



# ANNUAL REPORT 2019

COLLAB







# Annual Report

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*team@collabnewhaven.org*  
*collabnewhaven.org*



# Overview

*An overview of Collab's mission and goals.*

# Collab is a community-centered accelerator for Connecticut entrepreneurs with a focus on Greater New Haven.

Collab's mission is to equip entrepreneurs — particularly under-connected and under-resourced entrepreneurs — with the **confidence, resources, and skills** to build ventures that can contribute to the holistic vibrancy of a community.

We work on this mission in two ways:

1. Uplifting entrepreneurs in Greater New Haven, particularly people of color, low-income individuals, immigrants, and women who have historically been left out of innovation and entrepreneurship movements and resources, to improve their economic livelihood, confidence, and skills.
2. Addressing the structural economic inequalities that traditional economic development initiatives often deepen, by helping activate the exponential power of entrepreneurs in various sectors of our community to affect change, create community wealth, and build our neighborhoods from the inside.





We prioritize serving people of color, women, and immigrant entrepreneurs because we are **committed to social justice.**

Systems of oppression and structural barriers based on racial, ethnic, gender, class, sexuality, and other differences operate in the world of entrepreneurship.

Because of this, economic opportunity through entrepreneurship is more inaccessible to women, communities of color, immigrant communities, and other marginalized groups. This leads to economic and community development that does not incorporate the needs, perspectives, and assets of all of us.

**We want to change that.**





# Model

*A description of Collab's model for change.*



## **Collab employs a holistic, community-driven model to provide entrepreneurs the resources, skills, and confidence they need to be successful and impactful.**

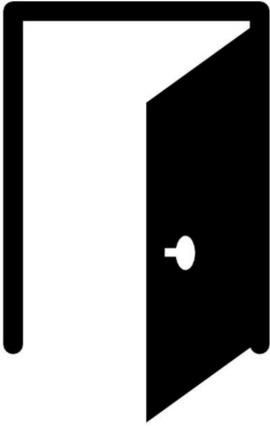
Our model is based on two beliefs:

1. Every entrepreneur deserves a chance to make a difference with confidence.
2. As a city, we have a collective responsibility to support a diversity of entrepreneurs.

Collab entrepreneurs have opportunities to gain access to resources, build their own confidence, and collaborate with a network with Collab service providers and mentors. With the support of the entire Collab community, they can walk down sustainable pathways towards long-term venture success.



Collab's model has three pillars:



### **Inclusion**

For all of our programs, we provide childcare, transportation, and interpretation services. True inclusivity and access, however, requires more than that. It's also about ensuring that our programming is truly open and shaped by the entrepreneurs we hope to serve so that they feel excited and empowered to work with us. This is an area of continual learning for us and core to our model.



### **Confidence**

Many individuals do not believe entrepreneurship belongs to them. Therefore, critical to the work of inclusive entrepreneurship is heart work. We must build space to address the limiting beliefs and low expectations that injustice perpetuates by replacing them with the tools for self-knowledge, self-love, and self-worth.



### **Pathways**

There are significant financial barriers to entrepreneurship that prevent certain entrepreneurs from being able to take risks. To maximize the chances of success for our entrepreneurs, we build pathways towards additional resources, network, and support post-program by collaborating with a network with investors, service providers, and mentors.

Collab's programs form a funnel designed to recruit, train, and activate entrepreneurs from the community.

### **Outreach**

Primarily, we form partnerships with other organizations, neighborhood stakeholders, churches, and more who know their communities the best.

**Outreach**

### **Events**

Free and open to the public, Collab's events are designed to recruit a wide network of entrepreneurs and amplify the culture of innovation in the region. We hold panels, storytelling events, and workshops.

**Events**

### **Office Hours**

Any entrepreneur can sign up for a session, which is a 30-minute coaching conversation with Collab, on the phone or in person. During each session, we deep dive into an entrepreneur and their venture.

**1-on-1 Coaching**

### **Accelerator**

The Accelerator is an intensive, part-time, 12-week program for a cohort of entrepreneurs ready for our deepest level of support. Entrepreneurs receive funding, workshops, 1-on-1 coaching, pro bono resources, and more.

**Accelerator**







**“Collab has  
changed my life.**

**After experiencing the program, I  
am perfectly comfortable stepping  
into the role of an entrepreneur.”**

*Shefau Dabre-Rufus, Zen Zilla Yoga & Wellness*

# ZEN ZILLA YOGA & WELLNESS

*Founder: Shefau Dabre-Rufus, Cohort 4*

Zen Zilla Yoga and Wellness, founded by Shefau Dabre-Rufus, is committed to seeing black kids succeed. They offer a health and wellness curriculum rooted in rhythmic yoga using black music and guided meditation to provide urban educators with concrete strategies to support black youth.

Already, Zen Zilla has contracts with New Haven Land Trust, One Village Healing, LEAP, and Job Corps. The goal is to work with public school systems to transform the way classrooms are run.

For the past 20 years as a teacher in the classroom, Shefau has been laser focused on improving the lives of her kids and improving the city they call home.

**Zen Zilla Yoga and Wellness is her next vision.**



A woman with long, dark, wavy hair is shown in profile, speaking into a silver microphone. She is wearing a light-colored, possibly beige or tan, top. The background is a plain, light-colored wall. The lighting is soft, highlighting her face and the texture of her hair.

“Collab has given me a community of support, encouragement, a hope and **unwavering belief in myself as a person** and that my business is something that can and will be successful.”

*Della Leapman, Nestl*

# NESTL

Founder: Della Leapman, Cohort 4

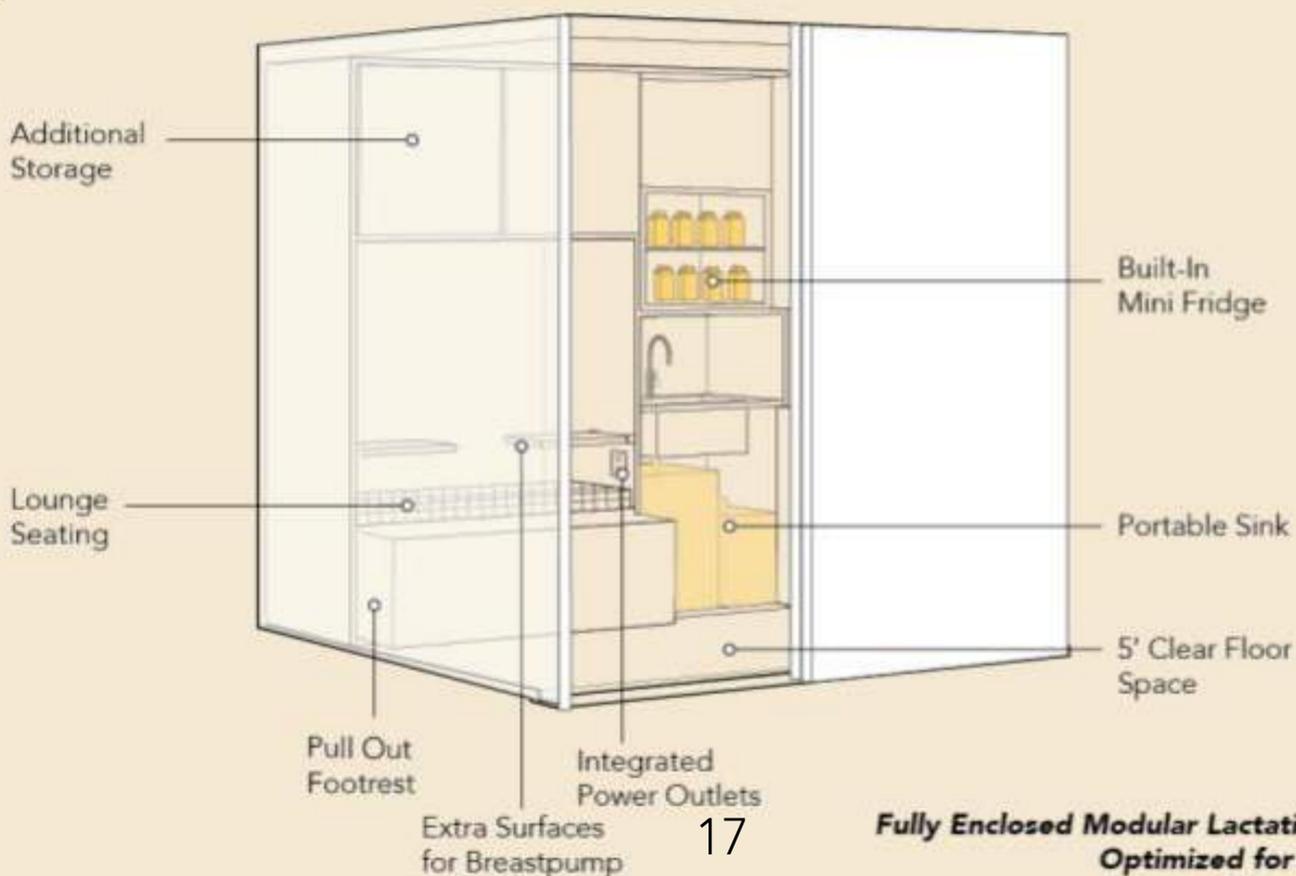
Della is an architect, designer, and a mom of two young children. Through her research and personal experience, Della found that 60% of lactating individuals don't have access to a private place to pump or break time for lactation at work.

That's why she built Nestl, to make **lactation space easy, affordable, and accessible to the greatest number of individuals at work**. Nestl provides businesses an off the shelf, modular product line that converts existing space into fully functioning lactation rooms and dedicated wellness space.

There are 15.4 million small businesses with less than 500 employees in the US, operating out of an office space. To start, Nestl is targeting businesses that are dedicated inclusion.

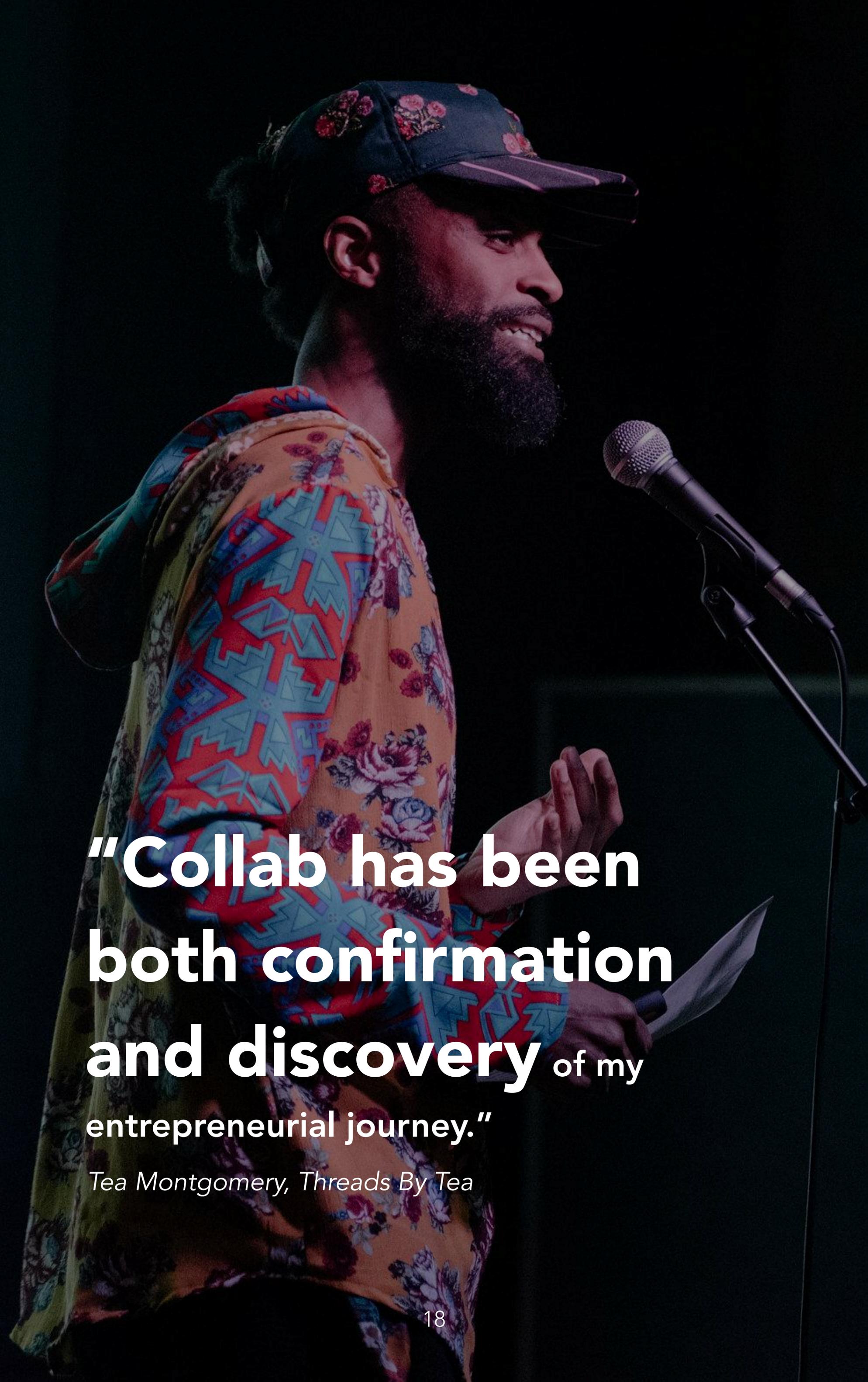
Della already has one client – and is starting a waitlist for interested clients as she builds her first prototype.

## Best Product Line Fully Enclosed Lactation & Wellness Space 56 Square Feet



Fully Enclosed Modular Lactation Space  
Optimized for Pumping  
Target Price < \$10,000



A photograph of Tea Montgomery, a man with a beard, wearing a floral-patterned cap and a vibrant, multi-colored patterned shirt. He is speaking into a microphone on a stage, with his hands gesturing as he speaks. The background is dark, and the lighting is focused on him.

**"Collab has been  
both confirmation  
and discovery of my  
entrepreneurial journey."**

*Tea Montgomery, Threads By Tea*

# THREADS BY TEA

*Founder: Tea Montgomery, Cohort 4*

Tea has worked in many jobs in many industries — from corporate to fundraising for non-profits to truck driving overnight. He didn't find himself in any of it. He then asked what people know him for; over and over, he heard style, creativity, being a motivator and a trendsetter. So, he taught himself how to sew and founded Threads By Tea.

Threads by Tea is bespoke wearable art, **handcrafted to inspire, empower, and motivate clients to take risks** in fashion and express themselves.

So far, Tea has been commissioned to design costumes for Tia Russell Dance Studio, sold over 70 bespoke pieces, and was selected as a RAW artist at the Oakdale Theater.

Next, Tea is hosting events, activating his online shop and stocking items, hiring his first employee, and releasing 5 collections as the official launch of Threads By Tea later this year.





**"Collab revalidated my enterprise,  
provided mentorship and catalyzed  
my next immediate steps.**

**There is work to  
do and a bright  
path to follow."**

*Domingo Medina, Peels & Wheels Composting*

# PEELS & WHEELS COMPOSTING

*Founder: Domingo Medina, Cohort 2*

Domingo Medina founded Peels & Wheels Composting to mitigate the effects of climate change in the Greater New Haven region.

Peels & Wheels Composting is a neighborhood-scale operation that composts households food waste for residents, schools, and small businesses that want to compost but can't or don't have the means to do so. Using bikes, bins, and trailers, Peels & Wheels picks up kitchen scraps and other biodegradable materials and takes them to farms and gardens for composting.

Over the past few years, Domingo has grown to over 150 clients — **diverting 160,000+ pounds of food waste**, avoiding 70+ metric tons of CO2E emissions, and producing 12,000+ cubic yards of compost.

His next step is to build a mid-sized facility to cover a growing client base and continue to make New Haven a stronger, more resilient place to live.





**"I see Collab growing and changing  
the lives of other entrepreneurs in  
and outside of New Haven.**

**Thank you for  
daring to do  
better."**

*Sade Jean-Jacques, Pascale's Body Care*

# PASCALE'S BODY CARE

*Founder: Sade Jean-Jacques, Cohort 2*

Pascale's Body Care is a part of a movement **to disrupt the ways in which oppression shows up within the wellness industry** by creating products with Black women in mind and centering self-care. They challenge mainstream products that often don't work for black women and have been harmful to our health by providing high quality and affordable products.

Founder and hand-crafter, Sade Jean-Jacques, is a social justice educator, naturalist, and new mom. Her journey to natural inspired a lifestyle and interest that changed her life. Part of that journey included decolonizing notions of beauty, exploring holistic approaches to wellness, and understanding how systems of oppression impact health outcomes.

Sade began making homemade body care products in 2013 and has not looked back. She has sold hundreds of products — consistently selling out at vending opportunities. Next up, she is building out her website to scale up her business.





# Outcomes

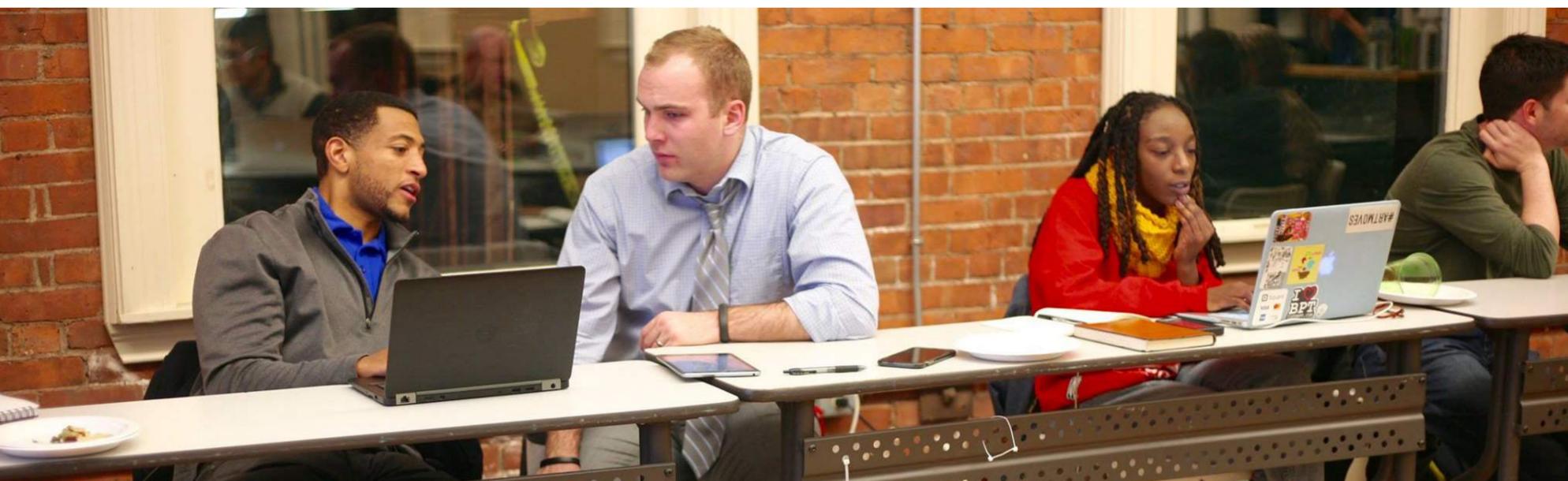
*A description of what has changed as a result of Collab's work and how we measure that change*

# Here's what has happened since Collab started.



**1,563**  
Event  
Attendees

Free and open to the public, **Collab Events** are designed to recruit a wide network of entrepreneurs and amplify the culture of innovation in the region.

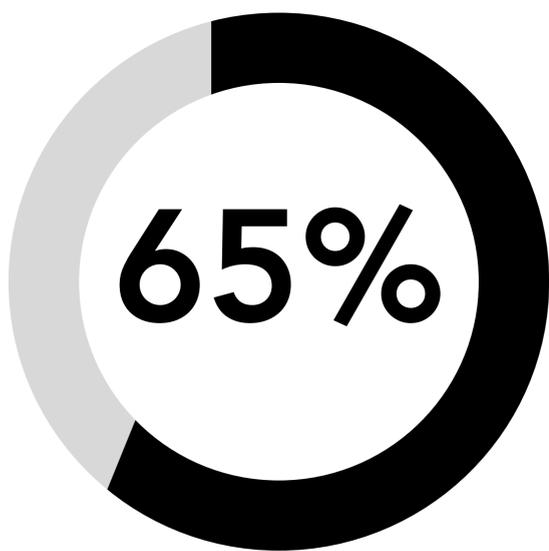
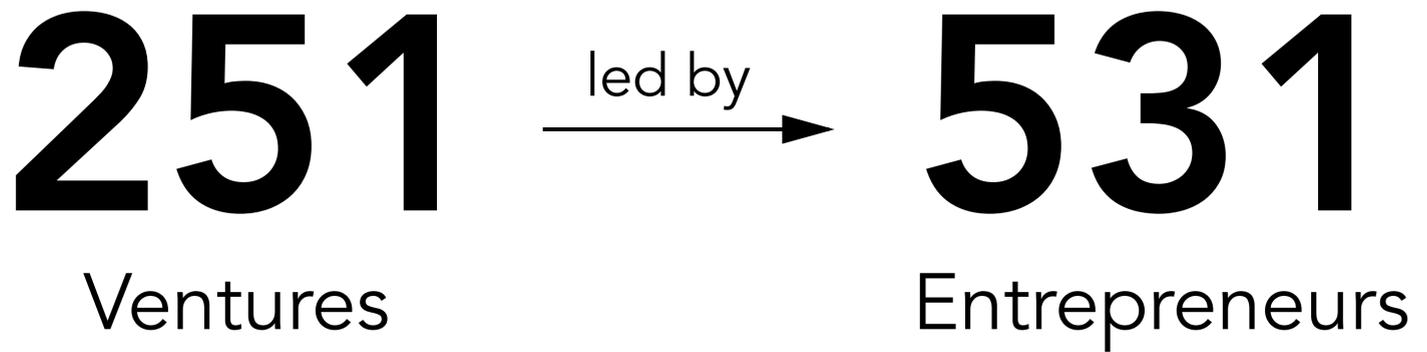


**Collab Office Hours** is a 30-minute coaching conversation with Collab, on the phone or in person, to deep dive into an entrepreneur and their venture.

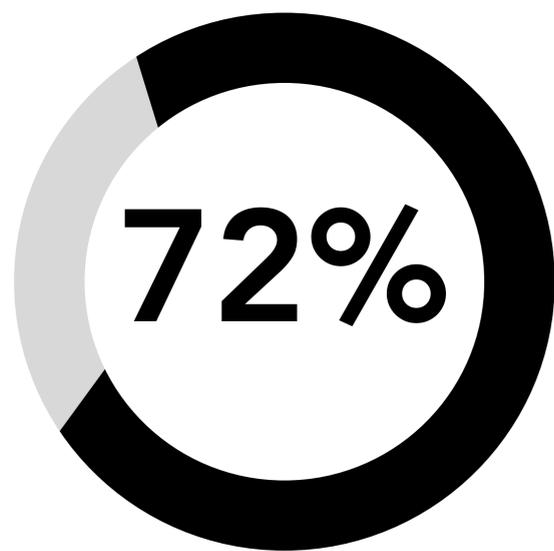
**658**  
Sessions Hosted  
through Office Hours

**Collab Accelerator** is an intensive, part-time, 12-week program for a cohort of entrepreneurs who are ready for the deepest level of pre-seed support.

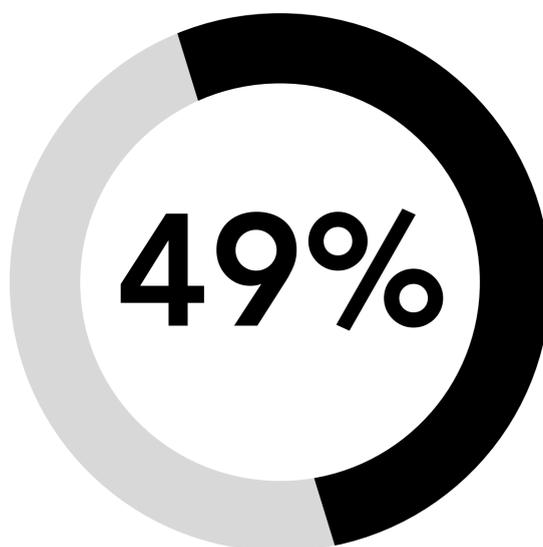
Here's who applied:



Women-led ventures



People of Color-led ventures

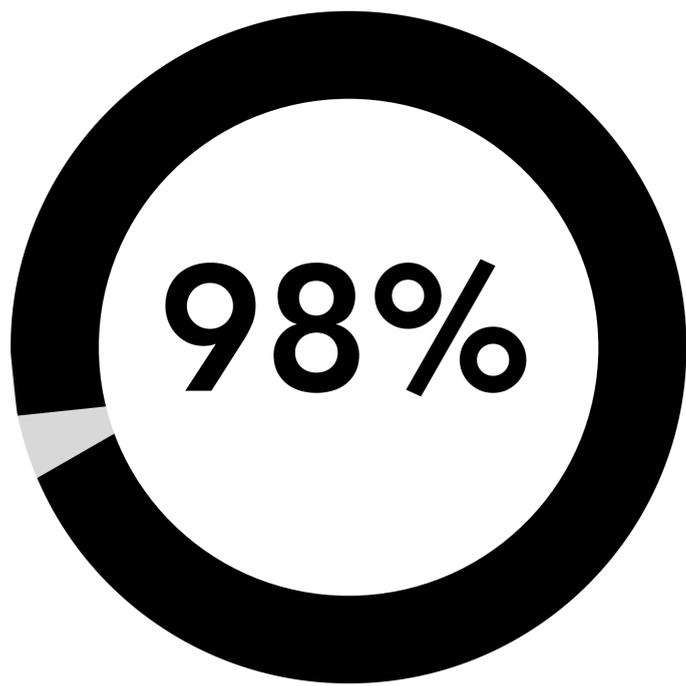


Women of Color-led ventures

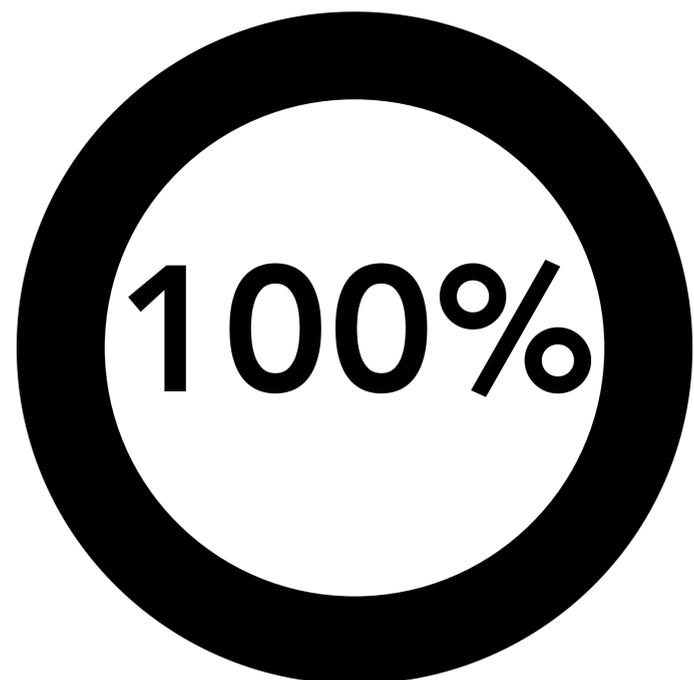
# \$254,918

Follow-on Funding Raised

*Since February 2018*



Ventures Still  
Active



Entrepreneurs would  
recommend Collab





My City Initiative



Threads By Tea



Extra Yard

# \$306,406

## Revenue Generated

*By Collab Ventures All-Time*



Lotusleaf Therapeutics

28



gathr



Since we've started, Collab has directly invested **\$26,000** in 51 entrepreneurs leading **26 organizations**.

Entrepreneurs we supported raised \$254,918 in follow-on funding, and added or continued to support 31 full time or part time jobs. This means that for every dollar we awarded to an entrepreneur, they raised an additional \$9.80.

That's a **980% return on investment** for inclusive innovation in Connecticut.



# Financials

*An outline of Collab's funding — where it comes from and what it goes to*

## FISCAL YEAR 2019 FINANCIALS

<b>Budget</b>	<b>\$120,000</b>
Accelerator	\$73,200
General & Admin	\$25,200
Office Hours, Events, and Marketing	\$21,600

**ACCELERATOR**  
61%

# BUDGET BREAKDOWN

**OFFICE HOURS,  
EVENTS,  
MARKETING**  
18%

**GENERAL & ADMIN**  
21%



# Ventures

*A list of the ventures we have invested in  
across four cohorts*





### **CITYSEED SANCTUARY KITCHEN CATERING**

*Sanctuary Kitchen Catering offers multicultural cuisines for institutions, organizations, and individuals while providing income and supporting food entrepreneurship for refugees and new immigrants resettled in the Greater New Haven area.*

### **CODESMASH**

*CodeSmash empowers New Haven's youth by developing and employing after-school programs on technology, emotional intelligence, and entrepreneurship for young people in Greater New Haven.*

### **LOTUSLEAF THERAPEUTICS**

*Lotusleaf helps women love their pregnancy, offering a pregnancy sleep system inspired by prenatal side-lying massage ergonomics that allows moms-to-be to get the restorative sleep they need.*

### **MY CITY INITIATIVE**

*Started in Bridgeport by young artists, My City sells city-branded merchandise that promotes pride in self, craft, community in Connecticut.*

### **NEW HAVEN COUNTS**

*New Haven Counts seeks to create young mathematicians and entrepreneurs in New Haven through targeted, focused curricula and a group of engaged, qualified volunteers.*

### **ROCK THE BEAT DJ CAMP**

*The first DJ Camp in Connecticut, Rock the Beat teaches the "art" of DJing and boosts confidence and self-esteem through an engaging curriculum that is aligned with Common Core Standards in reading, writing, and math.*

### **SCIKIT**

*SciKit is a subscription service that allows high school teachers to rent hands-on STEM education kits at an affordable monthly rate.*



### **EXTRA YARD**

*Extra Yard provides accessible, college preparation support to high-school students and student athletes. Extra Yard's SAT Prep course alone has helped students jump over 200 points on their SAT scores.*

### **HOMECOOKED**

*Homecooked is a web and mobile platform that enables users to book meals in the homes of talented local chefs. Homecooked's recommendation algorithm is their main technical innovation, but the core value is a unique social experience that brings diners from the digital world into the physical world of community.*

### **LOVE FED NEW HAVEN**

*Love Fed New Haven aims to equip people with the tools and supplies to grow their own food with free garden beds, consulting, and food-scaping services. Their mission is to help our neighborhoods grow their own food at home and cultivate a growing community within New Haven to work towards alleviating food insecurity and practicing food sovereignty sustainably.*

### **NASTY WOMEN CONNECTICUT**

*Nasty Women Connecticut provides a platform of inclusion and community-building through the arts—to elevate the voices of Connecticut artists through popular art exhibitions, film festivals, panel discussions, programs, and more.*

### **PASCALE'S BODY CARE**

*Pascale's Body Care creates products—including body butters, body oil, lip balm, and deodorant—that are created with 100% certified organic ingredients. Their goals are to promote self-care and decolonize wellness by providing high quality body care products at an affordable cost.*

### **PEELS & WHEELS COMPOSTING**

*Peels & Wheels Composting is a neighborhood-scale operation that composts households food waste for residents, schools and small businesses who want to compost but can't or don't have the means to do so.*



**INSPIRED COMMUNITIES, INC.**

*Inspired Communities aims to foster neighborhood-level and citywide collaborations to help leaders build community capacity and infrastructure — starting in Newhallville.*

**RESTEK**

*Restek aims to drive firefighter safety and efficiency by putting reliable and intuitive response software in their hands.*

**JONG ARMS**

*Jong Arms aims to build portable, affordable martial arts training equipment — starting with the Muk Yan Jong.*

**HAVENLY**

*Havenly employs refugee chefs to produce, market, and sell high quality snacks in college cities while preparing them for employment in the food industry with culinary training, ESL classes, and interview prep.*

**KAMILI’S KIDS YOUTH DEVELOPMENT**

*Kamili’s Kids Youth Development is a camp that aims to empower children of color, ages 10–14, through physical, social and emotional learning, and entrepreneurial activities.*

**HAVEN’S HARVEST**

*Haven’s Harvest aims to create a network of organizations, businesses, and institutions to direct excess food to individuals and families instead of landfills.*

**SOL MUSIC & MEDIA**

*Sol Music & Media aims to build products to empower songwriters across the country to build their own brand and business — starting with a subscription box service called “Brand Made Creatives Box”.*



### **THREADS BY TEA**

*Threads by Tea is bespoke wearable art, handcrafted to inspire, empower, and motivate clients to take risks in fashion and express themselves.*

### **DREAMKIT**

*DreamKit is a web-based app for homeless youth to catalogue their lived experiences. DreamKit's platform allows youth to receive support at multiple levels, which can improve their health and education opportunities that prepares them to exit homelessness quickly and permanently.*

### **NESTL**

*Nestl utilizes adaptive modifications and prefabrication to create affordable, turn-key lactation rooms for the workplace. Nestl's mission is to create environmental solutions that facilitate greater workplace inclusion, aiming for simple implementation and low impact to employers, with maximum improvement for employees.*

### **EMERGENT ACCESS SERVICES**

*Emergent Access Services is a mobile app that will provide Emergency Room patients with service timelines, wait statuses, and more before their hospital visit — addressing time management issues that affect emergency departments nationwide.*

### **STOLL ENTERPRISES**

*Stoll Enterprises is an event management company specializing in sports events, as well as coaching, team building, and leadership development. Through the combination of sports and event marketing, they aim to positively promote healthy, well-balanced, and active communities.*

### **ZEN ZILLA YOGA AND WELLNESS**

*Zen Zilla Yoga and Wellness offers affordable individual and group guided meditation, yoga, and mindfulness sessions to address the disparities in access to resources for health and wellness in the black community, starting with youth.*



This year, Collab partnered with a local nonprofit CitySeed to develop a **Food Business Accelerator** — a statewide accelerator for Connecticut early stage food entrepreneurs.

### **AFRICAN DIASPORA MARKET**

*A brick and mortar food market that celebrates African Diaspora food heritage and whole body products for wellness. The market will encourage opportunities for people of color as a core value.*

### **DAVE'S ANGRY SAUCE**

*A line of vinegar-based hot sauces with different flavors and levels of heat made with mostly organic, natural ingredients.*

### **DREAM PUFFS**

*A line of puffs with a variety of flavors — some vegan, some savory, some sweet — all with a healthy twist.*

### **ELM CITY ROASTER & BISTRO**

*A local coffee roaster providing globally source coffee, freshly roasted here in New Haven, CT.*

### **FATEMA'S KITCHEN**

*A Syrian food truck serving healthy, delicious, and affordable meze and mana'eesh, entrees like fried Kebbeh, and desserts like qatayef and baklava.*

### **FOR THE LOVE OF FOOD**

*A product line of Superfood Energy Balls — a chewy, bite-sized treat sweetened from dried fruits with a surprise pop of flavor from the combination of healthy, delicious ingredients.*

### **IN GOOD FAITH**

*A product line of fresh noodles made with local eggs and flour — and tons of love. These noodles will be more accessible for those in the New Haven area.*

### **KAWIT!**

*A restaurant offering innovative and accessible Filipino food — affording customers the ability to enjoy food and history at the same time.*

### **KINA'S KITCHEN**

*A Haitian food truck, serving delicious Haitian twists on American dishes and American twists on Haitian dishes using seasonal, local ingredients.*

### **PARVINE'S PLACE**

*Homemade and versatile chutneys with flavors like date, jalapeno, coconut, lemon, Mauritian vegetable, and more.*

### **PUPUSERIA CO-OP**

*A worker-owned cooperative food truck serving Salvadorian pupusas (thick stuffed corn tortillas).*

### **REPUBLIC OF EMPANADAS**

*A food cart providing gourmet empanadas — from seasonal lobster rolls empanadas in the summer or pumpkin in the fall.*

### **ROYAL VEGAN**

*A vegan food truck with a signature meat replacement — fried oyster mushrooms that are satisfying, delicious, and versatile.*

### **SOPA!**

*A "soup-scription" service delivering warm, healing, homemade soups to the New Haven area.*

### **VEGAN AHAVA**

*A food truck serving delicious, comforting vegan soul food.*



# Team

*A description of the team members,  
mentors, and partners behind Collab's  
work*



**CAROLINE SMITH**  
**CO-FOUNDER & CO-DIRECTOR**

Caroline is the Co-Founder and Co-Director of Collab. She also is the Founder of New Haven Bike Month — an effort to build bicycle justice through neighborhood empowerment. Additionally, she was elected the Chair of the Downtown-Wooster Square Community Management Team.

Before Collab, Caroline was the Co-Director of Marketing at SeeClickFix, a civic technology company that connects neighbors with their local governments. She's received Connecticut Magazine's 40 Under 40, Yale Chairman's Award, the City of New Haven Individual Innovator Award, BikeWalk CT's People's Choice Award, and Yale Seton Elm-Ivy Award for her work.

**MARGARET LEE**  
**CO-FOUNDER & CO-DIRECTOR**

Margaret is the Co-Founder and Co-Director of Collab. She also serves as the Chair of the Elm City Innovation Collaborative and Commissioner on the City of New Haven Economic Development Commission.

Before Collab, Margaret was the Co-Director of Marketing at SeeClickFix, a civic technology company that connects neighbors and local governments. Before that, she worked at the Yale Entrepreneurship Institute (now the Tsai Center for Innovative Thinking at Yale) where she managed Yale's academic year and summer accelerators, seeing through over 100 student and faculty ventures. She helped launch the pilot of the Social Venture Creation Program.

**In 2019, both Caroline and Margaret received New Haven Biz's Women in Business Award.**

Collab is supported and funded by organizations **we are proud to work with.**



**CTNext** is a public private partnership that fosters an agile, open, and networked entrepreneurship community that helps Connecticut's startups and small businesses find the resources to grow.



**The Elm City Innovation Collaborative** is a volunteer organization focused on promoting, connecting, and enabling the ideas and talents that fuel the future of New Haven's diverse innovation sectors.



**The Community Foundation for Greater New Haven** creates positive and sustainable change in Connecticut's Greater New Haven region by increasing the amount of and enhancing the impact of community philanthropy.



**Guilford Savings Bank** has been serving the financial needs of individuals, families, and businesses in Connecticut for 140 years.

**Co-Capital Investors**

**Co-Capital Investors** is dedicated to investing in local entrepreneurs for regional job growth.

Collab is proud to receive partnership support from **a diversity of organizations.**



**The Economic Development Corporation of New Haven** is a private, non-profit organization, dedicated to business and economic development in New Haven.



**The New Haven Free Public Library's Ives Squared** makes technology and entrepreneurship accessible in a beautiful, public library setting.



**CitySeed** engages the community in growing an equitable, local food system that promotes economic development, community development and sustainable agriculture.



EXPERIENCE THAT COUNTS  
ASSURANCE · TAX · ADVISORY SERVICES



Collab is grateful for the support to our ventures from our **Collab Mentor Network.**



**KIA LEVEY BURDEN**  
President  
Launch Consulting



**SAM GREENBERG**  
Co-Founder  
Y2Y



**ELLEN SU**  
Co-Founder  
Wellinks



**BRIAN ARDÓN**  
Program Manager  
Lenovo



**TAGAN ENGEL**  
Founder  
The Table Underground



**RANDI RENEE**  
Co-Founder  
The Urban Collective



**ANDY GREENAWALT**  
CEO  
OdinText



**REV. KEVIN EWING**  
Founder  
Baobab Tree Studios



**ANTHONY ALLEN**  
Founder  
A Tipping Point



**KAREN LENAHAN**  
Founder  
Small Kitchen, Big Taste



**RICHARD HUNT**  
Venture Mentor-In-Residence  
Tsai CITY



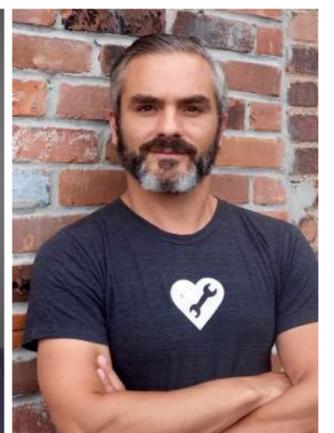
**SLATE BALLARD**  
Co-Founder  
The State House



**HELEN KAUDER**  
Executive Director  
Artspace



**AL BHATT**  
Founder  
UofNext



**BEN BERKOWITZ**  
Co-Founder  
SeeClickFix

# Collab is thankful for our **Collab Board members, advisors, and reviewers.**



**ISA MUJAHID**  
*Founder  
 CTCORE-Organize  
 Now!  
 Collab Board Member*



**ANIKA SINGH LEMAR**  
*Clinical Associate  
 Professor  
 Yale Law School  
 Collab Board Member*



**DREW ALDEN**  
*Sr VP:Investments/  
 CFO  
 CFGNH  
 Collab Advisor*



**LEE CRUZ**  
*Community Outreach  
 Director  
 CFGNH  
 Collab Reviewer*



**LEELA BHASHYAM**  
*Head of Impact  
 Liberty & Co  
 Collab Advisor*



**SADE JEAN-JACQUES**  
*Founder  
 Pascale's Body Care  
 Collab Graduate*



**KARLA LINDQUIST**  
*Deputy TT&P Director  
 City of New Haven  
 Collab Board Member*



**DAVID SALINAS**  
*Founder  
 District  
 Collab Advisor*



**DOMINGO MEDINA**  
*Founder  
 Peels & Wheels  
 Composting  
 Collab Graduate*



**DAVID GOLDBLUM**  
*President  
 The Hurley Group  
 Collab Reviewer*



**GIGI WALKER**  
*COO  
 ConnCAT  
 Collab Reviewer*



**SCOTT HURWITZ**  
*Partner  
 Hurwitz and Hurwitz  
 LLC  
 Collab Reviewer*





[team@collabnewhaven.org](mailto:team@collabnewhaven.org)  
[collabnewhaven.org](http://collabnewhaven.org)

