 140,000, Dayton has a diverse demographic composition with a significant African American population, alongside a growing immigrant community. The city is celebrated for its strong ties to the Wright brothers, vibrant arts scene, and a mix of historic and modern neighborhoods that reflect its rich cultural tapestry.

**Overview of the Local Economy:** Dayton's economy is diverse, with key industries including aerospace, manufacturing, healthcare, and education.

- **Regional Assets:** The city boasts significant institutions like Wright-Patterson Air Force Base, which is a major employer and a hub for defense innovation, and the University of Dayton, known for fostering innovation and research.
- **Entrepreneurial Ecosystem:** Dayton's entrepreneurial community is supported by programs like the Entrepreneurs Center, Score, Miami Valley Urban League, Miami Valley Small Business Development Center, Greater West Dayton Incubator, the Hub Powered by PNC Bank, and the Minority Business Assistance Center. These initiatives provide resources and mentorship to help entrepreneurs succeed. A focus on fostering minority- and women-owned businesses makes Dayton's ecosystem distinctive in its inclusivity.

**The Poverty and Disadvantage Challenge in the City:** Dayton faces significant challenges with poverty and economic disadvantage, particularly in underrepresented communities. According to census data, nearly 30% of residents live below the poverty line, with many concentrated in historically underserved areas. Disparities in access to capital, education, and employment opportunities exacerbate these challenges.

### Poverty and Entrepreneurship Program Overview:

- **Name of the Program:** Urban Elevation Accelerator (UEA)

- **Populations Served:** UEA is dedicated to supporting underrepresented and under-resourced entrepreneurs, including minorities, women, and individuals from low-income backgrounds who are seeking to start or grow their businesses.
- **Program Administration:** The program is managed by the Greater West Dayton Incubator, a department of the University of Dayton.
- **Annual Cycle:** UEA runs on a 11-month cycle, starting with a six-week bootcamp, "Elevation Academy," which provides intensive business training. The bootcamp is followed by ongoing mentorship, access to resources, and specialized workshops throughout the year.
- **Unique Aspects of the Approach:** The program emphasizes holistic support, offering not only skill development but also access to coworking spaces, micro-lending opportunities through the Cultural Capital Micro-lending Program, and strategic partnerships with community organizations. By connecting entrepreneurs with both financial and social capital, UEA helps participants build sustainable and profitable businesses.

**Program Goals:** The UEA program aspires to scale its impact by expanding resources and partnerships to serve more entrepreneurs in Dayton and the surrounding region. Future goals include increasing access to funding opportunities, enhancing alumni networks, and developing targeted initiatives to address specific challenges like digital transformation and scalability for small businesses. By fostering an inclusive and robust entrepreneurial ecosystem, UEA aims to contribute to Dayton's long-term economic growth and resilience while reducing disparities in business ownership and economic opportunity.

