



## PRESS RELEASE

### **\$2.1M EDA Grant for Tiger Room Grant Will Support Accelerator for Food Companies**

August 17, 2020

BATTLE CREEK, MICH —The U.S. Department of Commerce, Economic Development Administration approved an economic development grant of \$2,092,492 for the Southwest Michigan Accelerator Kitchen, located in Battle Creek, MI. The grant, along with locally raised matching funds, will help with the \$4 million renovation of the property located at 30 W. Van Buren St. in Battle Creek, MI.

The facility will be used to accelerate second-stage food businesses in the region. The new facility will provide space for product testing and production as well as growth-oriented training for businesses using the facility. Once completed, the project will help catalyze the next generation of economic growth in a critical local industry cluster. This project will bolster job creation, attract private investment, and strengthen the economy in Battle Creek and the region.

“This pandemic has been a particularly challenging time for Michigan small businesses, and it is critical that they have the support they need to start, grow and succeed,” said U.S. Senator Gary Peters. “This grant will spur economic growth and build upon the food innovation tradition that’s existed in Battle Creek for generations. I applaud Battle Creek Unlimited for building community support around this project, and I look forward to continuing to work with them.”

“Battle Creek Unlimited, in partnership with St. Philip Church and the Diocese of Kalamazoo, are pleased to be awarded the EDA funding for the Southwest Michigan Accelerator Kitchen. This investment will support many food-related small businesses that are looking for a place to grow,” said Shabaka Gibson, Vice President at Battle Creek Unlimited. “Battle Creek has a rich history of food related companies and food innovation. The existing talent and assets in this area makes food a strategic growth industry for Battle Creek.”

The 20,000sf facility, owned by St. Philip, will also support the church’s healthy food and community wellness initiatives. “We are very excited and grateful to see this tremendous opportunity coming to fruition. Because of the hard work of so many, an old, empty, yet historic building has new life breathed into it. This new chapter begins driven by a dynamic partnership that will help serve the poor and vulnerable through health and nutrition programing, grow

entrepreneurship, and strengthen our beloved Battle Creek community,” said Father John Fleckenstein, Pastor of St. Philip Church.

The initial investment for the project from the Diocese of Kalamazoo was made possible through a restricted gift. Other project funders include the Kellogg Company Twenty-Five Year Employees' Fund, the Battle Creek Community Foundation, the Binda Foundation, the Catholic Campaign for Human Development Foundation, Michigan Department of Agriculture and Rural Development, and many individual donors.

In addition to a \$500,000 total gift in support of the Southwest Michigan Accelerator Kitchen, Kellogg Company will provide subject matter expertise and support to Accelerator participants and offer small-scale manufacturing support via the pilot plant, located in the W.K. Kellogg Institute for Food and Nutrition Research, here in Battle Creek.

“Kellogg is proud to be part of this ambitious endeavor and we look forward to sharing our time, talent and resources, which will enhance our ongoing commitment to the community,” said Steve Cahillane, Kellogg Company Chairman and CEO. “A true visionary and food entrepreneur, W.K. Kellogg’s legacy lives on today across the globe – more than a century later – and nowhere is it more prevalent than right here in our hometown, where we are an active part of the local food ecosystem.”

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#### **ABOUT BATTLE CREEK UNLIMITED**

*Established in 1972, Battle Creek Unlimited (BCU) is a private, non-profit corporation which serves as the economic development arm for the City of Battle Creek and manages the Fort Custer Industrial Park. The Fort Custer Industrial Park is home to over 80 businesses, including 25 international companies, and employs over 13,000 people. BCU’s mission is to build a strong community by driving strategic investment and job creation.*

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