

ELEVATING SOCIAL ENTREPRENEURSHIP IN TARRANT COUNTY - DEEP DIVE

Roundtable Discussion Insights | March 12, 2025

On Wednesday, March 12, more than 20 community members and leaders gathered at Blank Space Fort Worth for roundtable discussions shaping the future of a Fort Worth social entrepreneurship cohort program. This conversation built on the initial convening we hosted on January 22, continuing the dialogue and refining ideas. Below is a summary of the key questions explored, along with the main themes and insights that emerged.



What challenges or barriers have you encountered in starting or growing a social enterprise, or in preparing to launch one?

- Resource Constraints: securing funding and finding the time to develop social enterprises while balancing other commitments.
- Mindset and Skills: shifting to an entrepreneurial mindset, building confidence in business skills, and learning how to market and launch/grow a social enterprise.
- Storytelling and Connections: clearly communicating ideas, marketing effectively, and building trust and partnerships.

Would receiving a certificate from a higher education institution or having an affiliation with one influence your decision to participate in the program? Why or why not? How would it impact the credibility or usefulness of the program for your career or business?

The general consensus about having a certification program affiliated with a higher education institution was positive, but with important caveats:

- Support for Certification: many see value in the program being affiliated with a university because it provides credibility and marketability for career advancement
- Concerns: some participants worry that it might be intimidating for those with lower academic attainment or that it could introduce gatekeeping or political biases
- Preference for Flexibility: there is a desire for flexible options, such as providing both formal certification and information-only pathways, to accommodate different goals



What time commitment (e.g., weekly sessions, weekend intensives) would be realistic for you to engage in a multi-month program?

- Session Frequency: 1 - 2 sessions per month
- Session Length: 2 - 3 hours
- Scheduling Flexibility: participants want sessions scheduled in advance and materials sent beforehand, with a preference to avoid weekend meeting times

What support (e.g., mentorship, funding opportunities, legal, networking) would you want integrated into a cohort/program specifically focused on social entrepreneurship?

- Mentorship and Coaching: high-quality mentorship from individuals with social enterprise experience and coaching support
- Funding and Financial Support: funding opportunities, including pitch competitions, experimental money, and access to national funding sources
- Networking Opportunities: networking within the cohort and access to industry connections and national networks for both support and funding

How can a program like this create an impact not only for participants' organizations but also for the broader Fort Worth community? What are the best ways to apply learning in real-time?

- Community Engagement: incorporating community feedback and focusing on addressing disparities and community needs
- Local Impact: supporting local social enterprises and engaging in community outreach
- Real-Time Application: project-based learning and real-time implementation of learning (e.g., group projects and organizing/participating in community events)

The next community conversation on this topic will take place in early June, providing an update on the cohort and details on how to get involved. Stay connected by following Community Frontline on social media for updates on future events and opportunities, or email info@communityfrontline.com to join our mailing list.