

# 2020

# Annual Report



 **Conductor**

## NOTE FROM THE TEAM

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In 2020, our Conductor community saw a new set of obstacles to overcome, while our team pivoted our services to continue to provide support in an ever-changing environment.

In this new environment, we've been able to add new team members, expand our services, and collaborate on a statewide, national, and global scale.

As we review 2020, we are humbled at the progress we've been able to make; we look forward to all that lies ahead in 2021 and beyond. Thank you for your continued support of the Conductor and entrepreneurship in Arkansas!

## PARTNERS

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## WHO WE ARE

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Conductor is a public-private partnership between Startup Junkie Consulting and the University of Central Arkansas. We empower entrepreneurs, makers, and innovators.

## OUR STORY

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**November 2016** - Startup Junkie Consulting DBA Conductor launches with the University of Central Arkansas as the founding partner

**March 2017** - Pledge from Conway Corporation to launch the Arnold Innovation Center, startup space to be operated by the Conductor

**September 2017** - Launch of UCA's Makerspace, Powered by the Conductor

**March 2018** - Establishment of the Conductor 10X Growth Accelerator program, in partnership with the State of Arkansas, Metova, and the Arkansas Economic Development Commission

**January 2019** - Conductor is awarded a regional innovation cluster contract through the Small Business Administration to expand offerings to 11 counties in Central Arkansas

**June 2020** - Partnered with Rural LISC to be a Kiva Trustee and endorse 0% interest loans for rural entrepreneurs

**July 2020** - Conductor selected to manage Ark Angel Alliance, the state's only active Angel Investor network

**October 2020** - Partnered with Main Street Arkansas on Level Up, a business development workshop and technical assistance series for downtown merchants and small businesses



**5,218**

participants  
reached through  
events & services

including

**358**

K-12 students



**94.7%**

of attendees reported  
they learned something  
new at Conductor  
activities

**85.1+**

Net Promoter Score



**71%**

of clients reported  
adding new products,  
services, or business  
lines in the past year

**60.4%**

of clients reported they  
interacted with the  
Conductor for COVID-19  
related information,  
support, or relief





*a year's overview*

# EVENT HIGHLIGHTS

**54** Entrepreneurship Webinars

**2** Pitch Competitions

**10** youth maker classes

**29** speaker series events

**8** Community Conversations

**23** Maker space webinars

# 2020 Highlights



## February

Hosted the first annual Arkansas High School Hackathon in partnership with the Arkansas Coding Academy



## May

Expanded our team with Miranda Daily, Event and Program Coordinator



## July

Selected to operate the Ark Angel Alliance to educate and increase angel investing in the state of Arkansas



## September

Partnered with Main Street Arkansas and the USDA to bring a new program to Main Street Businesses

## April

Hosted a Small Business Marketing Series webinar

## Small Business



## Marketing Series

## June

Conductor partnered as a LISC Trustee, endorsing borrowers to become eligible for Rural LISC's 1:1 match for 0% interest funds raised through Kiva

## RURAL LISC

## August

Completed the fourth cohort of the 10X Growth Accelerator program on a virtual platform

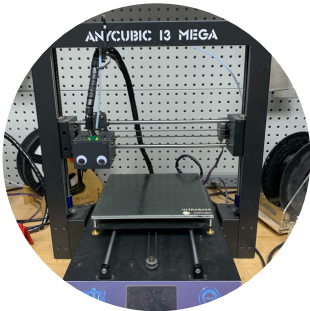


## December

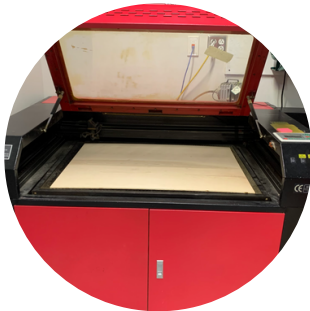
Authored "Creating Startup Junkies: Building Sustainable Venture Ecosystems in Unexpected Places" with our teammates from Startup Junkie Consulting



# UCA MAKERSPACE



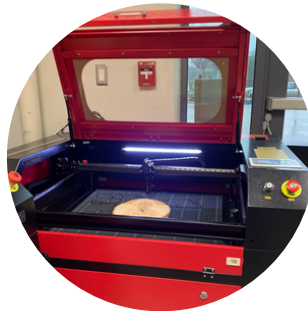
3D Printing



Small Bed Laser Engraving



CNC Machining



Large Bed Laser Engraver



Embroidery Machine

**1,280** appointments to utilize equipment in the UCA Makerspace

New Equipment Offerings

## HIGHLIGHTS:



Created a virtual tour of the Makerspace for students, teachers, and our community

358 K-12 students participated in a Makerspace event



Visited James Hayes at his Pine Bluff studio for a virtual Maker Professional event to see how he creates and sells his glass art

Partnered with the Innovation Hub for a virtual STEM camp during the summer for students







GLOBAL  
ENTREPRENEURSHIP  
WEEK USA  
ARKANSAS

**Conductor's Tiffany Henry  
& Grace Rains served as  
Arkansas State Coordinators  
for GEW 2020.**



**November 16-22, 2020**



### **Ecosystem.**

Conductor, Venture Center, ASBTDC, and Innovate Arkansas collaborated on a pitch competition for central Arkansas businesses with **\$18,500 in prizes!**



### **Education.**

Dr. Bernd Wurth, Lecturer at the Hunter Centre for Entrepreneurship at the University of Strathclyde Glasgow and Dr. Ron Duggins from the University of Central Arkansas hosted a discussion on **bridging the gap between educators and entrepreneurs.**



### **Policy.**

Governor Asa Hutchinson, Congressman French Hill, and Congressman Steve Womack participated in discussions around **entrepreneurial policy** and answered questions from entrepreneurs and small business owners.



### **Inclusion.**

Little Rock's community organizers hosted Carmen Portillo, owner of Cocoa Belle, to speak with Jeston George, Apptegy, Keith Fulks, Mr. Keith's Gourmet Kettle Corn, and Viana Jordan, 360Fit Nutrition, about their **experience starting a business.**

**6,000+ People Reached.**

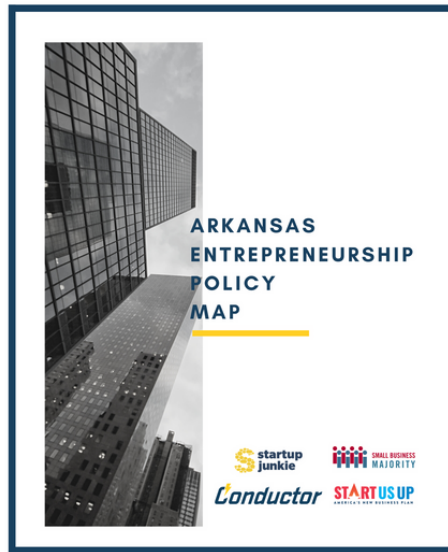
**40+ Events.**

**20+ Communities.**

**#GEWArkansas**



# P O L I C Y   A D V O C A C Y



Created the Arkansas Entrepreneurship Policy Map that is comprised of 60 policy recommendations, sent to lawmakers, to support a vibrant and thriving entrepreneurial ecosystem. The map is a collaborative effort between Conductor, Startup Junkie, Start Us Up, and the Small Business Majority.

Participated in conversations with policymakers, in partnership with the Kauffman Foundation and Engine at the local, state, and national level around policy recommendations that support the pillars of talent development, culture, community engagement, and capital.

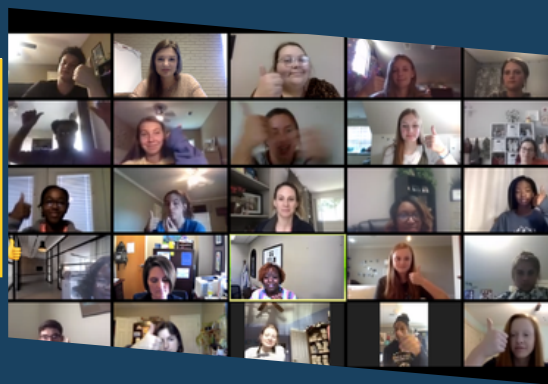
## PILLARS



Formed the Coalition to Advance Arkansas Entrepreneurship, a monthly discussion, of a non-partisan, collaborative group that aims to empower entrepreneurs and their supporters to identify deficits in the entrepreneurial landscape and recommend solutions that are accessible and actionable for local and state lawmakers.

# PIVOTING IN CRISIS

Conductor **pivoted** to all virtual events starting in March.



Released a survey to entrepreneurs and small business owners to understand the current state, **advocate for relief efforts** from policymakers, and provide resources to meet the need.

Consulted with businesses to help them pivot, as well as receive **PPP, EIDL, and other relief programs**.



Created *Accelerating Through a Slow Down* Series to discuss how businesses can **accelerate through the economic downtime**.

Continued to **feature entrepreneurs, innovators, and makers** and they pivoted through difficult times and preserved to serve their community.



Collaborated with cities, chambers, and other groups to **disseminate information on COVID relief programs**.

**"Very grateful for the support  
Conductor has  
provided our startup!"**

-Male Entrepreneur,  
Retail Product

**"You all are an incredible team  
and doing a wonderful job of  
keeping Arkansas' entrepreneurs  
growing! Thank you!!"**

-Female Entrepreneur,  
Consulting

**"Thankful for the help  
and guidance."**

- Female Entrepreneur,  
Retail

**"Conductor has such a great group of  
people, easy to work with and they are  
eager to share their knowledge. Great  
asset to our community!"**

- Female Entrepreneur, Nonprofit

**We are so fortunate to have an  
organization like Conductor to help  
small businesses get started, solve  
problems, and grow.**

-Male Entrepreneur, Finance,  
Insurance, and Real Estate

**Super thankful for this  
team and your  
investment in business  
in our area!**

- Male  
Entrepreneur, Retail  
Product

**"I have enjoyed working  
with the Maker Space staff  
it has been great!"**

- Male Entrepreneur,  
Manufacturing

**"The Conductor program was  
instrumental in our business  
success post COVID. We are  
very thankful for their effort to  
assist small businesses."**

- Male Entrepreneur, Marketing &  
Advertising

**"I love your programs  
and topics!"**

- Female Entrepreneur,  
Food Service

***Conductor***  
**FEEDBACK**



“Empowering  
entrepreneurs,  
makers, and  
innovators”

**#FullSteamAR**