



Opportunity Finance Network: Member Profile



Community Capital Works / Philadelphia Development Partnership

Philadelphia, PA

Incorporated in 1998 as the lending affiliate of the Philadelphia Development Partnership (PDP), Community Capital Works believes that anyone can build their own business — provided they carry the right blend of determination, resources, and opportunity. PDP supports low- to moderate-income entrepreneurs in the five-county greater Philadelphia region, and provides more than 400 aspiring entrepreneurs and established small business owners each year with business training, one-on-one business counseling, access to peer networks, and small business loans.

Success Story: Rastareality International, Philadelphia, PA

A successful business contractor in her native Jamaica, Empress Hall-Lewis found herself living in a homeless shelter outside of Philadelphia when she began writing a business plan for her own store. With only 53 cents in her pocket — as well as training and technical assistance from PDP — she opened Rastareality, a venture that focuses on the vegan lifestyle, self-transformation, and unity. She now generates enough income to fully support herself and her children.

"Your dreams can come true, if you work at it. I'm not there yet, but I'm thriving and focused on the prize."

*Empress Hall-Lewis
Owner, Rastareality International*



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Mission

To create economic wellbeing in the greater Philadelphia region by supporting individual entrepreneurs — particularly minorities who live in low-income neighborhoods — through affordable training, technical assistance, and opportunities to access capital.

Products and services

- Business skills training courses, specialized workshops and seminars, and one-on-one business counseling and technical assistance for clients
- Custom-tailored loans from \$500–\$25,000 for new or expanding businesses
- Peer lending training and support, networking events

Financial and social impact

- Loans made = 241, totaling \$386,300
- Income-generating businesses started or expanded = 600
- Jobs created or retained = 1,200
- Annual revenue generated by PDP entrepreneurs = \$5 million