



# 180Degrees

C O N S U L T I N G



# **BRIDGE OF GRACE**

## **Presented To:**

Javier Mondragon and Réna Bradley  
*Bridge of Grace*

## **Prepared By:**

**180 Degrees Consulting – Indiana University**

*Asmita Baskar*  
*Client Lead*

*Maitreyee Malpekar*  
*Engagement Lead*

*Bhavika Khamesra*  
*Senior Consultant*

*Adam Prichard*  
*Senior Consultant*

*Brooklyn Runte*  
*Junior Consultant*

*Adam Aribi*  
*Junior Consultant*

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# Table of Contents

<b>EXECUTIVE SUMMARY .....</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>PROJECT BRIEF.....</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>PROJECT APPROACH.....</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>RESEARCH EXISTING MODELS.....</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>GAIN COMMUNITY INSIGHT .....</b>	<b>12</b>
<b>EXPLORE LONG-TERM SUCCESS .....</b>	<b>19</b>
<b>WORKS CITED .....</b>	<b>22</b>

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

### **Purpose of the Report**

The purpose of this report is to summarize key findings over the course of the semester-long project conducted by the 180 Degrees Consulting Team at Indiana University on behalf of the client, Bridge of Grace. The team was tasked researching existing business incubator models, identifying information gathering methods that would best suit the community, and compiling a list of grants for long-term funding.

**Bridge of Grace can Gain Success from Replicating Existing Models:** Six models around the country were identified based on the similarity to the model that Bridge of Grace is trying to establish for the business incubator market. Research was conducted into models such as The Berkeley Flea Market, West Side Bazaar, Carrboro Market, Acorn Farmers Market, Small Business Expo, and Fort Wayne Farmers Market. Common themes of recommendations that arose from the models identified were using partnerships and private and public sponsorship support, offering online selling capabilities and a market handbook, and connecting vendors at the market through trainings and business directories.

**Phone Calls, Town Halls, and Paper Surveys Effectively Gather Information:** Research into the pros and cons of different information gathering methods provided insight into potential options Bridge of Grace can explore when reaching out to local businesses and residents in the community. Phone calls, town halls, and paper surveys were identified as the most effective strategies for collecting information based on information Bridge of Grace can learn about from respondents, level of detail in responses, and opportunity to develop long-lasting relationships with respondents after gathering information.

**Grants for Community Development Organizations are Beneficial:** A list of grants at the state and national level that Bridge of Grace can apply for must be compiled by the team. We utilized grant databases to search for public and private grants, compared award amounts and eligibility criterion, and assessed past grant recipients to narrow down a list of grants that are most applicable to Bridge of Grace. The three grants our team highly recommends Bridge of Grace apply for is the Small Business Administration PRIME grant, The Ackerman Foundation grant, and The Ball Brothers Foundation grant.

### **Conclusion**

Bridge of Grace is expanding its efforts to cement ideas for the upcoming business incubator market. By implementing the strategies recommended by our team, Bridge of Grace can further maximize opportunities to grow and succeed with the operations of the business incubator market.

## PROJECT BRIEF

Beginning the project, the 180 Degrees Consulting team was tasked with the following objectives:

**Research Existing Models:** Existing business incubator and farmers market models around the country need to be identified that align with Bridge of Grace's three key goals: supporting and strengthening existing local businesses, affirming the significance in others, and wealth building. Our team looked specifically for information on finances, operations, marketing, and general strategy. A comparison of similarities and differences enabled the team to compile recommendations for Bridge of Grace that best aligned with the goals set forth for the business incubator market.

**Gain Community Insight:** Different methods to gather information from the community must be researched to better understand which methods Bridge of Grace should use when communicating with residents of the Southeast Fort Wayne area. We identified pros and cons for each research method identified, weighed the practicality of implementing the research method, and solidified recommendations for a strategy that Bridge of Grace can use when communicating with locals.

**Explore Long-Term Success:** State-level and national-level grants must be identified that support Bridge of Grace's mission and the initiatives Bridge of Grace supports. Our team used public and private grant databases to research into different grants that were applicable to Bridge of Grace. After looking at past grant recipients and application requirements, potential grants were identified.

## PROJECT APPROACH

We began by identifying different business incubators and markets across the country that operated a similar model to the market that Bridge of Grace is trying to establish. Once we finalized our recommendations for the research into models, our team shifted the project focus to researching information gathering methods. We reached out to local businesses in the area nearby the proposed location for the business incubator market and asked questions to better understand their operating conditions. Finally, our team came together to create a list of grants at the state and national level that Bridge of Grace can apply for.

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# RESEARCH EXISTING MODELS

## RESEARCH EXISTING MODELS

### APPROACH TO IDENTIFYING MODELS

Models were chosen based on similarity to Bridge of Grace's vision for the business incubator market.

The six models chosen (The Berkeley Flea Market, West Side Bazaar, Carrboro Market, Acorn Farmers Market, Small Business Expo, and Fort Wayne Farmers Market) are successful in at least one of the key factors of Bridge of Grace's business incubator market. The models were assessed on factors such as financing, operations, marketing, strategy, mentorship, and their similarities to either Bridge of Grace or the southeast Fort Wayne community.

### MODEL 1: BERKELEY FLEA MARKET

The Berkeley Flea Market model shows that Bridge of Grace can leverage online selling platforms.

The Berkeley Flea Market was founded on the south side of Berkeley, CA in 1973. It has over 70 vendors. The vendors have the opportunity to sell their products every weekend from 7 am to 4 pm at the market. Vendors' contact information (phone, email, and/or social media) is also displayed on the website so that customers can contact them directly to make purchases even when the market is not in operation.

The market is financed through multiple sources. There is a donation tab on the website where community members can donate to the market. The Berkeley Flea Market also offers sponsorship opportunities to businesses. Businesses pay a fee to have their logos featured around the market and on the website. Sponsors are also in market advertisements. Finally, vendors must pay a flat rate of \$35 a day to use a spot at the marketplace. This rate provides them with an 8' x 21' space where they can sell their merchandise. The flat rate means that vendors can keep all the revenue they earn from their sales. To involve the community, the Berkeley Flea Market hosts cultural activities where artists can show off their talents. These activities include drum circles, open mics, and fashion walks. The artists are found either through vendor/organization connections or marketing efforts. The market's website contains information about logistics as well as an application for vendors. Radio ads and social media (Instagram and Facebook) are also used to advertise to the community. The social media posts generally update the viewer on activities happening at the market, along with vendor information.

Bridge of Grace's future business incubator market is similar to the Berkeley Flea Market since both markets aim to connect budding entrepreneurs with a stable customer base. The south side of Berkeley and the southeast area of Fort Wayne are also similar in their demographics and close sense of community. However, the Berkeley Flea Market—with its 70+ vendors—is larger than what Bridge of Grace is initially working towards. They also do not have a mentorship program, which is important for Bridge of Grace to implement in their incubator

### MODEL 2: WEST SIDE BAZAAR

**The West Side Bazaar model demonstrates how clear information sharing with vendors can provide better training opportunities, and marketing efforts should extend out beyond the Southeast Fort Wayne Area.**

The West Side Bazaar is a market in West Buffalo, NY that is run by the Westminster Economic Development Initiative (WEDI). The market is held in a building that WEDI purchased from a \$100,000 grant that houses thirteen vendors in total. The Bazaar started off as an outdoor, seasonal market with booths and tables, but funding later enabled the West Side Bazaar to gain funding for permanent storefronts for their vendors. Some of the key takeaways our team identified about the West Side Bazaar were the fact that marketing and outreach efforts extended past a 10-mile radius of the market and that vendors at the market continuously shared their business performance information with market organizers for constant feedback and training – two takeaways that Bridge of Grace can apply to the market they are trying to establish.

Vendors have a fee to set up a booth at the market, which WEDI has established at a rate that is below the market. WEDI managed to obtain a \$100,000 grant to fund the Bazaar, which allowed for the purchase of an old warehouse in the West Buffalo area that now houses the bazaar. In terms of operations, the WEDI bazaar has direct control in running the bazaar seven days a week throughout the year now that WEDI has ownership of the building. Each of the vendors that sell at the market are required to share their business performance information with the market organizers. This allows WEDI to provide apt trainings and lesson plans to vendors at the market on how they can sustainably build their businesses. Prior to WEDI owning the building, all equipment for the tents and booths were shared among the vendors. With marketing, WEDI placed a heavy focus on marketing towards the larger Buffalo community and to neighboring towns to ensure a steady stream of bazaar passengers always came to the market. Overall, WEDI's strategy was to have vendors go through an extensive training program to learn about the best ways to conduct business, and market organizers encouraged vendors to openly share information and collaborate with one another for partnerships.

Some of the similarities between the model that WEDI ran and the one Bridge of Grace is aiming for is in the fact that WEDI's reach extended beyond West Buffalo and that WEDI had a focus on building a diverse, local community. WEDI's organization structure, mission, and goals are very similarly aligned with the end-goals Bridge of Grace is trying to achieve, and the demographics WEDI serves are comparable to that of Southeast Fort Wayne. Some of the differences between the WEDI model that would not align with Bridge of Grace is in the fact that all stages of business incubation involved, and that the bazaar is run through a building that WEDI owns. The grant funded the building, which is a large capital-intensive investment, and WEDI's efforts helped not only new, aspiring entrepreneurs but also existing businesses as well.

### **MODEL 3: FORT WAYNE FARMERS MARKET**

**The Fort Wayne Farmers Market shows the need for a strong social media presence for marketing efforts and the use of a market handbook to guide vendors and customers.**

The Fort Wayne Farmers Market (FWFM) is an established farmers market in Indiana that has a primary focus on selling produce products from local farmers. FWFM has experienced success because of their heavy marketing emphasis through social media and their strong organization through a market handbook for vendors and customers. They have been able to grow their

market to run year-round and have gained around 50 vendors since 2012 specifically through their strong operations and marketing strategies.

Financially, FWFM charges their vendors in quarterly payments based upon what seasons of the farmers market the vendor will participate in. This is to ensure that FWFM can cover the costs of running the market, the largest being the location. All vendors are required to have adequate insurance to cover all vending and food risk there may be. Moving on to operations, FWFM has excelled because of their organizational market handbook. The market handbook holds all information needed for both customers and vendors. For example, how vendors will be evaluated for entry to the market, market layout, gift card opportunities, the staff layout, contact information, insurance information, products that are allowed/not allowed, and general guidance for vendors who want to get involved but do not know where to start. FWFM has capitalized in marketing through social media because of the low cost and popularity. They have linked Instagram and Twitter accounts to share news about the market. They also have created a private Facebook group for just the vendors of the market to encourage community and communication within the group. All this information is on their website, which is another essential key to a successful market. Websites include vendor information, location, times, and contact information along with other information valuable to potential vendors or customers. One vital piece that FWFM has implemented with strategy is through opportunities to draw in new customers. They do this because of the central location of the market, incorporating live music, and inviting known small businesses from around the community to vend.

Bridge of Grace and Fort Wayne Farmers Market are both located in Fort Wayne which was the biggest similarity for the two. Like the business incubator, FWFM has been a great opportunity for community growth within the Fort Wayne area. Both have also wanted inclusion of small businesses with an emphasis on bringing in coffee shops. The differences are that FWFM is year-round, where they switch locations based on the season. FWFM is a produce market, where only food is sold. Also, FWFM has been around for 10 years, so it is established in the community with many partners.

#### **MODEL 4: CARRBORO FARMERS MARKET**

**The Carrboro Farmers Market shows how Bridge of Grace can benefit from local businesses and support from the community for funding marketing and printing, and the market organizers can utilize a volunteering program to help with running the market.**

The Carrboro Farmers market is reliant on local businesses for printing, marketing, and sponsorships to help fund the market. Carrboro has been considered as an approved service-learning site and offers a volunteering program, which can be useful for Bridge of Grace's model. The market focuses on uplifting the community and offers a scholarship program.

Local Business, Lazer image have donated over \$10,000 worth of printing services to the Market over the years through printing flyers, signs, banners etc. The Carrboro Farmers' Market is an approved Service-Learning Site. The volunteers participate in special events or assisting at the Market welcome booth. They have a variety of programs that build their image in the community ranging from Food Assistance Programs and Healthy Food Incentives to Youth Programming and School Events. Every Saturday Market Day during the year, the Carrboro Farmers' Market collaborates with Orange County Solid Waste Management and the Town of Carrboro to provide a free food waste drop-off for residents and Farmers' Market attendees. Both food

scraps (including vegetable scraps, meat, bones, and dairy) as well as food-related paper such as paper napkins and paper plates are accepted. All of the sellers at Market live and produce their goods within 50 miles of Market. In fact, the average distance that food travels to Market is just 25 miles. The market accepts applications for guest vendors on a rolling basis by invitation only. Only specialty food businesses selling products that are underrepresented and in high demand are invited to apply.

It's a farmers' market: vendors sell a wide selection of the highest quality locally grown produce, pasture raised meats, eggs, cheeses, breads, pastries, woodwork, metalwork, pottery, woven rugs, baskets, and much more. The market has been established for more than 40 years.

### **MODEL 5: ACORN FARMERS MARKET**

**The Acorn Farmers Market model demonstrates how a fixed fee method for marketing and promotions establishes continuity, and both public and private support will help the market thrive.**

The Acorn Farmers Market in Manchester, Michigan was founded with a mission to support the economic viability of area farmers. They opened a store that farmers can apply to have their products in. They also host a traditional outdoor farmers market. It was founded in 2019 and has been successful since opening.

This farmer's market is exciting because of the two-pronged way of doing business. Their operations are the store/café as well as their traditional farmer's market. The market itself was financed through local donations, crowdfunding, and grants. For vendors, there are no fees related to getting their product on the shelves of the café. There is an \$8 tent fee to be part of the traditional farmer's market. Regarding marketing, Acorn allocates 1.5% of gross sales for marketing and promotion. This will keep the marketing money growing at the same rate as the overall marketplace. Their overall strategy started by attempting to merge the ideas from two other nearby markets. From there, they have worked to plan partnerships with organizations that have similar goals and try to garner public and private support. Overall, it has worked well for Acorn thus far.

Acorn is very community-focused just like Bridge of Grace intends to be. Both markets have a core focus to help people. For Acorn, they want to help the area farmers have a steady stream of income whenever they have crops in supply. In the case of Bridge of Grace, they want inexperienced entrepreneurs to have opportunities to develop their product and business acumen. The main difference of the two is the way Acorn operates a store along with their traditional market. This difference goes along with the way each market is helping in different areas. Since Acorn is so food-focused, the store makes a lot of sense.

### **MODEL 6: SMALL BUSINESS EXPO**

**The Small Business Expo is an example of how structured trainings and support for vendors at the market will help them with long-term success.**

When analyzing the Small Business Expo model and overall strategy, there are various takeaways to be brought up and applied to Bridge of Grace. First off, there is a heavy reliance on sponsors – this is extremely important and should be a similar theme for Bridge of Grace's incubator event.

Since Bridge of Grace is looking to support small and local businesses, there is no point of drawing funds away from them in hopes of providing them with funds--magazines, firms, large companies, and more should be the main ones to fund this event. Next, the second main takeaway for Bridge of Grace from this expo is to host educational workshops and tutorials. These are extremely important, as they provide small businesses and owners with the skill sets, tools, and knowledge that they need to propel their businesses and effectively run them.

There are a multitude of factors that contribute to the success of the Small Business Expo. It has a heavy reliance on sponsors and is almost entirely funded. The main two drivers are sponsors and booth spots; the booth exhibitors pay for spots, while the expo is free to attend to small business owners. Since it is free to attend, there is a very good ROI. There are seminars presented by industry experts, speed networking sessions, connections with industry leaders for product and service deals, and hosts a variety of partnerships, newspapers, and other forms of media. The Expo also sends material out through their email list of 1.2 million+ subscribers and provides free logos and footage (HD) upon request. Regarding strategy, it is centered around supporting small businesses, with primary themes of networking and education.

The Small Business Expo and the Bridge of Grace Business Incubator model have a variety of similarities, as they both are mainly geared towards supporting small business owners, start-ups, and entrepreneurs. However, there are some key differences; the Small Business Expo is far from locally focused, as it is hosted in different cities across the nation at different weekends. In addition, the expo has millions of email subscribers, hosts workshops for education, and holds considerable keynote speakers.

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# GAIN COMMUNITY INSIGHT

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## APPROACH TO CONTACTING AND IDENTIFYING LOCAL BUSINESSES

**Local businesses around the proposed marketplace location were interviewed.**

Per Bridge of Grace's instruction, the 180 Degrees Consulting team identified local businesses in southeast Fort Wayne on streets close to the future location of the business incubator market. These streets included South Hanna Road, Pettit Avenue, Decatur Road, Paulding Road, and Lafayette Street. The team searched for small businesses that would have interest in participating in the market or would want to provide resources to help with the market. The team conducted outreach either through phone calls or emails, depending on the contact information of the business. The businesses were asked about current partnerships with organizations in the community, potential areas of improvement in their surroundings, and their thoughts and considerations for a business incubator market on Fairfax Avenue.

## KEY TAKEAWAYS FROM GATHERING COMMUNITY INSIGHT

**Overall, sentiment about the establishment of a business incubator was positive in the community.**

The small businesses in southeast Fort Wayne had thoughts on improvements that could help business in the community, what they look for in partnerships, and their interest in a business incubator market. A common area of improvement among the businesses was the lack of foot traffic in the area, as this leads to fewer customers. Owners also believe that local government initiatives should prioritize the south and southeast Fort Wayne area, as well as increase the opportunities for life sustaining work. Finally, there is a large senior community, so businesses in the area can do a better job catering to them.

Many small businesses look for productive, symbiotic relationships with organizations that have similar goals and missions to their own. Organizations that support the local community are valued. In these partnerships, support can include monetary, product, or gift certificate donations. While small businesses are open to partnerships with non-profits, many need further details about the business incubator market to accurately gauge interest. These businesses would like for Bridge of Grace to provide the basic necessities, attractions, and amenities to create an open and inviting space.

## INFORMATION GATHERING METHODS

### Handwritten Paper Surveys

Handwritten surveys are printed pieces of paper with a multitude of fill-in-the-blank responses. They are commonly very quick and easy to fill out to make best use of them.

Handwritten surveys carry their pros and cons just like anything else. Some advantages include a generally higher response rate than online surveys, participants feel more anonymous so will likely give more honest feedback, they are easy to distribute, and are suitable for people who may not

be tech-savvy. Some disadvantages would be how labor intensive it is to read them all after they have been filled out as well as the way paper surveys can't dynamically change. Online surveys can give different questions to someone who answers "yes" to a previous question than to someone who answered "no".

These surveys are commonly used to log customer satisfaction, employee satisfaction, or to find public consensus. You will find paper surveys in retail stores, restaurants, and hotels most commonly. These will be useful for Bridge of Grace at the actual market. Frequent marketgoers could fill them out to ask for changes or additions to the way the market is run.

### Text and Email Surveys

As some of the oldest and most used forms of information gathering, text and email surveys have proven to be very reliable. They consist of sending mass surveys to a set list of email addresses and phone numbers. They tend to receive quick and applicable responses, especially when there is an incentive offered.

These surveys are often very cheap to send out, are effective, and can be sent out to many recipients very quickly. They can also integrate multiple types and forms of data collection at once to garner reliable data. When used, the audience portfolio and reasoning for why they were chosen should be presented, as to draw up confidence and rapport. There should be a simple and clear subject line, incentives, estimated time to take it, and no spam or advertisement surrounding the surveys.

Due to people's short attention spans while on their phones and due to long spam emails, these surveys need to be short and very relevant to a certain topic. They are very effective for yes/no questions, as individuals can quickly answer the presented questions. This should not be used if deep and personal responses are wanted on a large scale, as not many people will devote an extensive amount of time and energy to answer in paragraphs if there is no respectable incentive to do so (coupons, freebies, etc.).

### Phone Surveys

Phone surveys are an information gathering method where the interviewer can ask the respondent questions over the phone that can be qualitative or quantitative in nature. If the interviewer has access to different respondents' phone numbers, then the interviewer is capable of extending a wide reach by contacting respondents from a distance.

The advantages of phone surveys is the fact that there is a very high response rate compared to other methods. Research shows that phone surveys yield a 39% response rate, which is significantly higher than other methods. Furthermore, phone surveys allow the interviewer to ask further probing questions to understand a clearer picture about the respondent's opinions and thoughts. Questions can be either quantitative or qualitative in nature, and the interviewer can access rich, detailed information. However, it is important for phone surveys to be conducted in the appropriate manner to yield the most success. The interviewer should use a standard script at the beginning and the end of the survey to ensure there is consistency. Introducing and concluding the interview differently could lead the respondent to react differently.

Phone surveys are the optimal choice in times when an organization or an individual who needs to be interviewed lack other forms of main communication but are accessible via phone. Communication

over the phone is widespread, so the reach the interviewer has is extended through phone contacts. Furthermore, not many people will have access to internet and are reliant on phone communication as their way of contributing to the survey. Phone surveys are not optimal for groups, particularly younger generations, who prefer low-touchpoint survey methods or do not want their identity to be tied to their survey responses.

### Town Halls

A town hall is an event where members of the community can ask questions to a person or an organization. Town halls can be in-person (either at a city hall, community center, public library, etc.) or they can be hosted virtually (Zoom, GoogleMeet, etc.). Due to their engaging nature, town halls can create a sense of community by giving the audience the opportunity to interact with leaders and get key questions answered. There can either be a panel discussion/presentation about the business incubator market followed by Q&A or open Q&A for the audience.

To host a town hall, it is important to plan ahead. The first step is to identify the objectives of the town hall, such as assessing interest, conveying information to the audience, or identifying community needs. Bridge of Grace must also identify who is speaking and/or moderating at the town hall. The date for the town hall should conflict with other important events, otherwise, it will be difficult to have a full audience. In order to ensure a strong turnout for the event, it is necessary to promote the town hall on social media or through the support of other organizations. Adding the town hall to the event calendar on the local Fort Wayne website or newspaper is a great way to get the word out in the community. During the actual event, Bridge of Grace needs to make the protocol and objectives clear to the audience, so that they understand how the town hall will be running. After the event, it is important to debrief the people who attended on how effective and useful the town hall was.

Town halls are appropriate when organizations have a large audience who is eager to learn more about the program. The leaders of the organization must also want to discuss with and hear from the audience. To host a town hall, Bridge of Grace needs a location for the town hall to take place, speakers/moderators who will interact with the audience at the event, and resources to market the town hall to their intended audience of potential vendors and small business owners in the Fort Wayne community.

### Focus Groups

Focus groups work best when finding qualitative data and understanding the “what” and “why” behind certain questions. A group of 4-10 participants gather with a question asker and several observers to write down information discussed. The person asking questions starts with probe questions which introduce the topic and make participants feel comfortable with sharing. Next, they go into follow up questions where the discussion goes into the “why and how” factors to understand the deeper meaning behind participants’ choices. After that there are exit questions that are open ended for participants to voice their ideas and opinions about parts of the conversation.

Some recommendations for focus groups go as follows. Recruiting people is most effective when there is an incentive of some type. When inviting people, anticipate a no-show rate of 10-20% so over inviting slightly is a must. To begin, have each participant sign a form that consents for their opinions to be used in the study. Focus groups should be diverse and include all potential demographics that may be affected in the idea discussed. Having a UX research plan is essential

for focus groups. This plan outlines the goals for the business, which are listed. Then, take these goals and expand them into research goals for the specific focus group. You should encourage people to share by creating a comfortable space and calling on people who have not spoken. Some things not to do are as follows. Do not rely on the findings of the group too much because it is the opinion of a smaller group, so making large decisions from focus group findings is not recommended. Do not read off a script, have a couple questions in case of lull in conversation, but go with the flow of conversation instead. The only person asking questions should be the question asker, the observers should not interfere. Lastly, do not spend too much time on one topic, instead make sure that each topic has equal time.

This method is most appropriate when the interviewer is trying to understand feelings, perceptions, and motivations behind opinions. Understanding why people react in a certain way is a great use of focus groups. Another great time to use focus groups is when the target audience is different than the decision makers, this way there are no communication barriers, and everyone can be on the same page. Focus groups are beneficial especially when information about behaviors and motivations are too complex to explain through a survey or a phone call. Focus groups can discuss topics for longer periods of time. When making small recommendations, focus groups are beneficial, but when making big decisions, focus groups are not recommended.

### Online Surveys

An online survey, also known as an internet survey, is a type of data collection method in which a set of survey questions is sent to a target sample and the members of that sample can respond to the questions through the internet. Respondents receive online surveys in a variety of formats, including email, website embedding, social media, and so on.

If you want to collect data on a variety of topics, send out several surveys. Don't pack in more than one line of questioning per survey. For instance, if you want to learn about people's eating habits, don't also ask about their clothing preferences; the answers might be related, but they should be addressed separately in separate surveys. You'll get a higher response rate, and more people will respond. Give survey takers checkboxes, lists, and scales to make their tasks easier to complete and calculate. (Short-answer text boxes should be available as an option.) Answer the questions in a logical, block-by-block manner. Limit respondents' time to 10 minutes or less to avoid overburdening them. After you've written the survey, time it to see what you're really asking the respondents to do. (I guarantee you'll underestimate how long it took you to finish.) It's also a good idea to run it through a few uninterested third parties to see if there's any ambiguous terminology.

When obtaining important, actionable data is a top priority, this survey should be conducted. Use if you want to lower costs: Online surveying has one major advantage: it is inexpensive. For as little as \$10 a month, online services like Constant Contact or SwiftPages provide survey resources to their customers, and you will be able to turn it on and off without losing data from previous surveys. SurveyMonkey.com, Surveygizmo.com, and Zoomerang.com are more robust alternatives.

### **METHODS BRIDGE OF GRACE SHOULD USE**

The three best information gathering options Bridge of Grace should use are phone surveys, town halls, and paper surveys.

### Phone Surveys

Phone surveys are useful for straightforward data collections. This type of survey will be useful for the initial community feedback since there is a 39% response rate. Bridge of Grace can create a script to gain insight into the Fort Wayne community. The phone surveys are optimal to use at times when Bridge of Grace cannot get face-to-face with an individual in the community, so phone surveys are especially helpful during the COVID-19 pandemic in reaching out to people safely and at a distance.

### Town Halls

Town Halls will allow Bridge of Grace to those previously surveyed over the phone, email, or online. They also allow the audience to ask questions and provide their own input in a less scripted dialogue. Hosting a town hall will also give an idea of how many people are seriously interested in the idea because those who are willing to attend clearly want to know more. Once post-pandemic conditions are safer and more in-person events and gatherings can be coordinated, Bridge of Grace can opt to use the Town Halls to gather people together and hear their opinions.

### Paper Surveys

Paper surveys can be effective as a reflection to an experience that a person has. After the market has been established, paper surveys can be used at the incubator market as exit surveys to focus on continued improvement. Marketgoers will have the opportunity to express what they like and dislike about the market. Bridge of Grace can evaluate that feedback and incorporate it into changes or additions to the business incubator market.

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# EXPLORE LONG-TERM SUCCESS

## EXPLORE LONG-TERM SUCCESS

### FACTORS OF CONSIDERATION FOR GRANTS

After brainstorming and consolidating research about grants, the team focused on expanding focus towards grants that Bridge of Grace can apply for. Further investigation into different grant programs indicated that eligibility criterion, deadlines, mission and values, funding history, and more varied from one grant's requirements to the next. To compare the grants that were the most feasible for Bridge of Grace to apply for, the following characteristics and factors were weighed.

#### Relevance of the idea

Our team recognized that many grant programs were largely mission and value driven. Thus, there needs to be a clear connection between the proposed project for Bridge of Grace to the goals and expectations of the grant providers, whether the provider is a public or private entity. This can be applicable to the business incubator market or to any of Bridge of Grace's other programming.

#### Geographic focus

Depending on whether the grant is a state or national offering, there are specific geographic requirements that are needed in the eligibility criterion. Indiana offers grants for establishing incubators only in economically disadvantaged areas of the state, while national grants are not as selective about the geographic focus of the nonprofit recipient of the grant.

#### Amount of the request

Some states fund small business incubators while other public and private sponsors award amounts for large-scale projects. Because Bridge of Grace is new to the business incubator market idea, the grant awards all vary in sizes based on the level of funding Bridge of Grace sees appropriate.

#### Funding history

Some grant donors are consistent with their funding year after year while others offer grants at different times on an unpredictable basis. Because of this, the team sought out grants that were more consistent with their grant funding and assessed the past recipients of the grant to ensure that Bridge of Grace has a high likelihood of obtaining the grant from the donor base.

#### Focus on the community

As an organization focused on neighborhood revitalization and community development, Bridge of Grace would qualify for numerous grants that have a large focus on the community and commitment to prosperity for locals within the community. Some grants were specific to the business incubator market program for economic development while others are focused on more generic neighborhood revitalization efforts.

#### Application process and deadlines

Our team investigated the application processes and deadlines for each of the grants identified. Some grants have approaching deadlines, which Bridge of Grace can either try for in the coming

weeks or apply for in future years. Other grants have opportunities available for funding without a deadline that do not have as complex of application processes but will have lower funding amounts.

## **GRANTS IDENTIFIED FOR BRIDGE OF GRACE**

### **Small Business Administration PRIME Grant**

The United States Small Business Administration offers a grant known as PRIME. This is a grant that allows individual enterprises or public, private, or nonprofits to apply under either track 1 or track 2. as a nonprofit organization that helps with developing other entrepreneurs and microenterprises, bridge of grace qualifies for the grant under track 2.

Past recipients of the Small Business Administration prime grant under tracks one and two were all committed towards building and revitalizing their local communities. Although this grant is not directly applicable for the business incubator market program at this time, bridge of grace can later on apply for this grant to provide microfinancing loans and solutions to the entrepreneurs and the vendors in the market who could potentially look for long term financing solutions for their businesses. Depending on the level of need within the community, award amounts in previous years to grant recipients of the prime award varied between \$100,000 to \$200,000. this is all based on how many microenterprise development organizations are identified that Bridge of Grace is seeking to help in the application process.

### **Ackerman Foundation Grant**

The Ackerman foundation is based in Indianapolis IN and awards a \$2000 to \$20,000 grant to foundations and organizations that aren't involved in community development efforts. Past recipients of these grants were similar to Bridge of Grace in their mission, values, and programming offered for the communities in which they work in.

To apply for the Ackerman foundation grant, Bridge of Grace is required to submit a proposal through a one-to-two-page letter to the Ackerman Foundation. This letter will detail information about the uses for the grant, the benefits of the grant funding for Bridge of Grace is programming, and the opportunities afforded for the people impacted by Bridge of Grace. After the Ackerman foundation reviews this information, then they will assess the level of funding for the grant appropriate to the organization between the award range.

### **Ball Brothers Foundation Grant**

The Ball Brothers Foundation offers two types of grants that organizations can apply for. General grants can be awarded, which provides an organization an amount between \$5,000 to \$100,000 based on their need and their intended use for the grant. this general grant has an application deadline. the other type of grant offered is the rapid grant , which provides an organization with up to \$5,000 in grant funding for operations. The rapid grant does not have an application deadline and can be applied for at any moment in the year for up to that \$5,000 amount in immediate funding if necessary.

Previous recipients of the Ball Brothers grants have all been active with community development and neighborhood revitalization, so bridge of grace has a high likelihood of obtaining this grant.

### **ADDITIONAL GRANTS TO CONSIDER**

While the three grants above are the most promising for Bridge of Grace, our team also came across a few other grant opportunities that could be beneficial.

#### **Froderman Foundation**

Requires a one page summary to be submitted to the grant review committee. Once approved, the committee will send a full grant application package.

#### **Community Markets Grant ([communitymarkets.com](http://communitymarkets.com))**

An Ohio-based community food market chain that offers a grant. The application for the grant is open to anyone who has submitted an initial questionnaire through the Community Markets website.

#### **Economic Development Administration**

Occasionally, economic development assistance programs are provided that give funds to foster job creation.

#### **Indiana GrantWatch**

A website that allows visitors to search a wide database of state-wide grants, submit an application, and review the eligibility requirements. An account with Indiana GrantWatch also maintains constant alerts of new grants available.

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