

## Case Study



### Empowering Growth with Data:

How NewBo City Market Harnesses Impact Reporting to Drive Community Development and Unlock Funding





# Case Study Snapshot



## NewBo City Market Harnesses Impact Reporting to Drive Community Development and Unlock Funding

**Vertical:** Nonprofit/ Cohort Grantee

**Website:** [www.newbocitymarket.org/](http://www.newbocitymarket.org/)

**Client Since:** 2023

**Mission Theme:** Community Development

**Region of Impact:** Cedar Rapids, IA

**Product Features / Services Used:** Dashboards, Data Collector, Stories (Qualitative Data), Impact Measurement & Management, Managed Services



**Previously we relied heavily on anecdotal evidence to prove our mission and impact, but we can now use a combination of stories and concrete data to better illustrate impact in our community.**

**SARAH BLAIS**, Senior Director of Market Operations



# Org Overview

## Mission & Vision

When it comes to examples of purposeful community building done right, look no further than NewBo City Market, a nonprofit business incubator in the New Bohemia ('NewBo') District of Cedar Rapids, Iowa.

With a mission to foster regional economic development by uplifting entrepreneurs and artists through an equitable business incubator, accessible public programming, and a community gathering space, NewBo City Market services many different needs for a wide spectrum of people and organizations.

Home to local food and retail start-ups, farmers markets, artisans, and numerous community events, NewBo City Market has showcased Iowa's talent and resilience while promoting sustainability for over 10 years.

## Programs Overview

NewBo City Market supports vendors with various business assistance programs, offering permanent spaces for shopkeepers and weekend opportunities for guest vendors, empowering them to grow their business in a centralized location beloved by local residents.

Through their entrepreneurial development program, known as "The Hatchery", they award grants and other valuable resources to individuals from historically underserved populations who want to start a food or retail business - many of whom become tenured shopkeepers at the market. They also offer discounted fees for themed guest vendor markets, like the annual LGBTQ+ Market, to increase accessibility for vendors. Over time, the Market has become a major tourism attraction in Cedar Rapids, hosting some of the community's largest events like EcoFest, PRIDEfest, and AsianFest.

## NewBo in the News



**'\$1.3 million grant boosts NewBo City Market 'Next Level Local' campaign' | [Corridor Business](#)**



**'Cedar Witch Goods wins year of free rent at NewBo City Market' | [Corridor Business](#)**



**'Rock the Block rings through NewBo City Market' | [CBS2 Iowa](#)**

# Impact Measurement Approach | *Before & After*



- Prior to UpMetrics, the team had data collection systems for event attendance, but they were never able to cross reference sales and attendance.
- There was no reliable intake system for information on shopkeepers.
- Collection practices were casual, causing inconsistent reporting percentage.



- Simplify sales data collection systems for both shopkeepers and guest vendors.
- Make more strategic, data-driven decisions for the future of the organization.
- Leverage economic impact data to bolster fundraising and grant application strategy.



- Over time, fundraising pitches have gotten easier due to concrete data, and the team has seen a substantial increase in grant awards.
- Major Achievement: Received \$1.3M grant from the US government in 2024 due to exceptional impact measurement and reporting.
- They have greatly improved their reporting practices and coverage, increasing the percentage of businesses voluntarily reporting from around 40% to over 90%.
- They're also able to use the data to inform new business owners of where they stand within the pack as well as to assess the seasonality of Market sales and attendance.



It's a flaw for nonprofits in general that it's really hard to envision change. At the start, this all sounded like so much work, but now that we're two years in, **we can't envision our lives without it.** As the primary grant writer, my life has gotten so much easier... We started to really improve our communication and expectation with our shopkeepers, and now I have full sales reporting data to send off. And I will say that it's more than correlation that **after working with UpMetrics, we got some of our first substantial federal grants, because these are the kinds of grants that require real data,** hard data - not extrapolated data... So it's changed my life exponentially. And I think it's made us more honest and better fundraisers.

**SARAH BLAIS**, Senior Director of Market Operations





## Team Q&A | *Looking Forward*

**Q: What is your vision for the future and how do you hope to continue to deliver your mission and/or expand on your work?**

A: The Market is undergoing a major expansion in 2025. The primary goal of the expansion is to increase our incubation capacity. Not only will we add additional spaces for Shopkeepers, but we will also be adding several new spaces for entertainment and entrepreneurship. The second-floor mezzanine will serve primarily as a space for entertainment featuring a large stage and movie screen. Currently, we have a robust outdoor music series in the summer, but with our new stage we will be able to carry the momentum from summer into the fall and winter music and arts events.

Another section of our expansion centers around a partnership with Mt. Mercy University. We will work together to create accessible mental health care for our Shopkeepers, staff and community. Graduate students will work within this program to provide care through support groups, individual and family counseling. We hope to work with UpMetrics to display the impact of this program through anonymous data collection focusing on demographics and numbers of individuals served.

**Q: What advice would you give to other organizations looking to improve their impact measurement and management practices?**

Never underestimate the importance of a comprehensive data collection tool. With the help of the UpMetrics team we have developed collection tools that are easy to monitor and draw analysis from. I believe these tools will continue to be critical to our impact strategy as we grow into our new space.





# **Empowering Growth with Data:** **How NewBo City Market Harnesses Impact Reporting to Drive Community Development and Unlock Funding**



***Thank you for reading!***

**Unlock your organization's funding and impact potential by signing up for our [free Starter Plan!](#)**

Visit our [Resources Page](#) for more customer stories, guides, and blogs created to support mission-driven organizations in their journey towards impact measurement.

A special thank you to the entire NewBo City Market team and everyone on the UpMetrics team who helped produce this case study.

