



# ANNUAL REPORT

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# 2021





## NOTE FROM THE TEAM

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We are thrilled to share with you a copy of our 2021 Annual Report, which provides an overview of the past year and highlights of our initiatives and work.

In 2021, we continued to see many businesses navigate and recover from the effects of the pandemic and our team continued to bridge the gap with resources and support for the clients we serve. Our team grew our programs and initiatives to serve more entrepreneurs, innovators, and makers than ever before!

Thank you for your support of the Conductor and entrepreneurship in our state. We are proud to celebrate the end of a fantastic year and look forward to an incredible 2022!

## 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

**August 2021** - Conductor created LEAF: Latino Entrepreneurs & Families. This program focused on the entire families involvement in developing Spanish speaking businesses



participants reached through events & services

12,307

135.9% increase from 2020

K-12 students reached

2,208

516.8% increase from 2020

Percentage of attendees reported they learned something new at Conductor activities

100%

Net Promoter Score

100+

Percentage of Conductor clients that are Woman, Minority, or Veteran owned

62%

Percentage of clients who said interactions with the Conductor were beneficial to their business or business idea

80%

# 2021 Highlights

## Virtual Business Series

The Conway Area Chamber of Commerce and Conductor are partnering to bring you the 2021 Virtual Business Series! The series will feature a variety of subject matter experts on topics ranging from finances to cybersecurity to buying and selling a business and more.



### January

The Conductor partnered with the Conway Area Chamber of Commerce for the Virtual Business Series

### March

Conductor created the Arkansas Entrepreneurship Resource Map of organizations from across the state

Arkansas  
Entrepreneurship  
Resource Map



### Health Sciences Entrepreneurship Boot Camp



### May

Conductor hosted the Health Sciences Entrepreneurship Boot Camp for college students across the state

### July

Conductor welcomed Adam Patterson as the new Program Manager



### September

Conductor was awarded an SBA Grant to help expand the reach of the Health Sciences Entrepreneurship Bootcamp

### October

Grace Rains was named Executive Director of the Conductor



### October

Conductor welcomed Ericka Gutierrez as the new Outreach & Engagement Manager

### November

Conductor, UCA Athletics, and the Conway Convention & Visitor Bureau hosted the UCA 4+40 athletes pitch night for local sponsorship opportunities



# OUTBOUND ENGAGEMENTS



**AEDCE Presentation**



**Girl Scouts Expo**

**8,208**  
*Reached*



**El Grito**



**Conway Business Expo**

**12**

Innovation Sprints  
& Strategic  
Planning Sessions



**Toad Suck Daze Tinkerfest**



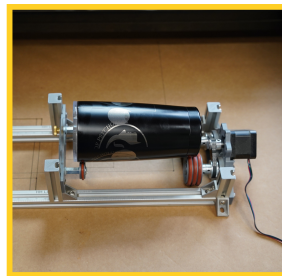
**Harrison Economic Development Summit**

# UCA MAKERSPACE

## New Equipment Offerings



All new 3D  
printers



Laser Engraver  
Rotary



SLA Printers

**369** Makerspace Walk-Ins

**1,746** appointments to  
utilize equipment

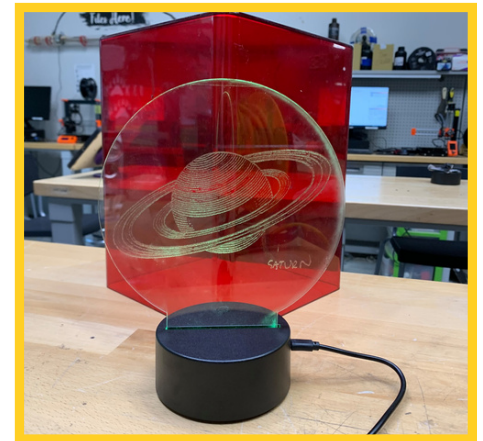


**258** virtual tour  
visitors



Inaugural STEAM Camp  
was held for 2nd through  
6th grade students to  
learn about innovation.

Maker, Cayla Baker, used  
the Makerspace for her  
OT Doctorate program.  
She created a gadget to  
help pick up golf balls  
without having to bend  
over.



The Makerspace held  
monthly workshops like  
the create your own LED  
acrylic sign.

# COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Conductor welcomed two **Community Engagement Officers** thanks to the Winthrop Rockefeller Foundation. Jimmy Warren and Tasha Moore focused on growing the Conductors mission to underserved entrepreneurs.



Conductor hosted **Minority Pitch Night** during Global Entrepreneurship Week. The Roots Agency and Rwanda Deluxe Coffee went home with cash prizes to assist their small businesses.



Conductor launched **LEAF: Latino Entrepreneurs & Families**. This program focused on Spanish-speaking families who own businesses. The content was presented in English and Spanish to involve the whole family in growing their business.

Conductor celebrated **Hispanic Heritage Month** by interviewing local Hispanic entrepreneurs. These videos showcased their business and themselves as a business owner.



Conductor celebrated **Minority Enterprise Week** in Arkansas by awarding 5 local minority entrepreneurs who have strengthened our community and operate fantastic businesses.



# EXPANDING CAPITAL ACCESS

## Kiva Loan Program

is a small business lending program to provide 1:1 matched, 0% interest loans to rural entrepreneurs.

Conductor endorsed two Kiva Loan recipients Garth and Gaston



S & R Investments Properties LLC received a full funded loan



"We were completely stunned by how quickly kiva lenders were willing to support our business and are humbled to be given such a valuable opportunity."

Conductor participated on the University of Arkansas Capital Scan Advisory Board in developing the inaugural 2020 Arkansas Capital Scan to better understand capital access and needs for entrepreneurs across the state.

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Grace Rains spoke at the Security & Exchange Commission Small Business Forum and contributed to the SEC Office of the Advocate for Small Business Annual Forum report which provides capital access policy recommendations to Congress.

## Conductor operates Ark Angel Alliance

supports active investment in startup companies and identify high potential deals, giving preference, but not limited to Arkansas-affiliated deals.



In 2021 Ark Angel Alliance hit \$500K in startup investment for the state of Arkansas.

# Celebrating 5 Cohorts of



68  
Total  
Companies

89% reported this is a valuable program for scalable Arkansas companies.

"We are so thankful for the opportunity; we met some awesome business owners and leaders across the state and we appreciate the opportunity to network and learn!"

89% feel more equipped to scale their business.

"I've become more focused. I've reduced the number of key objectives but aligning these with more aggressive short-term targets."

## 10X Success



### Teslar Software

"\$2 billion-asset bank leveraged fintech during PPP, expands partnership to boost efficiencies across broader commercial lending strategy."



### Power Technologies

"Hidden Treasure: Arkansas laser manufacture is a big player in industry and a family affair."



## Cohort 5 Highlights

"I am going to franchise!"

85% would recommend the 10X Growth Accelerator to a friend.



"This was a great experience. What I learned and the connections I made are invaluable."

93% said because of the 10X Growth Accelerator, I feel more equipped to scale my business.



My favorite part of the 10X Growth Accelerator was.. "the weekly "ah-ha!" moment. Each session had a valuable nugget of information that I could implement immediately in my business."

**"I am very grateful for this resource!!"**

Female Entrepreneur  
Legal Technology

**"The conductor is for everybody, every race, and every financial status. They have shown over and over again their willingness to help and go beyond to get you the training and connections you need to help start and grow your business."**

Female Entrepreneurs  
Retail

**"Great team and very helpful!"**

Male Entrepreneur  
Manufacturing

**"I love the way that you guys really care for the people you are working with. You feel like family, and you totally give support and great advice."**

Female Entrepreneur  
Retail

**"My business would not be able to function without the prototyping that the Makerspace has made available to me, and I have learned so much from the friendly staff and volunteers."**

Female Entrepreneur  
Retail

**"Services and the staff are excellent!"**

Female Entrepreneur,  
Manufacturing

**"10X is the best thing that has ever happened to our company!"**

Male Entrepreneur,  
Insurance Services

**"The Conductor does great work and I'm so proud Conway has such an amazing program."**

Female Entrepreneur,  
Media

**"The Conductor is a great local resource!"**

-Male Entrepreneur,  
IT

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



**Empowering  
entrepreneurs,  
makers, and  
innovators**

**#FullSteamAR**

