



UJIMA BUSINESS ALLIANCE INITIAL PROGRAM PROPOSAL

ABOUT UJIMA PROJECT

The Boston Ujima Project is organizing neighbors, workers, business owners and investors to create a new community controlled economy in Greater Boston. We are challenging poverty and developing our communities by organizing our savings, businesses and customers to grow local wealth and meet our own needs.

UJIMA (oo-JEE-mah) is a Swahili word, and the celebrated Kwanzaa principle for "collective work and responsibility." Ujima inspires us to take responsibility for our communities, to see our neighbor's problems as our own, and to build collective power to solve them together.

The Ujima Project demonstrates new ways to invest, work, buy, own, and advocate. We are driven by a belief that another world possible, and that we can help build it today.

ABOUT THE UJIMA BUSINESS ALLIANCE

The Ujima Business Alliance (UBA) is a local business association sponsored by the Boston Ujima Project for community oriented companies within its network. Members of the UBA are business owners, managers, and entrepreneurs who are committed to advancing social and economic justice through the private sector. Ujima Businesses align their corporate practices with their values by creating good jobs, sharing ownership and wealth, meeting local needs, and generating community benefits. Business Alliance Members find strength in unity, and value cooperation over competition to achieve shared success.

The Ujima Business Alliance serves two main purposes:

1. *To strengthen the business members of the Alliance through strategic programs, including both internal organizing and coordination/collaboration with other stakeholder groups such as consumers and investors*
2. *To represent the business stakeholder group in larger Ujima decisions, particularly in business standards setting/certification but also including neighborhood planning processes and capital fund discussions*

ABOUT THE GOOD BUSINESS CERTIFICATION

The Ujima Project will create a "Good Business Certification" to ensure that business members of the Ujima network reflect the values and goals of the broader community. The Good Business Certificate will consider enterprise practices including wages, benefits, ecologic policies, sourcing and community benefits. Ujima Project seeks to create supports and incentives to help disadvantaged community businesses succeed and grow social impact over time.



Businesses interested in joining the Ujima Business Alliance are required to meet minimum Good Business Certification standards. As members meet higher standards, they are able to access greater benefits.

BUSINESS ALLIANCE BENEFITS

Ujima Project and Business Alliance members are co-creating innovative, collaborative strategies to directly benefit Ujima Businesses. A portfolio of potential UBA programs will be prioritized and developed by the members of the Alliance.

Proposed UBA Programs:

Access to Capital: Businesses are eligible to apply for loans or investments from the Ujima Capital Fund, while also gaining exposure and referrals to Ujima’s network of socially aligned impact investors.

Ujima Business Promotions: Businesses will be listed in an online Good Business Directory and receive an “Ujima Business” seal to display to customers. Ujima will provide free marketing and media, and organize creative community events and campaigns to raise the profile of Ujima companies.

Technical Assistance: Businesses can access business assistance and support through [Ujima’s Technical Assistance Network](#), offering a diverse range of supports (marketing, planning, management, legal etc.) to small businesses and cooperatives. Ujima members will have priority access to subsidized and volunteer services offered by these providers.

Customer Loyalty Programs: Businesses may participate in Ujima’s consumer currency programs, providing access to an organized market of Ujima shoppers and supporters. Participating business will provide a small discount to Ujima members, who in turn pledge to spend money at Ujima Businesses.

Collective Purchasing: Businesses can participate in a Shared Purchasing program to reduce business costs through a collective buying agreement for services like bookkeeping or healthcare, or products like office supplies. The UBA will also facilitate supply chain alignment and inter-alliance purchasing between Ujima companies.

Procurement Advocacy: Ujima Project seeks to create new contract and vendor opportunities for Ujima Businesses by advocating for local, MWBE and co-op procurement preferences by major corporations, hospitals, universities and local government.

[Worker Services Network:](#) The Ujima Worker Services Network seeks to build a robust network of programs and partnerships to help improve workplace culture and communication, and support workforce development and satisfaction.

Business Coach: The Business Coach gives their skills, time and expertise to uplift members of the Ujima Business Alliance. They provides access to resources, trainings and other professional development opportunities to improve impact and success of Businesses.



UBA RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Businesses that meet the minimum Certification standards are invited to join the Ujima Business Alliance. The UBA integrates a range of programs and strategies to promote the financial health and social impact of its members. Business members receive a range of rights and benefits, and are expected to uphold key responsibilities to ensure accountability to Ujima's broader community of supporters.

Rights

Governance: Business Alliance members elect representatives to the Ujima Project governing board. Members have voting rights in Business Alliance and Ujima wide policy decisions.

Good Business Certification Standards: Business Alliance members participate as a stakeholder in the development, ratification and updating of Ujima Good Business Certification standards.

Investment Planning and Allocation: Business Alliance members participate in directing investment capital and other Ujima resources towards new and existing businesses and real estate projects, particularly as it relates to supply side development.

Responsibilities

Pledge and Participation: Businesses participate in minimum number of UBA meetings, and pledge to uphold Ujima Good Business Certification Standards.

Membership Fee: The Business Alliance will develop an accessible fee structure that corresponds to a range of benefits and programs that members can opt into.

Reporting & Transparency: Businesses will adhere to reporting and transparency requirements that allow ongoing monitoring of Good Business Certification standards.

Worker Services Network: Businesses enroll in the Ujima Worker Services Network, and invite their employees to join the Ujima Project to access shared Human Resource and Workforce supports.

BUSINESS ALLIANCE STRUCTURE

The Ujima Business Alliance is self governing with ongoing support and funding from the larger Ujima Project. Ujima Staff will support Business Alliance members and coordinate core strategies and programs.

Ujima Businesses will elect representatives to seats on the Ujima Board of Directors, Community Standards Committee, and Investment Committee reserved for Ujima Business Alliance appointees.



Ujima Businesses will be empowered to develop and evolve the Business Alliance's organizing and leadership structure and internal decision making processes.

BUSINESS ALLIANCE MEMBERSHIP

Ujima has engaged a broad range of community oriented businesses to join as founding members of the Ujima Business Alliance. Because Ujima has not yet ratified its Good Business Certification standards, early invitations to join the Business Alliance were focused on local minority business owners, nonprofit social enterprises, and worker owned businesses.

See: [Current Ujima Business Alliance Members](#)