

The Camden County Playbook for Diverse and Small Business Growth

January 2024

The Camden County Playbook – is an ecosystem approach to the development of diverse, small businesses in Camden, New Jersey.

Project Main Goals

1. **Examine and characterize direct federal spending** to understand how local and minority-owned firms benefit from these opportunities.
2. **Evaluate the effectiveness of the existing Entrepreneurial Support Organizations (ESOs) ecosystem** in supporting businesses owned by individuals from Black and Brown communities.
3. **Provide recommendations to practitioners** and policymakers for creating opportunities for minority-owned and Camden-based businesses to leverage direct federal spending in the area.

Main Deliverable:

The Camden
County Playbook for Diverse
and Small Business Growth

Funder

J.P.Morgan

CHASE 

Research Team



DREXEL UNIVERSITY

Nowak Metro Finance Lab

Lindy Institute for Urban Innovation



RUTGERS
UNIVERSITY

Lead Organization



THE ENTERPRISE CENTER
BUSINESS | CAPITAL | COMMUNITY
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Partner Organizations



LAEDA
Latin American Economic
Development Association, Inc.

The Camden County Playbook - Executive Summary

Frame:

- Unprecedented federal spending, mostly related to defense, is creating new business opportunities, and catalyzing a transformative industrial shift, which may create an enterprise and wealth-building opportunity for local and minority-owned firms.
- Camden County and Camden City, due to tax state incentives, have seen recent corporate investment from some corporations in the supply chain of this “new wave” of direct federal spending, which could create Tier 2 and Tier 3 supplier opportunities for local firms in Camden County, particularly for firms located in Camden City.
- Currently, Camden County receives approximately \$254 million in direct federal spending annually. A significant portion (89%) of federal spending in Camden supports defense-related manufacturing, particularly in the Electronics and Instruments sector.

Top Challenges:

- Corporations located in Camden County actively participate in the federal procurement economy, receiving 91% of direct federal spending, yet minority-owned firms face a notable disparity, receiving only 15% of this spending.
- Camden County minority-owned firms are not currently clustered in sectors that are being procured by the federal government.
- The limited availability of growth capital products and services tailored to supplier needs poses a challenge for their strategic integration into key supply chains.

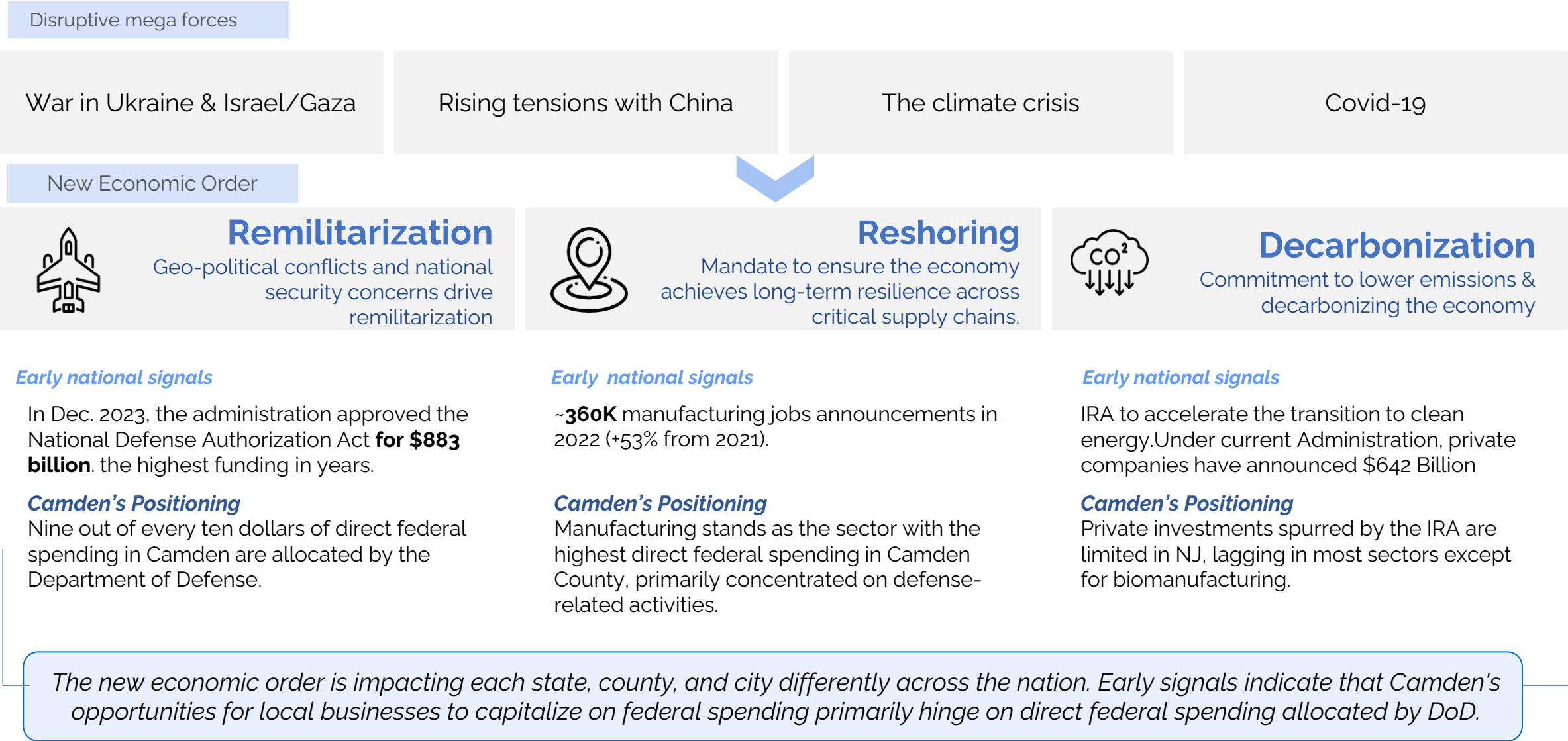
Key areas of opportunity for Camden:

- Addressing the lack of coordination among ongoing initiatives led by key stakeholders.
- Addressing the exclusion of minority-owned firms, particularly in B2B and B2G sectors, from New Jersey's direct federal spending, which is largely influenced by a small number of major anchors.
- Camden City's local purchasing policy ([“Buy Camden Ordinance”](#)) and [workforce reporting ordinance](#) presents an organizing impetus to corral corporate and local partners around increasing a local, diverse supplier base.

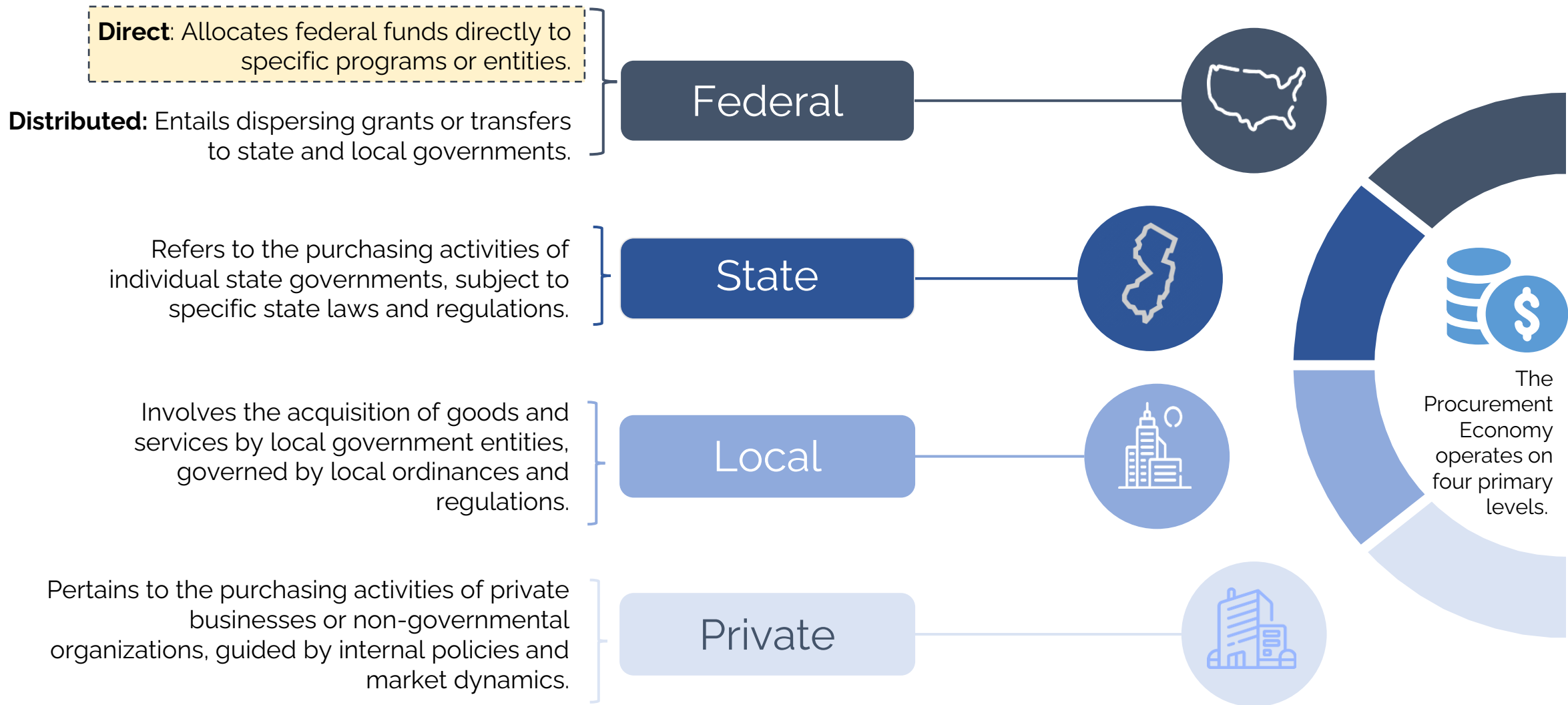
Recommendations:

- **Improve coordination within the ecosystem** by conducting a comprehensive census of minority-owned firms and exploring the unification of market-making initiatives.
- **Promote the integration of minority firms into anchor supply chains** by unbundling spending and facilitating direct engagement between minority-owned firms and anchors through mentorship programs.
- **Enhance capital services within the ecosystem** to support overall growth and sustainability through contractor mobilization financing and revolving credit products for increased and flexible working capital options for firms.

Our Motivation: In an evolving economic landscape, new opportunities are emerging, and particularly for Camden County's companies, these rely on DoD's direct spending.



Our Approach: This study analyzed a subset of the procurement economy - funds directly allocated by the federal government through contracts.



Note: The emphasis on direct federal spending stems from data availability for the region and the significance of federal spending in the current state of the U.S. economy.

Our Approach: This study also analyzed the local business support ecosystem in Camden County through qualitative and quantitative methods.



Asset Mapping & Interviews

We conducted interviews with ESOs, governmental entities and other ecosystem stakeholders to understand their perspective on firm and ecosystem challenges. Mirroring a firm's likely journey through support resources, we reviewed publicly available data about business development programs and capital services. Combining interviews and public data, we then mapped the characteristics of programs and services in the ecosystem.



Secondary Data Analysis

To better understand the business landscape in Camden County, and particularly Camden City, we collaborated with Rutgers University to analyze administrative data to estimate the number of minority-owned firms in Camden County. While the dataset combined various self-reported data including state licenses and other administrative sources, we recognize the limitations of the estimate in capturing the full breadth of microbusinesses in Camden County.



Firm Interviews

We conducted interviews with firms to understand their challenges, their view of the business support ecosystem, and what they perceived as procurement opportunities. We focused on firms who had a desire to enter the procurement economy or firms who were currently in the procurement economy. Due to low responsiveness and challenges with engagement, we were only able to interview a low number of firms.

Note: The emphasis on firms and services were those based in Camden County, and particularly, Camden City.

Context

Context: Camden City, in contrast to its surrounding regions, is a predominantly low-income city with a majority-minority population.



Population



Income

	Total	%Black	%Latino	Median HH Income
Camden City	71K	43%	53%	\$30K
Camden County*	524K	22%	18.5%	\$75K
PA-NJ-DE-MD MSA	6.2M	20%	11%	\$84K
New Jersey	9.2M	15%	21.5%	\$90K

Camden City vs
Camden County

X7.3

X1.9

X2.8

X2.5

Incomes in Camden City highlight a significant disparity, with incomes in Camden City being less than half of those in the surrounding county and three times lower than the state average.



Positive Difference



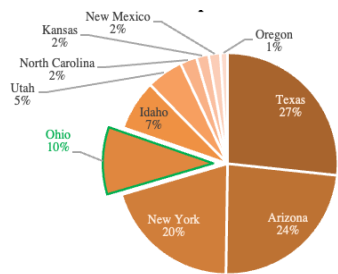
Negative Difference

Source: U.S. Census Bureau. "QuickFacts: Camden County, New Jersey." Retrieved from: <https://www.census.gov/quickfacts/fact/table/camdencountynewjersey/PST045222> data.

Context: Private investments show NJ falling behind in strategic sectors.

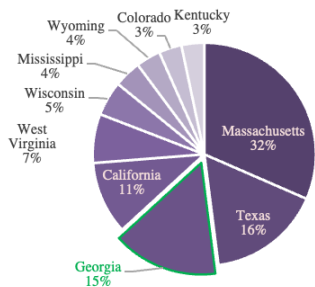
Top 10 States by Total Private Investment in Selected Industries

NJ lags in most sectors among the top 10 states for investment, except for biomanufacturing, where it holds the 8th position.



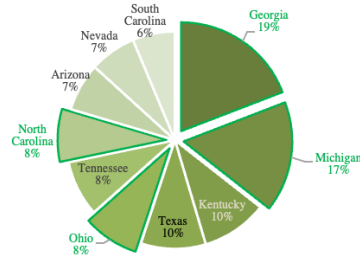
Semiconductors

\$212B across 38 projects



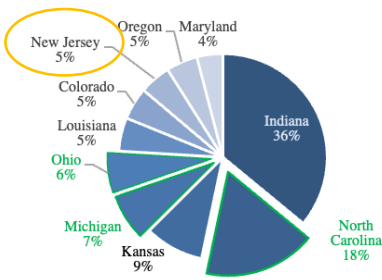
Clean Energy

\$78B across 61 projects



Batteries/EVs

\$139B across 112 projects



Biomanufacturing





\$18B across 46 projects

New Jersey performs less favorably in EVs and Batteries, securing the 28th position among 30 states with investment in this sector. In clean energy and clean power, it occupies a midrange position.



Private Investment in NJ

Commitments to invest in 21st century industries:






Sector	Total Investment	Ranking*
 EVs and Batteries	\$166M	28 (out of 30)
 Clean Energy	\$1,010M	17 (out of 35)
 Bio-Mfg	\$700M	8 (out of 25)
 Clean Power	\$1,000M	24 (out of 51)
TOTAL	\$2,876M	

Source: Nowak Metro Finance Lab. A data set was created with information obtained from White House. ["Invest in America."](#) **Note:** The total number of states in the ranking changes, as there are sectors in which some states have \$0 investment. Therefore, there are 30 states with investments in EVs and Batteries, 35 in clean energy, 25 in Bio manufacturing, and 51 in Clean Power.

Context: In contrast, direct federal spending highlights significant potential and opportunities for business involved in defense-related contracting.

Camden County receives approximately **\$254M in direct federal spending annually**, with the majority allocated to **defense-related manufacturing**.

Direct Federal Spending by selected regions and sectors (2022)

	TOTAL	 DoD	 Manufacturing	 Professional Services	 Administrative Services	 Construction
Camden City (2022)	\$74.9M	89% \$66.9M	85.2% \$63.8M	1.8% \$1.38M	7.4% \$5.5M	0.6% \$0.47M
Camden County (2022)	\$254.2M	91.7% \$233.3M	79.7% \$ 202.8M	13.6% \$34.6M	2.3% \$5.8M	0.3% \$ 0.71M
Philadelphia City (2022)	\$947.67M	47.4% \$449.52M	35.7% \$ 338.3M	21.2% \$201.3M	11.2% \$105.8M	19.8% \$ 105.8
PA-NJ-DE-MD MSA	\$6,469.7M	80.50% \$5,205.5M	47.20% \$3,051.2M	9.80% \$634.8M	3.50% \$223.7M	6.40% \$414.1M

TOP TAKEAWAYS

Defense-related manufacturing: Major federal spending in Camden primarily support defense-related manufacturing **in the Electronics and Instruments sector**.

The Role of Camden City in Admin Services: 86% of Camden County's administrative spending is largely directed to Protective Services Operations in Camden City.

Camden County's spending vs Philadelphia: Federal spending in Philadelphia is four times higher than in Camden County and twelve times higher than in the city.

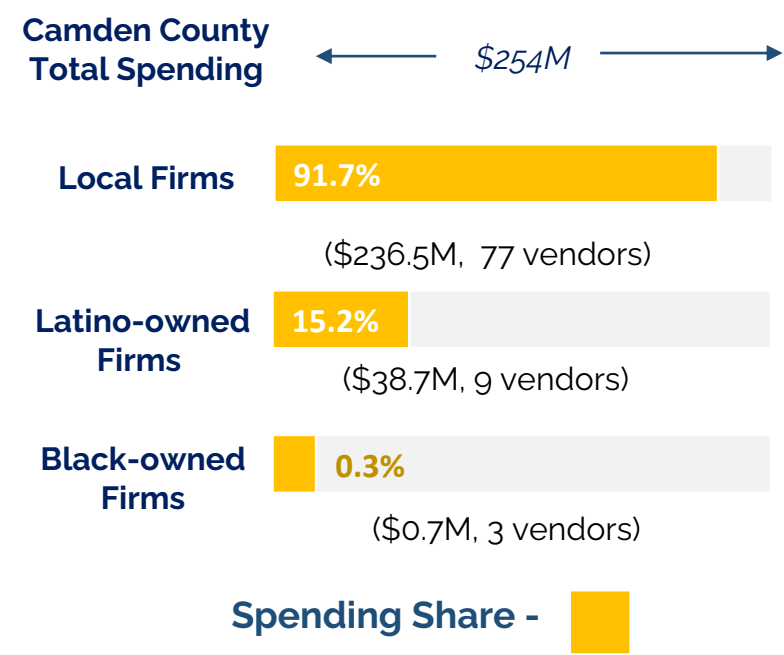
Source: Nowak Metro Finance Lab compiled data from USAspending.gov, encompassing all contracts awarded in selected regions for 2022.

Context: Camden County's local firms actively participate in the procurement economy, while minority-owned firms lack significant involvement.






Federal spending allocated to minority-owned firms is disproportionately low, with only 12 vendors contracting with the Federal government in Camden County.


The top 5 vendors, **all local**, account for 71% of all direct federal spending in Camden County.

Distribution of Spending Among Local, Black, and Latino-owned Firms







Camden County's Top 5 Vendors

	Company	Main Activity	Total Spending	Contracts
	Triman Industries, Inc.	Military Metal Components	\$59.2M (22.86%)	2,400
	R F Products, Inc.	Communication Equipment	\$39.20M (15.4%)	13
	Total Technology, Inc.	Electrical Testing Support	\$35.25M (13.85%)	5
	L3 Technologies, Inc.	Comms, Security, Maintenance	\$26.78M (10.52%)	23
	Rev-Cap Company, Inc.	Electro Products & Services	\$21.84M (8.58%)	1,095

 Latino-owned firm

Ecosystem Assessment

Key Challenges: We have identified a set of challenges hindering the Camden minority business base from maximizing opportunities in the region.

Supply-side	<p>There is a mismatch between the main sectors where federal spending is directed and the business landscape.</p> <p>Data reveals significant racial and ethnic disparities in business ownership.</p>	
Business Support Ecosystem	<p>There is a need for increased focus on supporting scalable businesses, strategic sector emphasis, and improved procurement outreach services within the ecosystem.</p>	
Capital Providers Landscape	<p>There is a limited availability of equity and growth-oriented working capital products tailored to diverse suppliers' needs for strategic integration into key supply chains.</p>	
Engagement coordination	<p>Multiple ecosystem efforts from lead organizations lack programmatic coordination.</p>	

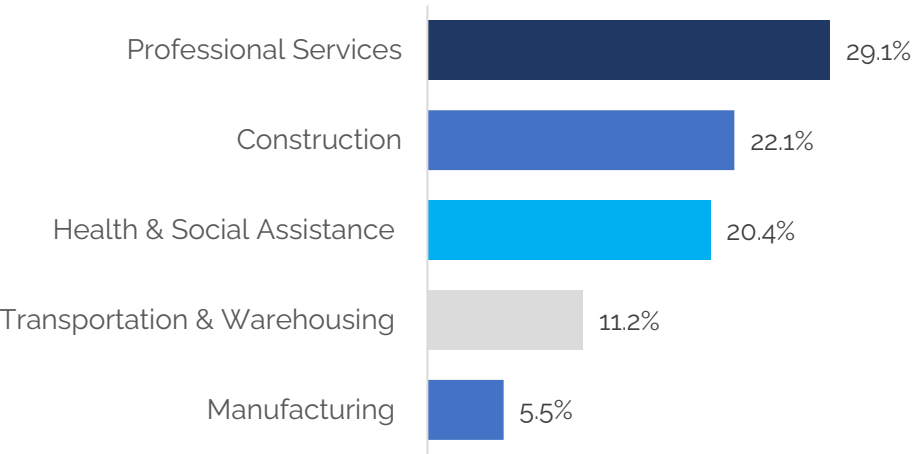
Key Challenges: The sectors with the highest concentration of businesses at both the county and city levels do not correspond to those receiving the most federal spending.

In Camden County, the business sector with the highest concentration of businesses is professional services, comprising slightly over 29% of the total share of businesses. While less aligned than the manufacturing sector, the professional services and construction sectors are more moderately aligned with federal demand. The health and social assistance sector is more weakly aligned with federal demand.

In the city, the sectors with the highest number of businesses, transportation and warehousing, health and social assistance, and construction, do not align with those receiving the most federal spending.

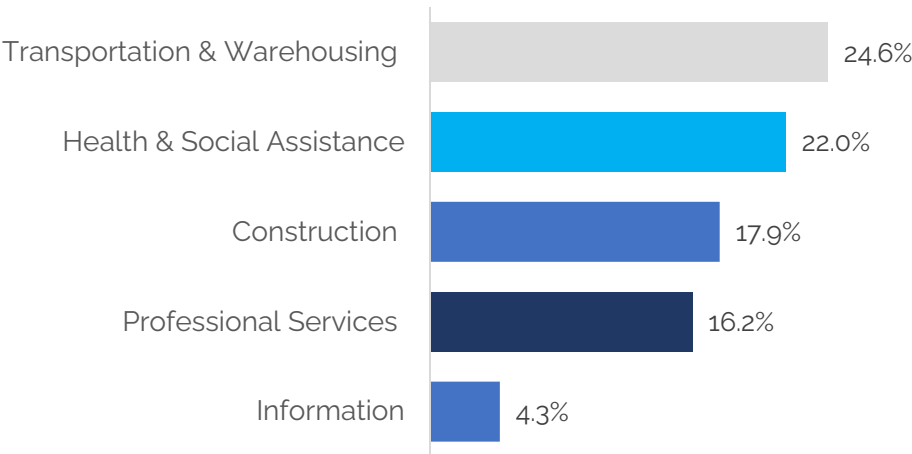
Top Sectors by Number of Businesses

Camden County



Top Sectors by Number of Businesses

Camden City



Key Challenges: Despite data limitations, the analysis unveils an even more significant gap in the supply of minority-owned businesses in Camden County.

Latino-owned businesses baseline

# of Employer Businesses	
4	Latino firms per 1,000 Latino residents
19	Non-Latino firms per 1,000 non-Latino residents

x5 gap

Data at the metro level reveals significant racial & ethnic disparities in business ownership. However, the metros' interconnection with Philadelphia makes it challenging to draw direct conclusions about the business ecosystem in Camden County.

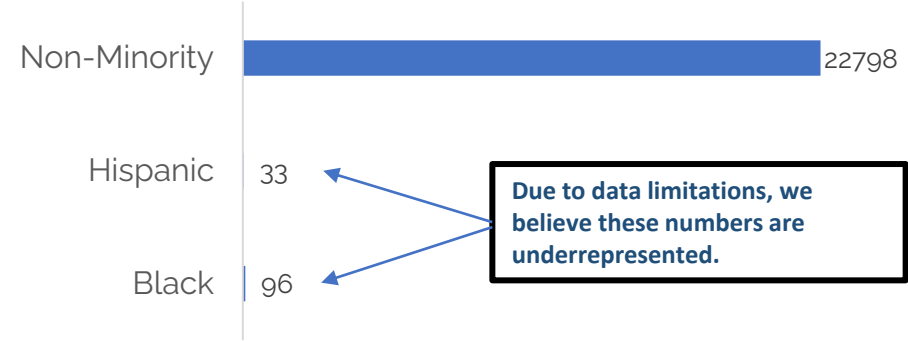
Black-owned businesses baseline

# of Employer Businesses	
2	Black firms per 1,000 Black residents
22	White firms per 1,000 White residents

x10 gap

To comprehensively evaluate the minority-owned business landscape in Camden County, the Rutgers Team employed a direct data extraction methodology utilizing public and private databases commonly used in the procurement and contracting industry across various sectors. Despite encountering notable challenges, this analysis uncovered a substantial gap in the number of minority-owned businesses operating in Camden County.

From 22,798 firms in Camden County, only 128 were identified as Black or Latino owned**



Professional services account for 43% of these businesses, followed by construction at 22% and health care and social assistance at 17%.

The analysis highlights important considerations for these findings:

- In administrative records is self-reporting by businesses.
- The completeness of business registration, tax data, diversity, and financial data from individual businesses and public/private sources.
- Retail trade is underrepresented in this data that from qualitative interviews is a prominent sector for minority businesses in Camden City, according to city business license data.

Key Challenges: The business support ecosystem could benefit from increased intentionality in supporting scalable businesses, sector-focused programming, and supplier-focused services.

Organization Name	Focus on diverse biz stages	Sector focus	Minority Focus	1:1 approach	Procurement focus	Capital programs
Camden Cares Business Center (TEC)	●	●	●	●	●	●
APEX Accelerator in the Rutgers-Camden SBDC	●	●	●	●	●	●
Minorities Allied Lenders (MINA)	●	●	●	●	●	●
Haddon Avenue Business Association (HABA)	●	●	●	●	●	●
Camden Special Services District	●	●	●	●	●	●
Latin American Economic Development Association (LAEDA)	●	●	●	●	●	●
Camden Business Association (CBA)	●	●	●	●	●	●
Camden Urban Enterprise Zone (UEZ)	●	●	●	●	●	●
OVERALL	●	●	●	●	●	●

Chart Key: ● Available ● In progress ● Not available

Ecosystem strengths

- Several capital programs
- 1:1 approach
- Minority focus

Ecosystem Gaps

- Limited focus on medium-sized firms
- No Sectoral Focus
- Limited procurement focus

The Camden Cares Business Center* is currently addressing some of the primary gaps in the ecosystem. However, there is a need for further work to define key sectors and adjust programming accordingly.

Key Challenges: The identified capital services providers are primarily oriented to the capital needs of microenterprises, and may not be oriented to growth.

Top Barriers for Microenterprises

On the side of the ecosystem
Historically, capital supply has centered on commercial banks, microloans, large loans, and equity investments, leaving a "missing middle" for small businesses aiming to expand.

- On the side of firms**
- Lack of quality financial statements, LOC (especially banks) and past performance necessary for accessing bonding capacity.
 - Rising interest rates pose a challenge to accessing working capital to finance projects and/or growth.



Limited options for microenterprises to secure patient growth capital result in entrepreneurs resorting to credit cards, factoring, or expensive capital sources.

Identified Nonbank Capital Providers*

Organization Name	Product Type
Cooperative Business Assistance Corporation (CBAC)	debt
NJ EDA	grants, debt
Camden County Improvement Authority Services	debt
New Jersey Community Capital	debt
Minorities Allied Lenders (MINA)	debt
Black and Latino Angel Investment Fund	equity

Ecosystem Gaps

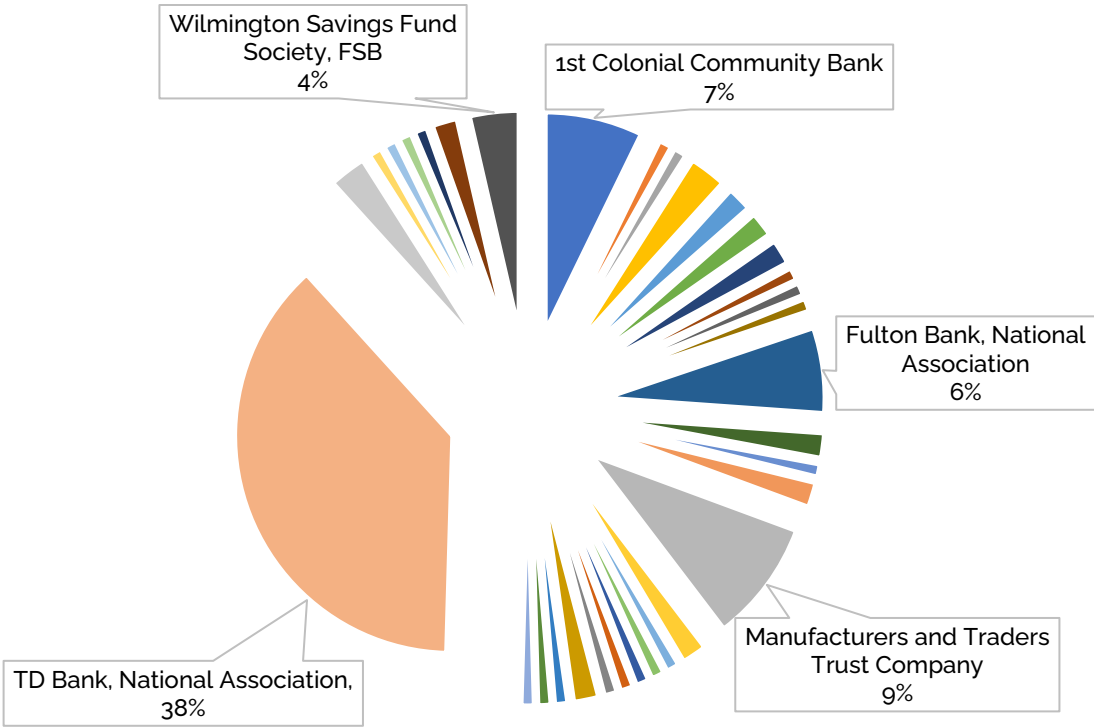
- There is a concentration of microlending products to meet the need of microbusinesses in Camden, but the products may not be “fit-to-purpose” for scaling firm capacity to fulfill additional contracts.
- Some firms report burdensome processes to obtain capital or loan officers who do not understand their business model.
- In qualitative interviews, some firms report that access to lines of credit could fuel their growth more than a conventional bank loan.

Note*: These do not include tax credit programs, TEC's programs, and excludes the main street revitalization programs. Of the six programs, four (NJ EDA, Camden CCIA, TEC, and New Jersey Community Capital) have "growth" capital programs.

Key Challenges: In fiscal year 2023, only five (5) financial institutions lending in Camden County had more than four (4) SBA 7(a) loan approvals.

Approved SBA 7(a) loans in Camden County, NJ by Lender
Fiscal Year 2023

- 1st Colonial Community Bank
- Bank of America, National Association
- Bank of Hope
- BayFirst National Bank
- Berkshire Bank
- Cadence Bank
- Celtic Bank Corporation
- FinWise Bank
- First National Bank of Pennsylvania
- Firsttrust Savings Bank
- Fulton Bank, National Association
- Fund-Ex Solutions Group, LLC
- Haddon Savings Bank
- KeyBank National Association
- Manufacturers and Traders Trust Company
- Meridian Bank
- Metro City Bank
- Mid Penn Bank
- Newtek Bank, National Association
- Newtek Small Business Finance, Inc.
- Peapack-Gladstone Bank
- PNC Bank, National Association
- Readycap Lending, LLC
- Republic First Bank d/b/a Republic Bank
- Santander Bank, National Association
- TD Bank, National Association
- Trenton Business Assistance Corporation
- Truist Bank
- United Midwest Savings Bank, National Association
- Unity Bank
- Univest Bank and Trust Co.
- Wells Fargo Bank, National Association
- Wilmington Savings Fund Society, FSB



7(a) lending activity in Camden County

- The SBA 7(a) lending program is the agency's primary product for small businesses and can be used for any legal business purpose including working capital, the purchase of equipment and the refinancing of debt. *
- The SBA "guarantees" a portion of the loan with participant lenders to reach small businesses who may not qualify for conventional bank loans.
- According to SBA 7(a) lending activity data, for fiscal year 2023 (October 2022 through September 2023), TD Bank and M&T Bank combine **for nearly 47%** of the 111 approved 7(a) loans in Camden County.
- In Fiscal Year 2023, JP Morgan Chase was not reflected in the Camden County data of 33 lenders.

Note*: Data is analyzed from SBA's Office of [Capital Access 7\(a\) Lender Activity Reports](#) fiscal year end 2023. Lender activity reports summarize current fiscal year approvals by 7(a) lenders.

Key Challenges: Several efforts to connect small business owners to procurement opportunities could be further coordinated to maximize impact.

LAEDA “Camden Verified” Initiative

CAMDEN VERIFIED

**WE BUY CAMDEN INITIATIVE
CAMDEN VERIFIED PROCESS**

Are you a Camden-based business that wants to do business with companies like American Water, Holtec, the 76ers, Michaels Development or Subaru?

How about institutions like Rutgers University, Rowan University, Cooper Hospital and Virtual Hospital?

All these entities and more use the We Buy Camden Directory to purchase goods and services from Camden-based businesses. The Camden Verified Badge will help you stand out from other companies.

Get Verified! Click the link below to start the process.

[Get Verified! - Click Here!](#)

Haddon Avenue Business Association Workshops

Haddon Avenue Business Association PRESENTS

Financial Opportunity NIGHT

Learn more about how to receive a scholarship for Financial Mentoring & State Licensing!

Camden County Procurement Portal

#	Title	Entity	Description	Type	Status	Pre-Conference	Opening Date
2024-01	Request for Proposals for Arbitrage Calculations Services for the Camden County Improvement Authority	CCIA	RFP for Arbitrage Calculation Services	RFP	Open		Jan 23, 2024 11:00 AM
	Request for Proposals to Conduct the Annual		RFP for Annual Financial and				

Camden Business Association “WeBuy Camden” Directory

WeBuy CAMDEN

CAMDEN BUSINESS ASSOCIATION

Coming Soon!

Business Directory

Local Purchasing and Procurement

Events Calendar

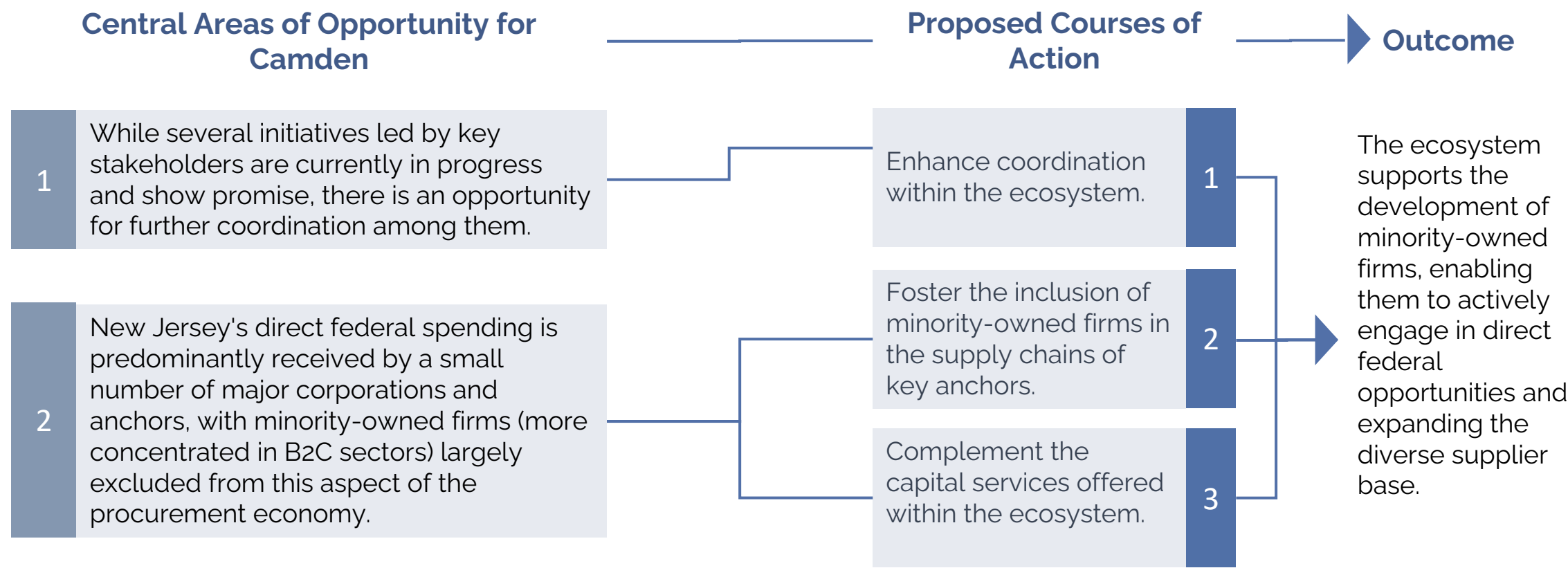
Current ecosystem efforts* involve business registries, targeted local spend for public procurement, workshops, and consolidated bid portals – all best practices for supplier development and market-making. However, some firms report little knowledge of the resources or low functionality of the tools.

Note*: Efforts here are meant to be illustrative and not an exhaustive list of procurement-related technical assistance.

Recommendations

Recommendations: We have identified two key opportunities in Camden and suggest three actions to empower local minority-owned firms to engage with regional opportunities.

From the challenges identified, we have also pinpointed two significant opportunity areas for Camden. We propose three specific courses of action to guide the ecosystem in empowering minority-owned firms in the region to actively participate in local opportunities.



Recommendations: Coordinate the business support ecosystem around procurement-related services and products such as bidding, scaling and back-end support.

1. Enhance coordination within the ecosystem.	2. Foster the inclusion of minority firms in the supply chains of key anchors.	3. Complement the capital services offered within the ecosystem.
Conduct unified “on the ground” census of firms to capture informal economy and certify the number of minority-owned businesses in Camden City.	Promote the unbundling of anchor and local spending to facilitate increased participation among minority-owned firms concentrated in B2C industries.	Explore equity-like and revolving credit products for increased and flexible working capital options for firms.
Consider assigning a corporate leader or statewide entity to be the lead convener of corporations and local governments and congeal efforts to create a “procurement council”.	Amplify procurement opportunities for business owners through capacity building and direct engagement, utilizing models like TEC’s 277-building model as a foundation.	
Consider unifying the two market-making initiatives, “We Buy Camden” and “Camden Verify” to create a “digital hub” for training, registry and opportunities.		

Recommendations: Enhance coordination within the ecosystem by conducting a unified “on-the-ground” census of minority-owned firms.

***Motivation:** The lack of a comprehensive record of all minority-owned firms in Camden County, particularly Camden City, impedes the understanding of their characteristics and challenges, underscoring the necessity to establish a detailed and inclusive database for informed decision-making and targeted support.*



Main Goal: Enhance coordination and understanding of the economic landscape in Camden City by conducting a unified "on the ground" census of firms. The goal is to capture data on the informal economy and certify the number of minority businesses, fostering informed decision-making and targeted support.



Key Anchors involved: Camden City, minority-owned businesses headquartered in Camden County, entrepreneurial support organizations.



- Proposed Next Steps:**
- 1. Engagement Planning:** TEC plugs into discussions with the city, CBA, LAEDA, and NJEDA to strategize and plan the census initiative.
 - 2. Collaborative Meeting:** Arrange a meeting involving the business support ecosystem to discuss the importance, scope, and goals of the census.
 - 3. Information Sharing and Role Definition:** Share insights about the census methodology, objectives, and anticipated outcomes during the meeting, ensuring alignment among stakeholders. Define the roles and responsibilities of each entity (TEC, city, CBA, LAEDA, NJEDA) in the planning and execution of the census.

Recommendations: Enhance coordination within the ecosystem by exploring the creation of a procurement council.

Motivation: Creating a procurement council ensures efficient collaboration among key stakeholders, maximizing overall effectiveness, and promoting inclusivity and growth for minority-owned businesses through equitable access to procurement opportunities and resources.



Main Goal: Create a collective body with the goal of bridging the gaps between procurement opportunities, support organizations, and regional vendors.



Key actors involved:
Top vendors in the area across private, local, state, and federal government levels, as well as business support organizations.



- Proposed Next Steps:**
- Leadership Buy-in and Engagement:** Communicate the vision, engage top buyers, and demonstrate the value of the procurement council to gain support from leadership.
 - Share Best Practices and Establish Operations:** Define a regular meeting schedule, develop clear meeting agendas, and designate key roles within the council, ensuring smooth operations.
 - Identify Initiatives to Pursue:** Conduct a needs assessment, gather stakeholder input, and prioritize initiatives based on impact, feasibility, and alignment with organizational goals.
 - Accountability Council:** Form a separate body responsible for overseeing the procurement council's performance, conduct regular assessments, and use findings for continuous improvement.

Examples of other “procurement councils”

*"In the past six years, the DC Anchor Partnership has helped increase MBE spending from large institutions from \$5.73 million to over \$250 million".**

Led by the Birmingham area chamber, VITAL leads a voluntary pledge from major companies and creates specific capacity building programming for businesses that provide 'procureable' goods or services and facilitates connections with corporate buyers.

Note: Recommendations developed through quantitative data analysis and qualitative interviews. Due to some challenges with firm and procurement officer engagement, further research may be needed to affirm recommendations. Source*: <https://mayor.dc.gov/release/mayor-bowser-celebrates-new-milestone-250-million-directed-minority-owned-businesses-through>.

Recommendations: Enhance coordination within the ecosystem by creating a “digital hub” for training, business registry and procurement opportunities.

Motivation: Differentiated efforts to increase the capacity of diverse suppliers in Camden City and the County can be amplified and clarified to business owners if they could access resource in one, centralized platform.



Main Goal: The primary objective is to reduce barriers to information, training, and market visibility for small business owners. Small business owners often have limited administrative capacity to navigate several resources and often cite disparate resources as a barrier to success. An online hub that centralizes and calendarizes small business resources can reduce the navigation burden for small business owners. A hub that also has a public registry of minority-owned businesses can also assist corporate procurement officers to build connections and relationships with local and minority-owned firms.

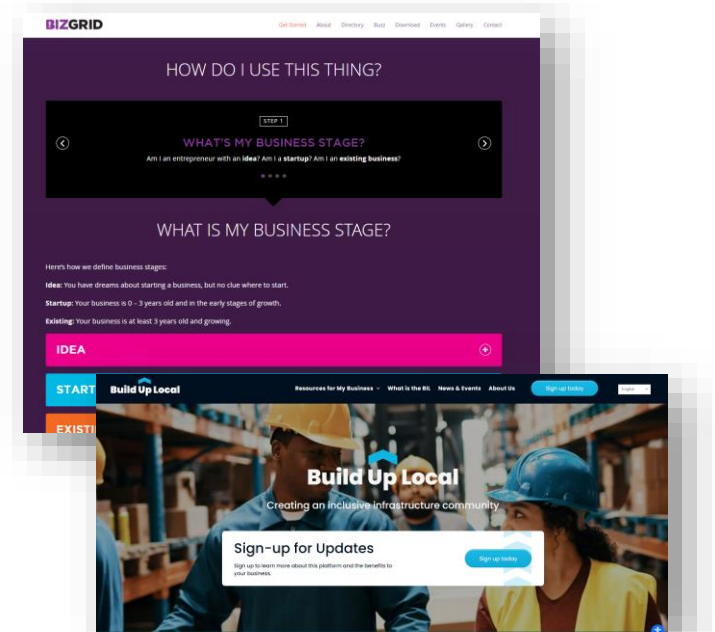


Key anchors involved: Camden County, Camden City, key corporate anchor partners, CBA, LAEDA, TEC.



Proposed Next Steps:

1. **Convene Top Key Players:** CBA, LAEDA, Camden City, Camden County, Camden Special Services District, corporate partners.
2. **Collaboration Opportunities:**
 - Compare and contrast core services and features across existing platforms.
 - Conduct outreach to firms to understand how the tool should be designed to meet their needs.
 - Conduct outreach to procurement officers to understand how they would best use a registry.
3. **Implementation:**
 - Map technology needs based on UX/UI findings from stakeholder outreach.
 - Identify and engage corporate funder for a multi-year investment in the platform.
 - Develop operational and sustainability plan and consider additional resources to support a full-time “ecosystem navigator” who manages the content and referrals from the platform.



Detroit's BizGrid is an online navigation tool for small business resources from over 54 organizations. Businesses select their stage or need, and the page filters potential resources. **Build Up Local**, an initiative of the National Minority Supplier Diversity Council, a resource hub for small businesses interested in Infrastructure and Jobs Act-related contracting opportunities.

Recommendations: Foster the inclusion of minority-owned firms in the supply chains of key anchors by promoting unbundling of anchor spending.

***Motivation:** Unlike other regions, Camden stands out for its substantial participation of local firms in direct federal spending opportunities. These local firms could have a role in creating Tier 2 and Tier 3 supplier opportunities. Leveraging this foundation, actively involving minority firms in these supply chains can serve as a potent vehicle for fostering economic growth and inclusivity within the community.*



Main Goal: The primary objective is to break down larger procurement opportunities into smaller, more manageable components. This strategy aims to foster accessibility, particularly for minority-owned businesses operating in consumer-oriented sectors.



Key anchors involved: The key actors involved in this initiative are major institutions acting as anchors. Notable entities such as L3 Technologies, Rutgers, American Water, Total Technology, Lockheed Martin and Campbell's are central to the plan. Their participation is crucial in driving the transformation of procurement practices to be more inclusive and supportive of minority-owned businesses.



Proposed Next Steps:

- 1. Convene Top Anchors:** Organize a meeting with representatives from L3 Technologies, American Water, Rutgers, Total Technology, Lockheed Martin and Campbell's and other key corporations.
- 2. Opportunity Identification:**
 - Analyze existing procurement portfolios to pinpoint projects with the potential for unbundling.
 - Evaluate consumer-oriented sectors to ensure alignment with the overarching goal.
- 3. Unbundling Implementation:**
 - Establish guidelines and best practices for unbundling larger contracts into smaller components.
 - Develop and implement training programs on unbundling strategies for procurement officers to enhance their capacity.
 - Work closely with procurement officers to implement the unbundling process effectively.

Note: Recommendations developed through quantitative data analysis and qualitative interviews. Due to some challenges with firm and procurement officer engagement, further research may be needed to affirm recommendations.

Recommendations: Foster the inclusion of minority-owned firms in the supply chains of key anchors through capacity building and direct engagement.

***Motivation:** Top anchors can also boost the growth of minority-owned businesses by providing mentoring support to enhance their skills and capabilities.*



Main Goal: Promote mentoring and experiential learning programs for subcontractors, offering comprehensive support in technical and managerial aspects, including guidance on contracts, procurement opportunities, business management, and trade work. The goal is to empower subcontractors for success in various business facets.



Key anchors involved: Top Anchors, The Enterprise Center, Entrepreneurial Support Organizations.



Proposed Next Steps:

- 1. Program Analysis:** Conduct a thorough examination of programs similar to the one implemented by TEC for the construction of the 277 building. Identify best practices, successful elements, and areas for improvement.
- 2. Opportunity Identification:** Collaborate with anchors to identify specific opportunities within the industry for mentoring support. Tailor programs to address the unique challenges and requirements of subcontractors.



The 277 S. 52nd Street Project, led by The Enterprise Center (TEC), aimed to revitalize the 52nd St. Corridor through multifaceted efforts. TEC successfully engaged with 100% minority-owned business enterprises as subcontractors, partnering with LF Driscoll for mentoring and construction management support. The project exemplified TEC's commitment to hands-on contracting opportunities and technical assistance, proving the concept of holistic minority contracting support. The mentoring program covered various topics, benefitting subcontractors involved in the project.

Recommendations: Complement the capital services offered within the ecosystem by exploring contractor mobilization financing and revolving credit products.

***Motivation:** While traditional installment loans that fuel business expansion can increase firm capacity at a point in time, these products may have limited flexibility to firm's need to scale. Conversely, factoring or other receivables financing in alternative markets may negatively impact a firm's cashflow. To ensure that firms new to the procurement economy can scale and not be overleveraged, flexible financing to get firms started and scaled is a necessary component of an inclusive procurement economy.*



Main Goal: Work with financial institutions and community development financial institutions to enhance and introduce flexible financing options for local and minority-owned businesses based in Camden County. Widen the suite of products and business advisory services available to growing firms.



Key anchors involved: Entrepreneurial support organizations, banks, CDFIs, NJ EDA, philanthropies, Camden City, Camden County.

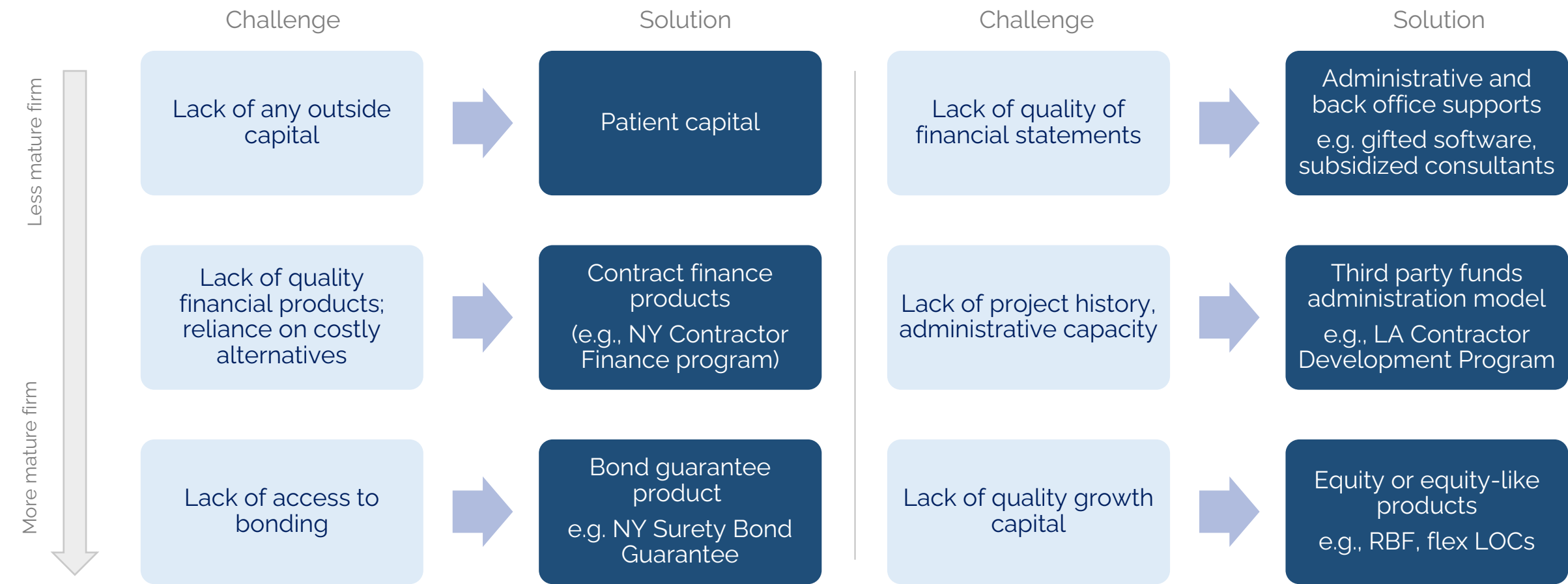


Proposed Next Steps:

- 1. Convene business owners to sharpen capital product development:** Conduct a focus group with business owners who are currently contracting and seeking to contract with government entities and local corporations to assess and design a place-based, sustainable product.
- 2. Organize a capital consortium:** Collaborate with statewide capital providers to develop relationships that lead to guarantee programs, funds of funds and knowledge sharing to pool risk and ensure product sustainability.

Recommendations: Complement the capital services offered within the ecosystem by exploring various capital solutions to support firms' needs.

We suggest various capital solutions drawing from national models to support firm needs.



Note: Some suggestions informed by Built by Philly initiative and Philadelphia Ecosystem Assessment and Strategy.

The Camden County Playbook for Diverse and Small Business Growth

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