

# BUILDING IN BALTIMORE: A guide for Startup Founders

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Resources  
& Incentives

**UPSURGE**  
BALTIMORE





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## Welcome to Baltimore

### Dear Founders,

It's an exciting time to be an entrepreneur in Baltimore! The startup ecosystem has real momentum and Baltimore is tapping its dynamic, accessible location and its rich academic, cultural and corporate communities to build a high growth innovation economy around the Equitech vision. Whether you were born here, it's your first time in the city or you're returning from some time away, we wanted to provide you with some resources, reasons and incentives to help you not only build your business, but call Baltimore home. Please take some time to review the benefits of living, working and growing, both personally and professionally in Baltimore.

We're here to support your growth at every step along the way.

~ The UpSurge Team





# Getting Around

## Walk!

Baltimore is more walkable than you may first assume. Walking is a great way to orient yourself to the city, discover new neighborhoods, and stretch your legs!

## Bike

There is a growing movement to remove barriers to biking across Baltimore. [This map](#) includes all current protected bike boulevards, bike lanes, and trails. Check out Bikemore's [website](#) and [Facebook page](#) for frequent updates on bike infrastructure and pro-tips for getting around the city.

## Dockless Vehicles

Baltimore allows the use of [Jump](#), [Lime](#), and [Spin](#) rentable scooters, bikes, and e-bikes. Check out [this FAQ page](#) for rules and regs for riding around the city.

## Charm City Circulator

The Charm City Circulator (CCC) is a free shuttle service that travels along [four routes](#) in Baltimore's central business district including right next to the [UpSurge | Techstars offices!](#)

- [Harbor Connector](#): The Harbor Connector is part of the CCC system and offers free water taxi service along its [serviced routes](#). Be sure to remember that it only runs on the weekdays!

## BaltimoreLink

BaltimoreLink is the local bus system. The MTA offers this helpful [trip planner](#) and [this page](#) includes detailed schedules for each route. One way trips cost \$1.90; round-trip and multi-trip passes can be purchased through the [CharmCard system](#).

## Metro

The Metro is Baltimore's subway system. It has [one route](#) that runs Northeast/Southwest from Johns Hopkins Hospital to Owings Mills. One way trips cost \$1.90; Round-trip and multi-trip passes can be purchased through the [CharmCard system](#).

## **LightRail**

The LightRail is Baltimore's above-ground train system. It has one main route, running North/South from BWI Airport to Hunt Valley, with a secondary train that stops at Penn Station. One way trips cost \$1.90; Round-trip and multi-trip passes can be purchased through the CharmCard system.

## **Water Taxi**

The Water Taxi is separate from the Harbor Connector system, although they may share stops. Adult Day Passes are \$14. There are not one-way ticket options, but you can buy a monthly, six month, or twelve month pass. The Water Taxi is a very pleasant way to get around and is used by a few Fellows as part of their work commute.

## **Uber or Lyft**

Ubers and Lyfts are readily available across the city. Rides typically cost anywhere from \$4-\$15, depending on where you're going and the time of day.

## **Parking**

Some neighborhoods require parking permits. Parking decals are distributed through neighborhood associations or the Parking Authority. To find out more about residential parking permits and to see a map of residential permit areas, visit the Parking Authority of Baltimore City.

## **MARC Train**

The MARC Train is the easiest way to get to and from Washington, DC. Service now runs 7 days a week, in and out of Penn Station (full schedule can be found here). Trips are \$8 each way. You'll want to make sure to get on the Penn Line (not the Brunswick Line) on your trip home!

## **BWI Airport**

There are a multitude of ways to get to and from BWI Airport, just south of the city. You can take the MARC Train, the Light Rail, Uber/Lyft, or drive.





# Housing & Neighborhoods

Baltimore is known as a “City of Neighborhoods.” Each neighborhood has its own personality, character, and community. Live Baltimore has an online resource for all of Baltimore’s varied neighborhoods. The following neighborhoods are close to the UpSurge offices at Railway Express (1501 St. Paul St, right by Penn Station), or accessible by foot and/or the [Charm City Circulator](#) (CCC).

- [Barclay](#)
- [Charles North](#)
- [Charles Village](#)
- [Hampden](#)
- [Remington](#)
- [Greenmount West](#)
- [Federal Hill](#)
- [Fells Point](#)
- [Mount Vernon](#)

For those who have access to a personal vehicle, there are neighborhoods further away for you to consider. LiveBaltimore’s [comprehensive neighborhood guides](#) can help you find the perfect place to live in Charm City.

In regards to housing, large swaths of Baltimore’s rental market can be found on [Craigslist](#) and Facebook. Many neighborhoods have official or unofficial neighborhood Facebook pages where individuals post about rental opportunities. To find the best deals, be sure to find these online communities and keep an eye out for openings. Given the abundance of universities and colleges in the area, it is also helpful to scan the public unofficial university/college groups where young professionals and students also post about rentals.





# Food, Culture, and Happenings

## Restaurants to Explore

- The Baltimore Sun's [Baltimore's Best Food & Drink](#)
- Baltimore Magazine's [50 Best Restaurants](#)
- Thrillist's [15 Essential Black-Owned Restaurants in Baltimore You Need to Know About](#)
- Thrillist's [Everywhere You Need to Eat in Baltimore Right Now](#)
- Eater's [Where to Eat and Drink in Baltimore](#)
- Baltimore Magazine's [Black-Owned Food Businesses to Support in the Baltimore Area](#)
- Washington Post's [10 cheap-eats spots in Baltimore that offer more than just crab cakes](#)
- Roaming Hunger's [Baltimore Food Trucks](#)

## Theater/Music/Stages

- [The Hippodrome](#)
- [The Lyric](#)
- [The Baltimore Symphony Orchestra](#)
- [BSO Pulse](#) (BSO Collab with [WTMD](#) (89.7 FM))
- [Centerstage](#)
- [Arena Players](#)
- [Chesapeake Shakespeare Company](#)
- [Baltimore Shakespeare Factory](#)
- [Everyman Theater](#)
- [Single Carrot Theater](#)
- [Spotlighters Theater](#)
- [Baltimore Rock Opera Society \(BROS\)](#)
- [Baltimore Improv Group \(BIG\)](#)
- [Fluid Movement](#)
- [Baltimore Old Time Jam](#)
- [Creative Alliance](#)
- [An Die Musik](#)
- [First Thursdays Concerts in the Park](#)

## Museums to Check Out

- [Baltimore Museum of Art](#)
- [Walters Art Museum](#)
- [American Visionary Art Museum](#)
- [The Reginald F. Lewis Museum](#)
- [Edgar Allan Poe House](#)
- [Maryland Historical Society](#)
- [Eubie Blake Cultural Center](#)
- [The National Great Blacks in Wax](#)
- [Babe Ruth Museum](#)
- [B&O Railroad Museum](#)
- [Baltimore Streetcar Museum](#)
- [Baltimore Museum of Industry](#)
- [Maryland Science Center](#)



# Outdoor Events & Festivals

## Once a Year

- [Artscape](#)
- [Light City](#)
- [Baltimore Homecoming](#)
- [Baltimore Innovation Week](#)
- [Baltimore Pride](#)
- [Charm City Night Market](#)
- [Baltimore Caribbean Carnival](#)
- [RemFest](#)
- [Honfest](#)
- [HampdenFest & Toilet Bowl Races](#)
- [Baltimore Book Festival](#)
- [AFRAMBaltimore](#)
- [Kinetic Sculpture Race](#)
- [Minority Innovation Weekend](#)
- [The Mushroom City Art Festival](#)
- [Patterson Park BrewFest](#)
- [Brew at the Zoo](#)
- [Tour Dem Parks, Hon!](#)
- [Cranksgiving Baltimore](#)
- [Little Italy Festival](#)
- [Doors Open Baltimore](#)
- [Maryland Film Festival](#)

## Recurring

- [The Gathering Food Truck Festival](#)
- [First Thursdays Concerts in the Park](#)
- [Highlandtown First Fridays Art Walks](#)
- [Baltimore Bike Party](#)
- [Bike and Brunch Tours](#)
- [Flicks From the Hill](#)
- [Films on the Pier](#)

## Sports

- [Oriole Park at Camden Yards](#)
- [Baltimore Ravens at M&T Bank Stadium](#)
- [Volocity: 21+ Coed Sports Leagues](#)
- [Baltimore Running Festival](#)
- [The Best Running Groups in Charm City](#)
- [Fluid Movement](#)





# Research, Talent, Innovation at Baltimore Colleges & Universities

There are 14 colleges in Baltimore and 64 colleges within 50 miles enrolling a total of 502,398 students.

Baltimore City Community College

Community College of Baltimore County

Coppin State University

Goucher College

Johns Hopkins University and Medicine

Loyola University of Maryland

Maryland Institute College of Art

Morgan State University

Notre Dame of Maryland University

Towson University

Stevenson University

University of Baltimore

University of Maryland, Baltimore (UMB)

University of Maryland Baltimore County (UMBC)

## **Baltimore CollegeTown**

is a great place to post opportunities and to learn more about the local college scene.





# Connect with Baltimore Tech

- **UpSurge Baltimore** - Ecosystem engine and Techstars accelerator hub, working to propel Baltimore into a global innovation center and the the world's first Equitech City.
  - Sign up for the [UpShot newsletter](#) - bi-weekly news on deals, events, wins and
  - Get invited to [Equitech Tuesdays](#) weekly tech happy hour
  - [Techstars Equitech Accelerator](#) - Global accelerator based in Baltimore launched in partnership with Techstars.
- **TEDCO** - TEDCO provides funding, resources and connections that early-stage technology and life sciences companies need to thrive in Maryland.
- **Baltimore Regional Tech Council** - technology and life sciences trade association in the state of Maryland, and we provide value by giving members a forum to learn, share, and connect
- **Baltimore WomXn in Tech** - Events and educational programming for women and female-identifying technologists in the Baltimore and the Greater Baltimore region who are working or interested in technology.
- **Baltimore Black Techies** - Project nights, study group, speaker nights and social nights for black tech.
- **Anchor Ventures** - speaker series aimed at inspiring startups and tech companies in greater Baltimore.
- **Baltimore Tech Slack Channel** - Slack community for Baltimore tech founders, funders and friends.
- **Baltimore Tech Meetup** - Gatherings to learn, network and share.
- **Tech News** -
  - [Technical.ly Baltimore](#)
  - [Maryland Inno](#)
- **Baltimore Accelerators and Incubators**



## Connecting Baltimore Tech

The goal of B'More Tech Connect is to create a community of belonging where everyone can find what they need to thrive -- entrepreneurs in search of funding, high-growth businesses in search of new markets, jobseekers looking for new opportunities, parents looking for tech programs for their children, or neighborhood residents in search of simple access to information and opportunities. The B'More Tech Connect portal is the single source of information for everyone.

It's one of the key tools underpinning our goal to build the country's first Equitech city.

Check it out: [baltimore.tech](https://baltimore.tech)



# Incubators, Accelerators, Innovation Spaces and Funding

- 1501 Health (Healthworx)
- AccelerateBaltimore
- Innov8MD AddVenture Pre-Accelerator
- Baltimore Creative Action Network (BCAN)
- Baltimore Co Lab
- Baltipreneurs Accelerator (Loyola University MD)
- Betamore
- BLCK VC
- B-more Kitchen Accelerator Space
- bwtech@UMBC
- Brown Advisory B.Innovative
- CCBC Center for Business Innovation
- Chesapeake Digital Health Exchange (CDHX)
- City Garage
- Conscious Venture Lab
- Coppin State University (Center for Strategic Entrepreneurship)
- CreateU Academy
- Emerging Technology Center (ETC)
- Equalyze
- Johns Hopkins Tech Ventures: FastForward
- Fells Point Culinary Incubator
- Goldman Sachs 10,000 Small Businesses
- Harbor Launch at IMET
- HEXCITE Medical Accelerator
- The Hutch (Fearless Tech)
- Impact Hub Baltimore
- Innovation Works
- Made In Baltimore Home-Run Accelerator
- Maryland Momentum Fund
- Moms as Entrepreneurs
- Moms Makers Academy
- Morgan State University (I-Start)
- Nucleate
- Open Works
- SBIR/STTR Proposal Lab
- Johns Hopkins Social Innovation Lab
- Spark Baltimore
- Station North Tool Library
- Techstars Equitech with UpSurge
- TEDCO
- TEDCO (Builder Fund)
- TEDCO (Seed Fund)
- The Baltimore Fund
- The LaunchPort
- LifeBridge Health BioIncubator at Sinai Hospital
- Towson University StarTUp
- University of Baltimore Center for Entrepreneurship and Innovation
- University of Maryland BioPark

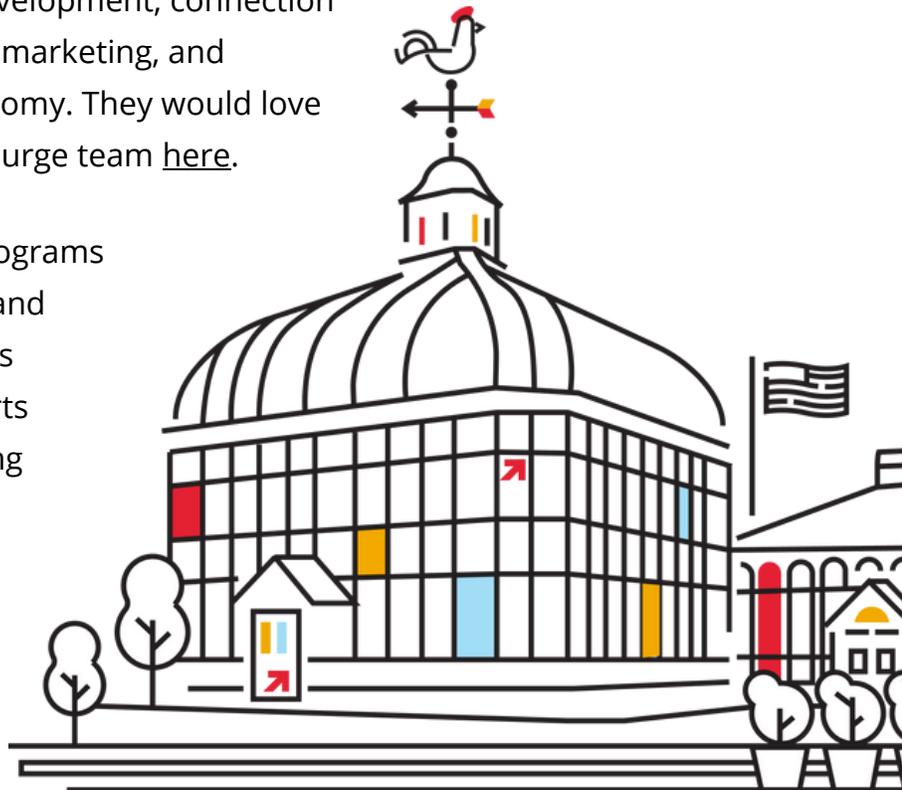
**[Links, funding, focus, and more detail here!](#)**

## Baltimore Tech Incentives and Tax Credits

Our city and our region are actively working to help tech entrepreneurs launch and scale their startups in Baltimore, building out the vibrant local ecosystem.

UpSurge Baltimore works to grow the startup community by providing support in the following areas: founder/company engagement, capital attraction, talent attraction and development, connection and collaboration, storytelling and marketing, and pathways into the knowledge economy. They would love to meet you. Connect with the UpSurge team [here](#).

Following is a list of established programs and incentives aimed at founders and companies at various stages. This is not a comprehensive list of supports for entrepreneurs and their growing companies, but gives a sense of available opportunities in Baltimore.





# Local Programs & Resources

## **Baltimore Development Corporation (BDC)**

The BDC is the economic development organization for the City of Baltimore. It provides a range of services, including:

- The Emerging Technology Center, or ETC, whose programs include an incubator, innovative coworking space, a tech accelerator and a business bootcamp.
- Real estate assistance that can help companies identify applicable tax incentives, assist with necessary permits, licenses and site selection and support other business and technical needs.
- A small business resource center, housed at the Mayor's Office of Minority and Women-Owned Business Development, that offers technical assistance, training, counseling and workshops.
- And specific loan funds (described below, under access to capital).

## **Maryland Department of Commerce**

Commerce provides companies in Baltimore with access to state services and incentives, including the following (details of many of these programs are in the pages that follow). Mei Koorey is the representative for companies in Baltimore City.

- Building and site location assistance
- Finance programs, tax credits and job training grants
- Business advocacy and consulting
- Technology transfer
- Foreign direct investment
- Export consulting and marketing
- Tradeshow and conference partnership

## **TEDCO**

TEDCO is helping to lead Maryland's innovation to market, providing the funding, resources and connections that early-stage technology and life sciences companies need to thrive.

This includes:

- Funding (described below, under access to capital).
- Efforts to coach and connect entrepreneurs.
- The Maryland Entrepreneur Hub, which serves startups and founders beyond Baltimore.
- The Urban Business Innovation Initiative, which enhances technology commercialization and provides technical and business assistance to small and early-stage companies in urban Maryland.



# Access to Capital

**BDC** manages several loan funds, including a microloan program for small businesses. Eligible uses vary across the funds, and include working capital, furniture, fixtures and equipment, land acquisition and improvement, business acquisition, and capital projects.

- The Capital Pathways Map, developed by BDC, points to a range of self-disclosed resources from local organizations (and others), from incubators and accelerators to venture capital firms.
- BDC also manages a range of technical assistance and incentive programs for startups.

**TEDCO** offers a variety of funding opportunities, including:

- Social Impact Funds designed to engage and invest in economically underserved founders and communities.
- Seed Funds aimed at strengthening and growing early-stage technology-based businesses.
- Venture Funds, which are sector and stage agnostic.
- And specific loan funds (described below, under access to capital).

The **Maryland Innovation Investment Tax Credit** fosters the growth of the local tech sectors by incentivizing investment in early-stage companies. The program provides a refundable income tax credit to qualified investors in a Qualified Maryland Technology Company (QMTC). Investors in the QMTC can receive a credit of 33% of the investment, up to \$250,000.

**Baltimore City SourceLink** provides links to organizations offering a variety of financial support to Baltimore-area entrepreneurs. These resources include financing & loans, grants, site selection, tax credits, permit expedition, and technical & business assistance.



# Location-Related Incentives

There are 42 designated **Opportunity Zones** in Baltimore City, offering a range of incentives for those who invest in real estate or in operating a business. (To see if a specific address is located in an Opportunity Zone and what incentives are available, [click here](#) and enter the address in the search bar.) These incentives involve deferral and partial tax reductions of reinvested capital gains and forgiveness of taxes on new capital gains. The city's designated Opportunity Zone coordinator helps provide information and guide local efforts.

- Maryland's Department of Commerce also offers **Opportunity Zone Enhancement Credits** for businesses in certified opportunity zones that meet certain requirements.

**Enterprise Zones** can provide real property tax credits and state income tax credits for businesses located within the zone. Businesses must be certified as eligible by the local EZ administrator ([BDC](#)).

- Real Property Tax Credits: 10-year tax credit on incremental increase in property taxes resulting from real property improvements
- 80 percent tax credit years 1-5; decreases 10 percent annually years 6-10
- Tax credit goes to the property owner
- Tax credits for job creation in Enterprise Zones are described below.

**Enterprise Zone Focus Areas** are designated areas within Enterprise Zones that offer expanded benefits for certified businesses.

- For example, businesses that invest in improvements to the property are eligible for a 10-year tax credit determined as a percentage of the incremental increase in property taxes, though the amount may hold steady at 80% rather than declining over the decade.
- Also available in Focus Areas are 10-year tax credits against local personal property taxes on new investment in personal property within the area. The amount of credit is 80% of the "eligible assessment" across the ten-year period.
- Tax credits for job creation in Focus Areas are described below.

The **Neighborhood Impact Investment Fund** is a mission-driven fund dedicated to delivering capital and promoting inclusive, equitable growth in Baltimore's historically disinvested neighborhoods. The NIIF can provide low interest acquisition, predevelopment, construction and bridge financing.

Through the **Brownfields Tax Credit**, the BDC assists businesses considering brownfield sites – vacant or underutilized sites where contamination (or the perception of contamination) hinders new investment – to remove barriers to redevelopment. For sites eligible for Maryland's Voluntary Cleanup Program, there is a 5-year tax credit of 50% to 70% on the increase in City property tax (10 years if in an Enterprise Zone) following the completion of a redevelopment project on a brownfield site.

The **HUBZone** program fuels small business growth in historically underutilized business zones with a goal of awarding at least 3% of federal contract dollars to HUBZone-certified companies.

Businesses and property owners can use the **Facade Improvement Grant Program (FIG)** – which provides up to \$25,000 – to enhance the appearance of building facades, signs, awnings, and other exterior improvements of commercial properties.

**Advantage Maryland (MEDAAF)** provides grants, loans and investments to support economic development initiatives, such as business attraction and retention, in Priority Funding Areas, including Baltimore City. Commerce representatives can provide more information about the awards, which are made on a competitive basis.





# Employment-related Incentives

**Enterprise Zones** can provide real property tax credits and state income tax credits for businesses located within the zone. Businesses must be certified as eligible by the local EZ administrator ([BDC](#)).

- The income tax credit is activated through job creation after the business is located in the designated zone. General income tax credits provide a one-time, \$1,000 credit for each new employee hired in the Enterprise Zone. An income tax credit for economically disadvantaged employees provides a three-year credit (Year 1: \$3,000; Year 2: \$2,000; Year 3: \$1,000) for each qualified new employee who stays for the full three-year period.

**Enterprise Zone Focus Areas** are designated areas within Enterprise Zones that offer expanded benefits for certified businesses.

- In these areas, general income tax credits for job creation may amount to \$1,500 for a qualified employee, and those for economically disadvantaged hires are also higher (Year 1: \$4,500; Year 2: \$3,000; Year 3: \$1,500) for a new employee.

The state's **Job Creation Tax Credit** provides an income tax credit to eligible businesses that expand in Maryland and create net new full-time positions. In Baltimore, at least 10 new qualified positions must be created within a 24-month period to be eligible. The \$3,000 credit per new job increases to \$5,000 for those businesses creating new jobs in revitalization zones, and additional benefits are available for companies hiring qualified veteran employees. The Commerce Department certifies credits on a first-come, first-served basis, and the program is capped at \$4 million in tax credits in a calendar year.

The **Job Creation Tax Credit** program also provides an income tax credit to small businesses that hire at least one qualified veteran employee to fill a net new full-time position. The credit is equal to \$2,500 for each qualified person – up to five – who fills the position for at least one year.

**More Jobs for Marylanders** makes tax credits available to new and existing manufacturers that locate or expand in Maryland and create new manufacturing jobs, and to non-manufacturers that locate or expand in Maryland Opportunity Zones, creating new jobs. Benefits, available across a 10-year period, include a refundable credit against the State's

income tax of 4.75% of wages for each qualified position. Organizations must create at least 10 qualified positions (full-time, \$50,000/year, filled for 12 months) and offer ongoing job training/post-secondary education program (e.g., tuition reimbursement). Additional benefits are available for new manufacturing businesses, and businesses new to Opportunity Zones.

The **One Maryland Tax Credit** is a state income tax credit available to businesses that invest in an economic development project in certain Maryland jurisdictions – including Baltimore City – and create a minimum number of qualified jobs. The amount of tax credit a business qualifies for depends on costs related to the total of acquiring, constructing, rehabilitating, installing, furnishing and equipping a project, as well as the costs related to moving a business to Maryland. Maximum credit amounts range from \$1 million for businesses creating 10 qualified positions to \$5 million for businesses creating at least 50 qualified positions.

- Note: In any Tax Year a business claims the One Maryland Tax Credit, it may not also claim the Job Creation Tax Credit.

The **Small Business Relief Tax Credit** is available to businesses that employ 14 or fewer people whose primary work location is in Maryland and that provide paid sick and safe leave in accordance with Maryland law. This refundable tax credit applies to the accrued paid sick and safe leave of each employee, up to \$500 per employee or \$7,000 per small business.

The **Maryland Technology Internship Program** offers financial assistance to technology-based businesses, as well as state and local agencies, to hire more interns. If approved for MTIP funding, employers may be reimbursed up to 50% of an intern’s wages, up to \$3,000 annually per intern (\$1,800 for the first semester and \$1,200 for subsequent semesters).

The **Partnership for Workforce Quality Program** helps Maryland companies – especially manufacturing and technology companies – with at least 10 full-time employees invest in incumbent worker training for job-specific skills or to upgrade or retain workers. Employers that qualify may be reimbursed for up to 50% of qualified direct costs of worker training that increases business efficiency and competitive advantages.

**Maryland Commuter Tax Credit** allows businesses to claim a tax credit equal to 50% of the cost of providing qualified commuter benefits to employees (not to exceed \$100 per employee per month).

Through the **Baltimore City Live Near Your Work Program** the city works to provide financial assistance for eligible employees’ home purchases. homeownership. Enrolled employers contribute at least \$1,000 per employee, and Baltimore City then matches that contribution \$2,500.



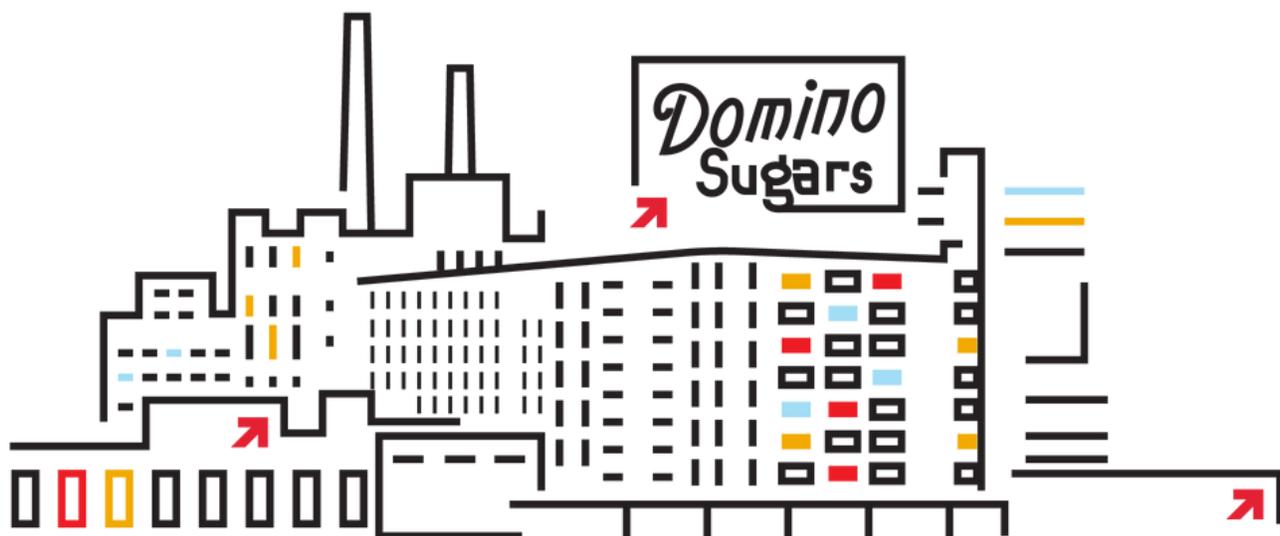
**Incentives for making Baltimore home - Live Baltimore** lists a host of other programs to support down payment and closing costs for home buyers, taxes and credits for homeowners and renters, and special loan offers to make home ownership more affordable.

**Maryland also offers specific tax credits and incentives for particular sectors and industries.** For example, the state offers tax credits related to:

- Biotechnology Investment Incentives,
- Cybersecurity, including costs related to security clearance and SCIF construction or renovation,
- Data Centers,
- Employer Security Clearance Costs,
- Research & Development.

And the **Maryland Stem Cell Research Fund** offers six programs to accelerate research and commercialization of human stem cell-based technologies.

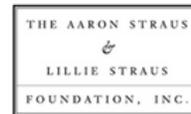
**Trying to make sense of all that Baltimore and Maryland have to offer to startups, their founders and employees? Talk to a real person at the BDC (for City questions) or Department of Commerce (for state program questions). UpSurge can connect you with the right person to help you make the most of working and living in Baltimore.**



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