

OU awarded grant to support economic development in Pontiac



March 4, 2020

SHARE THIS STORY

A new \$117,700 grant awarded to Oakland University will fund a feasibility study for a Small Business Support Center in downtown Pontiac. The project will evaluate how university, city, county and state resources can be integrated into a single entity to develop, sustain and promote non-technology companies including retail, restaurants, cleaning services and more.

The grant is an Economic Adjustment Assistance (EAA) award from the U.S. Department of Commerce's [Economic Development Administration](#). The EAA program provides a wide range of technical, planning, public works and infrastructure assistance, with the goal of growing small businesses and job creation in regions experiencing economic challenges. Application for the award was supported by Oakland University, Oakland County and Pontiac Mayor Deirdre Waterman.

"OU has a long-standing relationship with Pontiac through the OU-Pontiac Initiative," said Michael Long, executive director of the [OU Mobilization Zone](#). "The city has been hard-hit by the financial crisis and the subsequent crash of the automotive industry. The need for more support of small businesses is specifically identified in Pontiac's strategic plan, which makes this award a win-win for Pontiac, OU and Oakland County."

The proposed Small Business Support Center will focus on existing companies, as well as start-ups and pop-ups. A consulting firm will gather input from stakeholders, including executive leaders from OU and Pontiac, and local business leaders and company owners. In addition, OU's two business incubators, [OU INC and the Macomb-OU Incubator](#), will provide mentors and other support for the Small Business Support Center.

"Ideally, we would eventually like to see a downtown facility providing incubator space, meeting space and a host of other resources," said Long.