

IMPACT REPORT 2023

PHL 
Taking Care of
BUSINESS 



MESSAGE FROM THE MAYOR



As a Philadelphia native, I dream of days when our beloved city will be seen as the cleanest big city in America. I am proud to have created the PHL Taking Care of Business (TCB) Clean Corridors Program as a former Councilmember in the Ninth Council District in Northwest Philadelphia. Since then, TCB has grown to serve the busiest commercial areas citywide, invest in small businesses, create job opportunities for local residents, and keep Philadelphia's neighborhood commercial corridors clean. TCB cleaning ambassadors also gain employment experience and skills that are highly valued by employers across many industries, which can benefit them when searching for future career opportunities. These cleaning ambassadors are our frontline workers who know these neighborhoods – and neighbors – best, from the cultures, to the spoken languages, and the individual problem areas that need the most attention. I deeply value every cleaning ambassador.

TCB works for the people of Philadelphia. I am proud of the impact we have made to champion litter reduction efforts and environmental care in commercial areas citywide. The Parker Administration is making major strides to expand this successful program even more. Together, we are working to make Philadelphia safer, cleaner, and greener, with access to economic opportunity for all. I am committed to ensuring Philadelphians have a local government they can see, touch, and feel— one that is visible, responsive, and effective. Through my One Philly budget, we will expand PHL TCB, including covering more commercial corridors, more frequent cleaning of existing commercial corridors, and increasing the number of participating organizations. We will reach nearly 140 total corridors across the city and hire about 200 more cleaning ambassador for a total of approximately 460 workers. We will end Filthadelphia!

I am also making critical investments in neighborhood and residential cleaning through our Clean and Green Initiative by expanding trash collections, adding illegal dumping crews, streamlining enforcement processes and more. We are launching a new approach to addressing quality-of-life issues, like illegal short-dumping, cleaning up litter and graffiti, fixing potholes, and removing abandoned cars— and we've started by focusing on the hardest hit neighborhoods. Across all our initiatives, the City of Philadelphia is committed to ensuring our work prioritizes and serves the needs of Black, brown and other historically disadvantaged Philadelphia residents. We envision Philadelphia with a globally competitive economy that benefits all people who live, work, and do business in our city.

TCB is made through neighborhood partnerships and will continue to be sustained because of each of you doing the work every day. Philadelphia is an incredible city, and it is advancing because you too are not giving up on this shared dream that we support together. Thank you to the Philadelphia Department of Commerce led by Commerce Director Alba Martinez, TCB-contracted organizations, and every partner who contributed to the success of this report. We will continue to improve the quality of life in every zip code of our city together. We are One Philly, a United City!

Sincerely,

Cherelle L. Parker
Mayor of Philadelphia

MESSAGE FROM THE COMMERCE DIRECTOR



The Department of Commerce is thrilled to report on the growth and impact of TCB. TCB is revitalizing our commercial corridors, supporting small businesses, and creating meaningful employment opportunities for residents. Our TCB cleaning ambassadors play a vital role, bringing their local knowledge and dedication to keeping our city clean. We're proud to invest in their success, providing credentials that open doors to future employment across various industries.

This year, TCB is expanding significantly, reflecting our commitment to a cleaner and more vibrant Philadelphia. We're grateful for the partnerships with over 40 community organizations and small businesses that make this work possible, and look forward to continued collaboration in building a city where businesses and communities flourish.

Sincerely,

Alba Martinez
Commerce Director

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2018

While still a member of City Council, Councilwoman Parker secures funding to expand the Department of Commerce's existing Commercial Corridor Cleaning Program. The program grows from funding cleaning services on 14 commercial corridors to 49 commercial corridors. This expansion brings the benefits of clean sidewalks to new areas of the city.

2019

Councilwoman Parker successfully champions PHL Taking Care of Business Corridor Cleaning - a comprehensive and citywide commercial corridor cleaning program. City Council approves \$10 million for this new initiative, which includes workforce training opportunities and a \$15 per hour minimum wage for cleaning ambassadors.

2020-22

The COVID 19 pandemic slows business activity citywide and waves of civil unrest following the killings of George Floyd and Walter Wallace Jr. devastate several commercial corridors. TCB crews maintain a crucial baseline of cleanliness during this period and provide logistical and organizational support to mobilize cleanup efforts following episodes of property damage. Cleaning ambassadors are visible community stewards during a time of great uncertainty.

TCB officially launches during the summer of 2020 and cleaning services expand from 49 commercial corridors to 85. By late 2022, TCB is responsible for employing 208 cleaning ambassadors across 38 partner organizations.

2023

City Council allocates additional funding for TCB, expanding the program to 116 commercial corridors and increasing the workforce to 255 cleaning ambassador. The program minimum wage rises to \$15.71 per hour and many organizations are able to promote existing staff into higher-paying supervisor roles.

Councilwoman Parker is elected Mayor with TCB being an integral component of her mission to make Philadelphia "the Safest, Cleanest and Greenest big city in the nation with access to Economic Opportunity for all."

Cleaning Commercial Corridors, Creating Opportunities

Since 2020, the Philadelphia Department of Commerce has been investing directly in the maintenance of clean shopping districts through its PHL Taking Care of Business Clean Corridors Program (TCB). The program funds and empowers community-based nonprofit organizations to sweep sidewalks and work with the City to address block-by-block cleanliness issues like dumping hotspots. But the program doesn't only brighten the streets — it can help change lives. TCB improves cleanliness for neighborhood business districts identified by the City and helps elevate local workers in the process.

How it Works

Some participating community organizations employ their own cleaning ambassadors to sweep sidewalks, while others subcontract with local, minority-owned cleaning companies. In almost every case, cleaning ambassadors are hired from within the neighborhoods they serve. The bottom line: all cleaning ambassadors earn \$15.71 or more per hour and can participate in free workforce trainings, which can help them attain higher employment within their organization or wider economy.

Growing Our Impact

Since TCB's launch in summer 2020, the program has grown from serving 49 commercial corridors to 116 by the end of 2023. And it doesn't stop there. Most recently in 2023, City Council increased TCB annual funding from \$7 million to \$10 million. This increased funding has allowed community organizations to boost the number of cleaning ambassadors employed, increase wages, and ultimately serve more community business districts. That means cleaner streets, higher employment and economic opportunities, and a greater share of Philadelphia's small businesses with inviting sidewalks leading to their front doors.



A cleaning ambassador employed by Esperanza sweeps the sidewalks, including litter stuck in tree pits, at the corner of Wyoming Avenue and Mascher Street in Hunting Park.

Program Goals

Passyunk Avenue Revitalization Corporation

The Passyunk Avenue Revitalization Corporation's TCB team cleans several commercial strips in South Philadelphia.

GOAL

1

CLEAN COMMERCIAL CORRIDORS



Maintain clean neighborhood commercial districts.

GOAL

2

WORK OPPORTUNITIES



Create jobs with credentialed workforce training opportunities.

GOAL

3

CORRIDOR ECONOMIC VITALITY



Stimulate economic vitality for neighborhood businesses.

GOAL

4

GROWTH OPPORTUNITIES



Expand opportunities for local organizations and minority-owned cleaning companies to grow.

\$10M

program budget

168,599

bags collected in 2023

255

cleaning ambassadors employed

99.4

miles of commercial corridors cleaned

GOAL

1

CLEAN COMMERCIAL CORRIDORS

Maintain clean neighborhood commercial districts

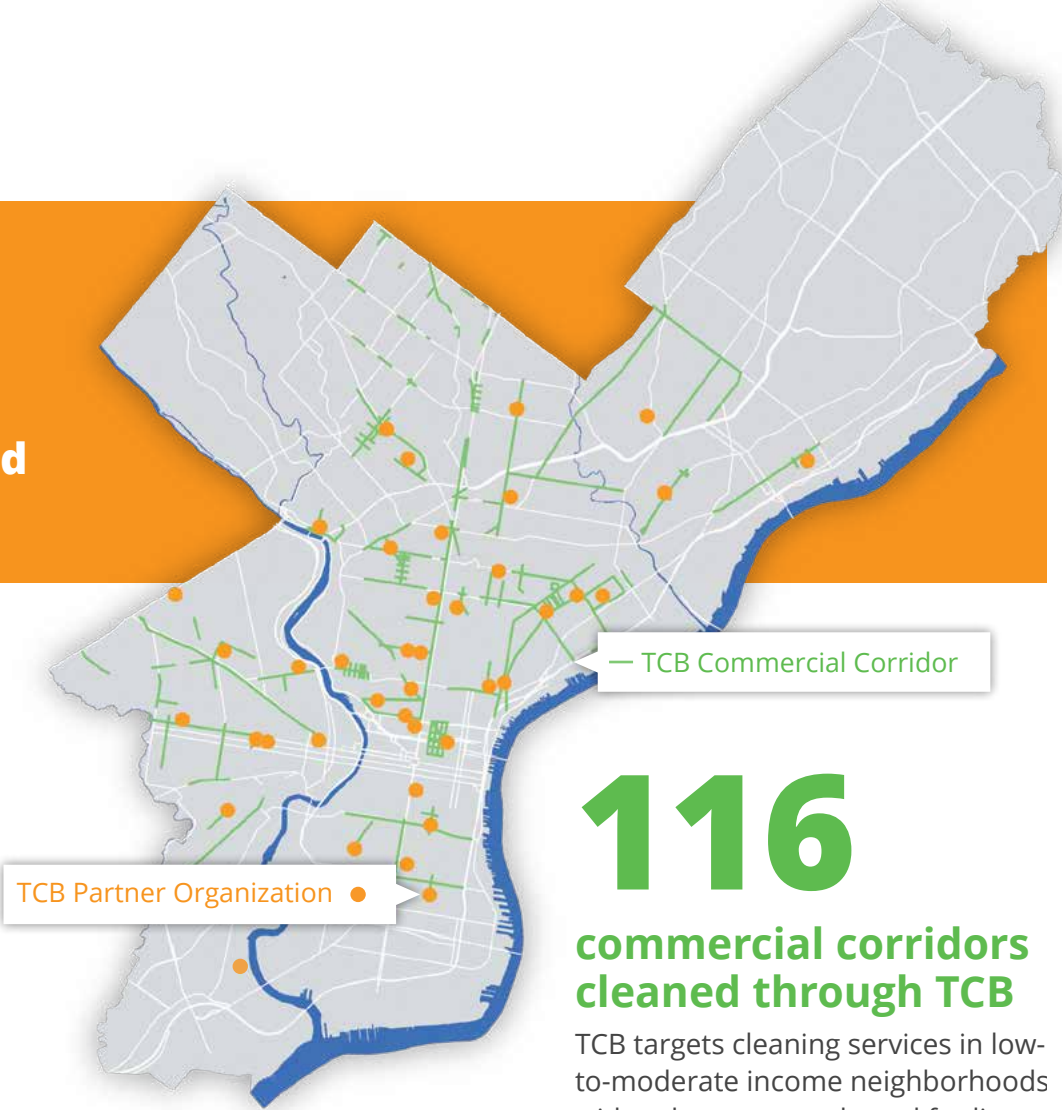


TCB crews sweep sidewalks and along the curbs where litter tends to collect. This cleaning ambassador, employed by ACHIEVEability, maneuvers his broom beside parked cars on 60th Street near the Market-Frankford Line.



39 partnerships with neighborhood nonprofits

TCB contracts with neighborhood nonprofits that know the litter challenges of their communities best. Most organizations hire cleaning staff from the neighborhood, while others subcontract with a minority-owned cleaning business.



TCB Commercial Corridor

TCB Partner Organization

116 commercial corridors cleaned through TCB

TCB targets cleaning services in low-to-moderate income neighborhoods with a demonstrated need for litter removal. These commercial areas are pedestrian-oriented and have a high density of commercial spaces with businesses offering essential goods and services.

1,050 city blocks cleaned

TCB cleaning crews are responsible for cleaning sidewalks on both sides of the street and 18 inches from the curb into the roadway. Most sweep up litter the old fashioned way, with a broom, dustpan, and rolling bin. This is because it's the most effective way to collect everything from soda bottles on sewer grates to cigarette butts wedged in sidewalk cracks.



More than half of Philadelphians benefit from cleaner and more inviting neighborhood commercial corridors within a short stroll of their front door.

905,480 residents live within a quarter-mile of a TCB corridor.

639,275 of those residents are low-to-moderate income.

Calculated using 2020 US Census and ACS 5-Year 2011-2015 Low and Moderate-Income Summary Data available through HUD. Includes population totals for all census tracts fully or partially within a 1/4 mile buffer surrounding each TCB corridor.

168,599 bags of litter and trash removed in 2023 or **14,049** dumpsters!

That's 15,839 more bags of trash collected than in 2022 (a 10% increase) because TCB added **27 new commercial corridors.**

Total number of bags calculated using quarterly bag counts provided by TCB contract holders. Number of dumpsters calculated by dividing the total bag count by 12, which is the amount of bags a standard 2 cubic yard dumpster holds.



Transforming Communities, Block by Block



In Kensington, the Impact Services TCB crew goes far above and beyond simple litter removal. Recognizing that blighted and abandoned properties were having an effect on the safety of the neighborhood — including an uptick in vandalism and robbery — the team quickly moved toward greening and cleaning lots.

One particular lot located on a side street near Clearfield and A Streets was filled with trash, abandoned cars, and other materials, creating an eyesore and general feelings of despondency among residents. The crew worked for a year and a half to remove the debris and transform the lot into a green community meeting space, complete with a cookout area. They coordinated much of this work with the City's Streets Department (Streets) and Community Life Improvement Program (CLIP). Streets and CLIP are critical partners, working directly with the Impact team daily to tackle blight.

The community has been so grateful for the cleaner sidewalks and transformed lot and thanks the crew every time they come around, according to Lead Crew Chief Daniel Marshall. *Learn more about Daniel and his work on page 15.*

"There's a lot of love from the community for TCB. They see the work we put in. They see it all, and they appreciate it. They appreciate us."

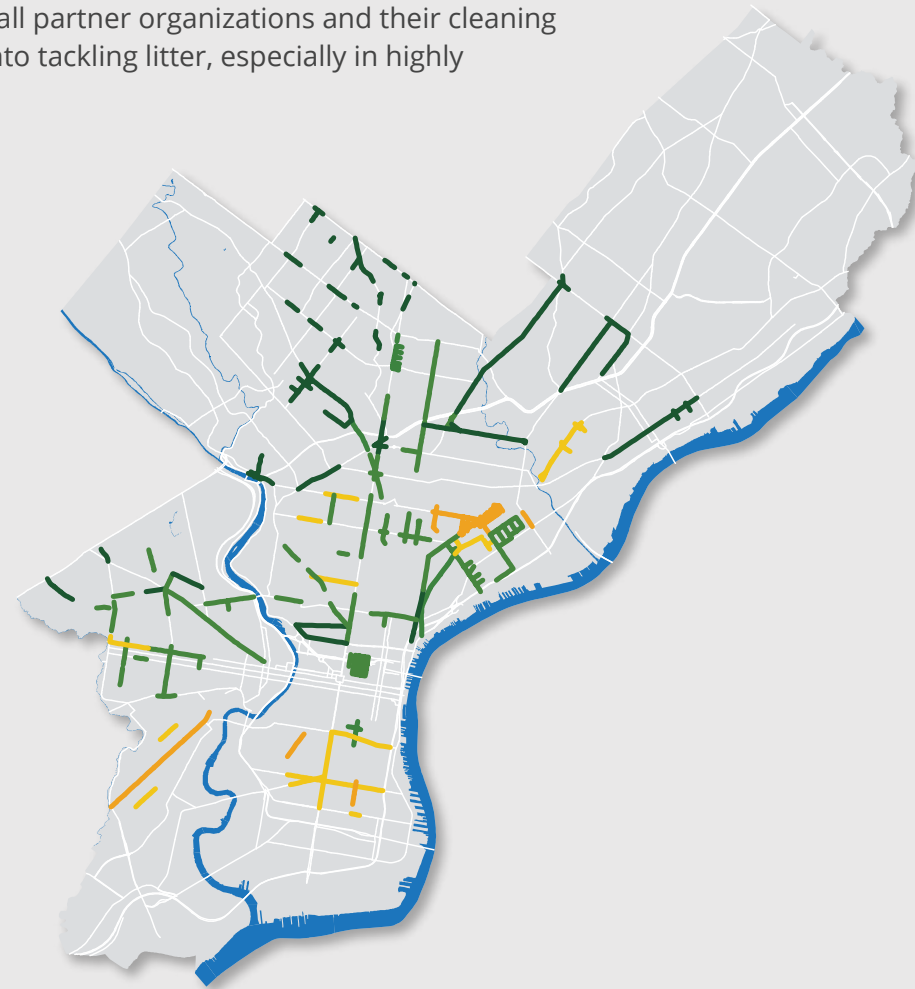
—Daniel Marshall, Lead Crew Chief for Impact Services

The Litter Index

The Department of Commerce performs a Litter Index study every year to measure litter on TCB corridors.

Every TCB block was visited three times in the late spring and three times in the early fall of 2023 and scored on a scale of 1-4. A score of 1 meant little to no litter and a score of 4 meant very high litter. The map shows all of the block scores averaged out for each corridor. The Department of Commerce recognizes the hard work that all partner organizations and their cleaning ambassadors put into tackling litter, especially in highly challenged areas.

Litter Index Score Key



75% of TCB corridors have a Litter Index score between 1 and 2.

This is up from 66% in 2022, meaning that more corridors are consistently cleaner.

1.7 Average TCB corridor Litter Index score

TCB corridors, on average, have little to moderate litter despite many being the busiest streets in their areas. This is a 0.3 increase in cleanliness from 2022's average Litter Index score of 2.0, which is great progress towards a cleaner, greener Philadelphia.

Celebrating Success in 2023

TCB crews throughout the city scored countless wins in 2023, from hosting successful neighborhood clean-ups, to adding trash and cigarette butt receptacles to their corridors.

But some of our most meaningful successes this year came from investing in our cleaning ambassadors. Many partner organizations were able to hire additional cleaning ambassadors, and even more were able to provide professional training to build their ambassadors' skill set. Across the city, crews went beyond litter removal to provide services like cleaning and greening, tree planting, power washing, and more — not only to improve the appearance of the neighborhood, but to contribute to the health of the environment and the overall wellness of the community.

Their hard work has not gone unnoticed. Both businesses and individuals alike regularly thank the crews when they encounter cleaning ambassadors on the street, but the biggest change has been a shift in behavior. TCB partners report a reduction in litter and short dumping, as well as increased knowledge and behavior from residents and businesses toward putting out trash on the appropriate collection day. When community members see other community members cleaning and caring, they do the same.



Before



After

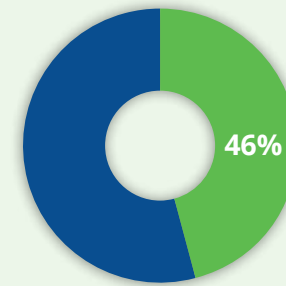
On a normal day's work, TCB crews across the city remove dumped trash like this heap of rubbish removed by the Fishtown Kensington Area Business Improvement District.

WORK OPPORTUNITIES

GOAL 2 Create jobs with credentialed workforce training opportunities

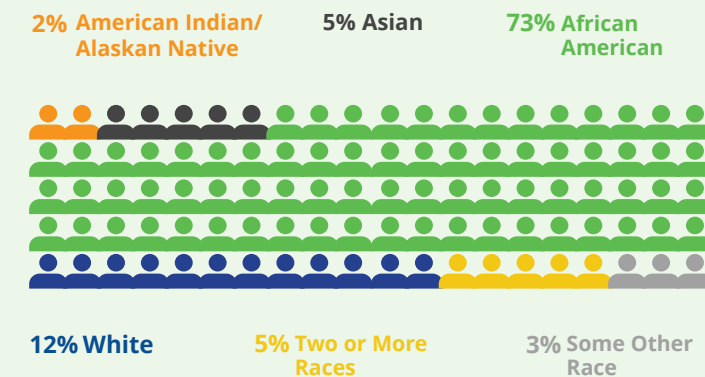


Who are the cleaning ambassadors?



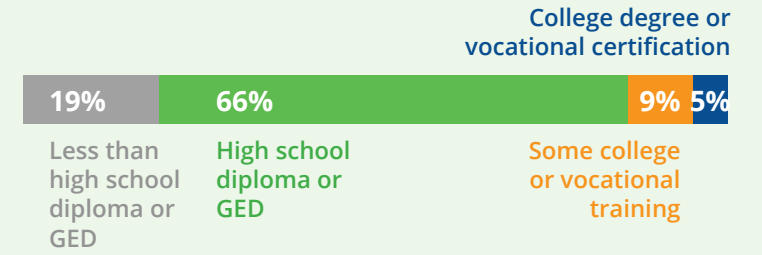
46% of cleaning ambassadors were previously incarcerated.

TCB offers a pivotal and promising career path to returning citizens. Difficulty finding employment after incarceration is a major contributing factor to recidivism. TCB helps eliminate barriers to finding employment by not requiring previous work experience or a high school diploma. Once hired, cleaning ambassadors can receive workplace safety and readiness trainings to further their earning potential, employment opportunities, and overall life stability.



88% of cleaning ambassadors are BIPOC.

TCB prioritizes cleaning services for low-to-moderate income, BIPOC, and immigrant communities, and it strongly encourages its partner organizations to hire locally. Cleaning ambassadors are by and large representative of the communities they serve.



86% of cleaning ambassadors do not have college or vocational training experience.

While 100% of cleaning ambassadors have skills and a can-do attitude to contribute to the economy, only 14% have any college or vocational training experience. TCB creates jobs for those who may have limited employment opportunities while offering worker trainings to help advance their careers.

8% of cleaning ambassadors have limited English proficiency, with their primary language being either Mandarin Chinese or Spanish.

This is important for two reasons. First, it means that TCB is providing employment for non-English speaking Philadelphians who may have barriers to other employment opportunities. And second, it means that cleaning ambassadors are being hired locally to serve their own communities. When cleaning ambassadors, business owners, and residents can all speak the same language, they can better solve the problem of litter together.

Demographic information is based on best estimates from cleaning team managers collected from February — March 2024.

255

cleaning ambassadors employed through TCB.

\$15.71

minimum hourly wage for all cleaning ambassadors with many supervisors and senior cleaning staff earning more.

191

cleaning ambassadors to date have completed an Online CareerSafe OSHA 10 certification, with 23 earning their certificate in 2023.



Appreciation for cleaning ambassadors

In April 2023, the Department of Commerce hosted its second annual TCB Pep Rally to celebrate the impressive achievements and litter reduction efforts of cleaning ambassadors citywide. Scheduled to coincide with Earth Month, the TCB Pep Rally recognized how cleaning ambassadors help prevent litter from entering our waterways and enhance economic revitalization efforts by supporting vibrant shopping areas.

During the TCB Pep Rally, presenters highlighted the benefits of TCB for shoppers, residents, and businesses. City Council Members marked the occasion with awards to the cleaning crews who reduce litter within their districts.

Philip Parks, owner of Thinking Outside the Box Daycare at 52nd St. and Lancaster Ave. in West Philadelphia, expressed rousing appreciation for TCB.

The event also included partner tables offering valuable resources for TCB crews and testimonials by corridor merchants and cleaning ambassadors whose lives have been positively impacted by TCB.



Daniel Marshall

Impact Services



For Daniel Marshall, it's all about pride. The 21-year-old Kensington native spent two years with TCB — first as a cleaning ambassador, then as a manager — and, he admits, the love that he has for the work now was not immediate.

“In the beginning, I didn't really have my head into it. But I grew and I learned, and I've seen a lot of transformation,” he said. “It's amazing to see the before and the after, the cause and the effect, and to be the person out there helping clean up, it brings me joy.”

Where Daniel's crew cleans, the litter can range from clothing and furniture to human waste and used needles, as well as simple trash. While the crew leaves the needles to Impact Services' Kensington Initiative for Needle Disposal (KIND) team, the rest is up to them. And they work tirelessly to clean it up — even if it means spending about an hour every day cleaning the block at G and Kensington, which is most challenging on Mondays after a busy weekend. Daniel also reports focusing efforts surrounding Allegheny Station.

“When the streets are filthy, people don't want to come outside. They don't want to walk to the store, or even take the train. I personally know people who would walk an extra train stop because Allegheny was so dirty before we started our work,” he said.



Daniel Marshall

“Since we've been out cleaning, we've seen a lot more people going to work, getting their kids to school, and just living their day-to-day lives.”

The pride works both ways in Daniel's case. Having grown up in the neighborhood, he runs into a lot of business owners and residents who knew him as a boy and have seen him grow into a man.

“Out on the streets, I see so many people that know me from a past life, and they congratulate me. They see the changes I've made in myself and in the community, and they're proud of me.”

“Jobs with TCB are a perfect fit, and they offer good pay.”

PCDC currently employs 14 cleaning program staff, many of whom are seniors. PCDC’s Commercial Corridor Manager, Haoyi Shang, says that the hiring of seniors is something that happened more organically — and she attributes it to the way immigration trends in the region.

“When we put recruitment out, we received a significant number of applicants who could only speak Mandarin and Cantonese, and a large percentage were older. It makes sense because older immigrants often come to America to join younger family members, mainly their children, who have already established their family here. But they don’t have the language or job skills necessary for most employment opportunities — and they require flexibility so that they can be with their families. Jobs with TCB are a perfect fit, and they offer good pay,” said Shang.

Many applicants are at the tail end of their careers and are not looking for any type of career advancement. Having worked in construction for the majority of his life, Haojian wanted to continue to work with his hands, but sought a position that would be easier on his body.

Haojian leads the team of cleaning ambassadors, some of whom are well into their eighties, but Shang jokes that he also manages her. He is particular when it comes to cleaning supplies, always wanting the best tools for the most efficient, highest-level cleaning he and the crew can provide. But when it comes to hitting the streets, “Mr. Deng” can always be found listening to music and singing along with a smile on his face, pleased to serve his community and lead the charge to beautify Chinatown.



Deng Haojian

Deng Haojian

Philadelphia Chinatown Development Corporation

In his native Mandarin, Haojian — or “Mr. Deng” as he is known to colleagues — often expresses the pride he feels in keeping Chinatown’s business and residential environment clean and beautiful. The 65-year-old cleaning ambassador has worked with Philadelphia Chinatown Development Corporation (PCDC) since 2019, six years after his move from Guangzhou, Guangdong, China with his wife and two children.

Home to more than 300 small businesses and countless Chinese language services, Chinatown serves as its own ecosystem, offering its residents — many of whom are immigrants — a kind of home away from home. An immigrant himself, Haojian sees great value in working with business owners and service providers to rid the streets of litter and work against illegal dumping.

保持中国城商业环境和居住环境干净整洁，我感到很自豪。

“I am proud to keep Chinatown’s business district and residential area clean and tidy.”

— Deng Haojian



In 2023, the Department of Commerce launched “Trash Talk,” a monthly newsletter that connects cleaning ambassadors, partners, stakeholders, and the Philadelphia community with TCB’s latest happenings. The newsletter provides program updates, job and training opportunities, cleaning ambassador profiles, cleaning success stories, and other resources for all members of the TCB community. Sign up for Trash Talk [here](#).

TRASH TALK!

Announcements · Training Opportunities · Job Postings



Meet Megan

Southeast Asian Mutual Assistance Association Coalition (SEAMAAC)

It's 9am, and Megan Romanoff is fresh off her shift as an elementary school crossing guard, ready to join her cleaning ambassador team of three on 7th Street in South Philadelphia. It's a neighborhood she knows well, having been born and raised here, never moving farther than a few blocks away at a time. And she's proud to be cleaning it — first, on her own, voluntarily — and now through TCB alongside her son David and their manager Dishaun.

Armed with a broom, trash bags, and her wagon, Megan makes her way down the commercial corridor lined with Asian specialty stores, grocery stores, and residents new and old. The litter she encounters ranges from raw food to plastic bags and containers — but whatever the day, whatever the weather, she works tirelessly to remove it.

Megan Romanoff



Megan and the crew face the largest cleaning challenges on Mondays and Fridays, when the load is at its heaviest, and in the fall, when the fallen leaves make for extra debris to collect.

There's the act of cleaning — which, for Megan is an act of love and pride for her community — and then there are the benefits that come with it. Businesses have an easier time attracting customers, residents feel safer, and everyone has a friend in Megan. Standing on the corner with her, it's impossible not to notice the passing cars and residents on foot who shout a greeting to her or swing by for a hug while she's on her shift. And it's important to her that people know they can trust her.

"In so many cases, it's not what you know, it's who you know. And for me, I want to know who's who on 7th Street and make those connections," said Megan.

"I want people to feel safe, and in a community that has some safety concerns, I create strong relationships that I think make people feel like they have someone looking out for them."

Megan's efforts to create a safer neighborhood have not gone unnoticed by the law enforcement officers who regularly patrol 7th Street.

"Megan and David know everyone on 7th Street, so there is a mutual respect with them and the people here. Both of them are a valuable asset solely based on that. When they started cleaning you noticed a difference in the cleanliness right away," said Officer Samantha Basquill of the nearby 3rd Police District. "Meg has a way of making everyone feel like a someone, and that is a gift. All the community needs is someone who cares and, by them seeing what she does, people have started throwing the trash in the bags instead of on the ground. It's all about respect and she has theirs."



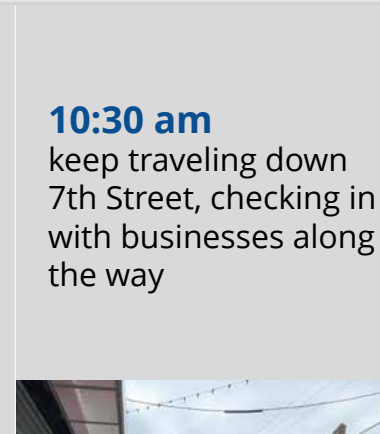
9:00 am
arrive, meet up with the crew, gather supplies, and head out



9:15 am
start walking the corridor, sweeping and greeting residents



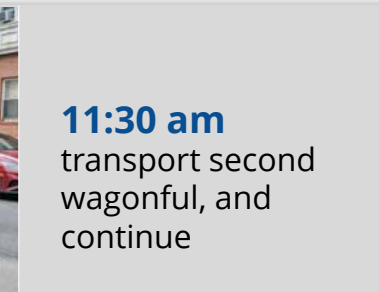
10:00 am
take full wagon (7 bags of trash) to the disposal location and continue on...



10:30 am
keep traveling down 7th Street, checking in with businesses along the way



11:00 am
coordinate sanitation education and enforcement with the area's SWEEP officer whenever possible.



11:30 am
transport second wagonful, and continue



12:30 pm
take a final sweep through the business district and head back to SEAMAAC

Caring for the Canopy

Trees are well-known to improve air quality, help combat climate change, and alleviate extreme summer temperatures. But you may not know that trees also promote vibrant commercial districts, with studies suggesting that shoppers prefer to stroll and shop on tree-lined streets.

That's why TCB joined with Philadelphia Parks and Recreation to plant 242 trees as part of the Philly Tree Plan, a ten-year roadmap to equitably grow the city's tree canopy. Trees in West Philadelphia neighborhoods were planted in partnership with the Centennial Parkside Community Development Corporation, ACHIEVEability, Global Thinking Initiatives Inc., and the African Cultural Alliance of North America. Trees in Eastern North Philadelphia were planted through partnerships with HACE and Esperanza in the Hunting Park neighborhood. In every location, the organizations engaged with business owners to hear their feedback, stories, and preferences.

Planting a tree is just the first step. Trees require regular watering the first two years to help them survive and thrive.

This is where cleaning ambassadors become cleaning and greening ambassadors by maintaining the health of these newly planted trees. Through the generous support of the William Penn Foundation, Deeply Rooted, and the Prince Albert II of Monaco Foundation, cleaning ambassadors on these newly tree-lined corridors receive tree care trainings through the Overbrook Environmental Education Center. The cleaning ambassadors also receive additional work hours and compensation for their new responsibilities. This investment ensures that the street trees, as well as the cleaning ambassadors' skills and opportunities, grow to flourish.



"Some of our TCB cleaning ambassadors come to us underemployed and under-skilled, and this training gives them a chance to seek a future in the 'green' economy. It's exciting to see people grow in this space and gain skills that are transferable to other fields."

—Jerome Shabazz,
Founder and Director, Overbrook
Environmental Education Center



Cleaning ambassadors learn how to properly prune and care for trees through a partnership with the Overbrook Environmental Education Center and Parks and Recreation.



The proprietor of Evelyn Graves Christian Daycare on Chester Avenue in Kingsessing praises TCB for the difference it's made in the area.

GOAL 3

CORRIDOR ECONOMIC VITALITY

Grow the economic vitality of businesses within neighborhood commercial corridors



Dwight Nelson, owner of Dwight's Southern Barbecue II, flips ribs as his staff is busy filling Friday evening take-out orders.



Cleaning is Good For Business at Broad, Germantown, and Erie

At the heart of North Philly is the intersection of Broad, Germantown, and Erie Streets — sometimes called BGE for short — a bustling hive of commercial activity. There are several anchor businesses, including Dwight's Southern Barbecue II, a mainstay on Germantown Avenue for nearly 45 years. Owner Dwight Nelson is committed to the community he serves and goes out of his way to keep the corridor desirable. Nelson grew up in the neighborhood, which he says has always been a host for good entertainment and good food, and easily accessible by public transportation.

"This corridor is my life's blood. It's always been the place to be, from when I was a kid to a middle-aged man. There was a time that it seemed the vitality was dwindling, but you can see it's been shaken up again. And part of that is keeping the streets clean."

— Dwight Nelson



Dwight works closely with Called to Serve, a nonprofit organization that works to break the generational cycle of poverty in the Nicetown-Tioga community. Though they had already been committed to keeping the corridor clean and attractive, when the opportunity arose, Called to Serve (CTS) began working with TCB in 2020.

"BGE had always been the downtown for as long as I can remember. It still is, but the residents we serve face economic disadvantages and health and wellness challenges, exacerbated by a high rate of unemployment and limited access to resources," said Amelia Price, CTS's Corridor Manager since 2014. "TCB is just one piece of the puzzle to improve the health of our residents, our environment, and our economic strength."

The corridor — originally home to a department store, a hat gallery, a pet store, and more in the 1950s and 60s — is still a retail and eatery hotspot.

"BGE is about community — and what it means to one person may be different to the next. But there's something here for you," said Shalimar Thomas, Executive Director of the North Broad Renaissance. "I grew up in the neighborhood, my mom still lives there, and it's where my son catches the bus to school. It's always meant a lot to me, and it blows me away that I get to be part of the revitalization that's taking place."

In addition to its impact on the businesses at the intersection, TCB has helped to provide economic opportunity to returning citizens.

"We were very intentional about hiring cleaning ambassadors to give them another chance. We make it clear to the staff that your past does not define you, and we look out for them like family," said Price. "We provide the training and confidence these men and women need to move on to a sustainable career elsewhere when they're ready."

Overall, the work that the TCB crew provides is a sign of investment in the corridor — something that reinforces the pride that businesses and residents feel for the shopping district.

"TCB's work means everything to me — and to the area. And seeing the cleaning ambassadors out there is sense of pride about this locale where we do business," said Nelson. "They're personable, they look out for you — it's just an uplifting effort."

What it comes down to, Nelson says, is the desire to invest in this corridor. Shalimar Thomas agrees.

"When the community sees the cleaning ambassadors, for so many people, they see someone investing in them in a way that no one else has before," said Thomas. "Just cleaning the corridor shows the community that someone is paying attention. It's a broom and pans, but it's so much more."

Broad, Germantown, and Erie A Jump in Cleanliness

In 6 short years, BGE's Litter Index block average jumped from a cluttered 2.5 in 2017 to a manageable 1.8 in 2023. The 3800 block of Germantown Avenue saw a remarkable transformation, from a score of 4, indicating large-scale trash dumping, to a score of 1.75.

- Litter to no litter
- Litter that can be picked up by one person
- Litter that needs a team to clean up
- Litter that requires a large effort or machinery for clean up



2017 Index Block Average 2.5

2023 Index Block Average 1.8



Cleaning is Just One Piece of the Puzzle

It takes more than cleaning to bring businesses, jobs, and vibrancy to neighborhood commercial corridors. That’s why 28 of the 39 TCB partner organizations also benefited from economic revitalization programs funded through the Department of Commerce in 2023.

\$4,569,700

in Neighborhood Economic Development Grants to help pay for commercial buildings and mixed-use developments in high need areas.

\$2,520,000

in Community Development Corporation Support Grants and Tax Credits to help neighborhood nonprofits hire staff and keep the lights on.

\$2,135,000

in Targeted Corridor Management Program grants to embed economic development professionals in neighborhood business districts.

\$415,000

in Corridor Enhancement Grants to fund special projects like street festivals, public art, and safety initiatives.

Maintaining the Vibrancy of North 5th Street

Settled in the most linguistically diverse zip code in the state, North 5th Street in Olney boasts a wide range of businesses — not only in what they provide to customers, but in their rich cultural diversity. And thanks to efforts led by North 5th Street Revitalization Project (N5SRP), it’s bustling at all hours of the day, with residents waiting for the Route 47 bus on their way to work and parents picking up their children from daycare. A crucial priority of N5SRP is ensuring the cleanliness of the commercial corridor that they serve.



Warren Russell, belovedly referred to as ‘Burger’ by business owners and residents, celebrated his 15 year anniversary as a cleaning ambassador in 2023.



“We like to say that 5th Street is a welcome mat to Olney, and the cleaner it is, the more likely people will support our businesses. Blight and broken windows contribute to violence in neighborhoods, and the cleaning program is the linchpin to the whole effort. Having a clean neighborhood is good for business and for residents to feel safe, welcome, and willing to shop,” says Stephanie Michel, Executive Director of N5SRP.

N5SRP has been dedicated to beautifying the streets for years, but the introduction of TCB in 2020 has allowed its efforts to expand, both geographically and in the number of cleaning ambassadors the organization is able to hire. The support from TCB has also allowed N5SRP to increase its cleaning schedule to seven days a week and offer a higher wage for its crew members.

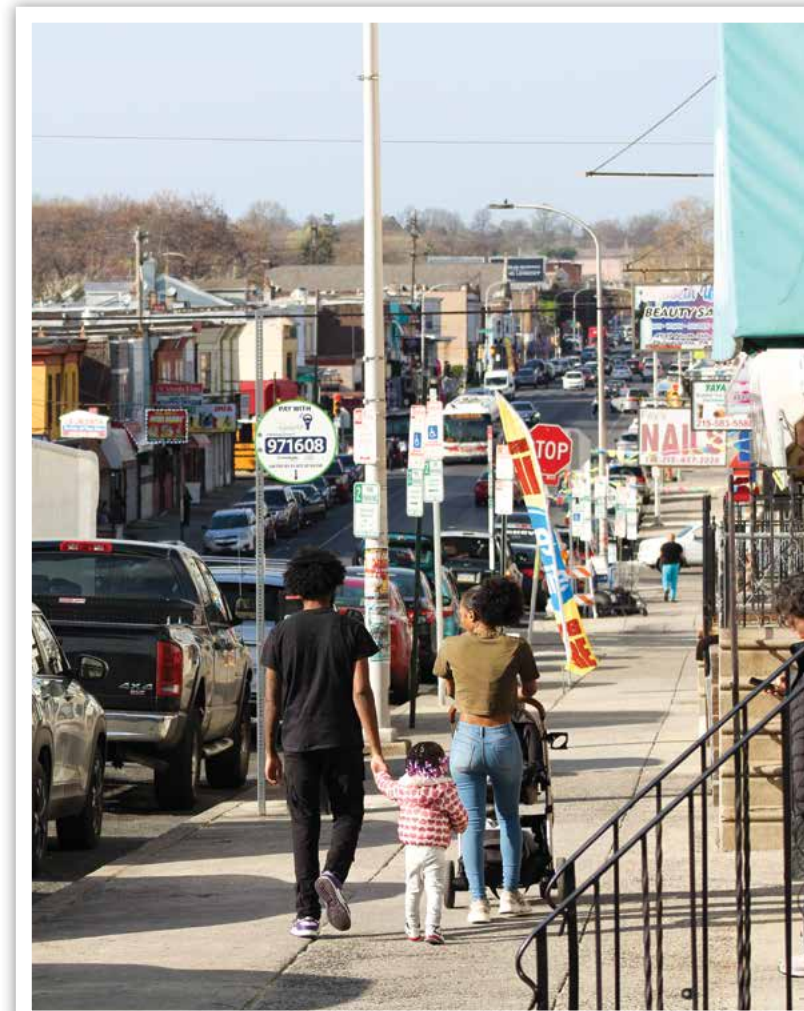
One particular cleaning ambassador, Warren Russell, has cleaned the corridor for 15 years — long before TCB entered the picture. Living just a block off North 5th, he has become a neighborhood fixture and a person that residents trust and rely on. Off and on, the area has experienced episodes of short dumping, but Warren and his team members take great pride in addressing these issues and removing harmful litter.

“Warren is well-known throughout the neighborhood. Residents appreciate him, and on the flip side, he sees the value in keeping our streets clean,” said Stephanie. “It’s afforded him a lot of opportunities for professional training, but also to form connections with his teammates, the business owners and the residents. And at N5SRP, that’s what we’re all about — making connections.”



“We take a holistic approach to community and economic development. We provide a variety of services to our business owners, but we know that cleanliness of the neighborhood contributes to their success.”

—Stephanie Michel, Executive Director of N5SRP



Fifth Street just north of Roosevelt Boulevard is where local shoppers can find Italian, Colombian, and Mexican bakeries all on the same block.

Support from Small Business Owners

Businesses throughout the city frequently express how much they value TCB. They recognize that clean sidewalks encourage customer visits and that the presence of friendly uniformed cleaning ambassadors helps put people at ease.

Nor Faride, owner of Burmese grocery store Nor Halal since 2021, reports that Southeast Asian Mutual Assistance Association Coalition's (SEAMAAC) TCB crew not only makes her feel safer, but the customers as well.

It seems clear: when you have a clean business corridor, it attracts more shoppers. But many businesses are going one step further to partner with TCB crews and build on the work they do to remove litter. In addition to engaging with the cleaning teams and offering water and refreshments to crew members, certain business associations have also joined forces with their local TCB crews to establish initiatives like the Pilot Powerwashing Program in Germantown and the Business Block Captain program in East Falls. TCB has also been instrumental in educating and encouraging business owners to be part of the process.

"We have assisted in communicating with businesses that have been habitual in putting trash out on days not designated for pickup," said Matthew George, Commercial Corridor Manager from Germantown United Community Development Corporation. "We have approached them with literature describing our efforts on keeping the corridor clean and requested they stick to the Streets Department pickup schedule and to hold off on putting bags out before or after that given time."

TCB is proud to work in service of — and in partnership with — Philadelphia's businesses, their customers, and the surrounding community.



"Ever since the cleaning ambassadors have been out there, people want to come in. Not everyone has respect for the streets where we live and work, but they do. And they make it easier for others to respect the streets, too."

— Nor Faride, Owner of Nor Halal

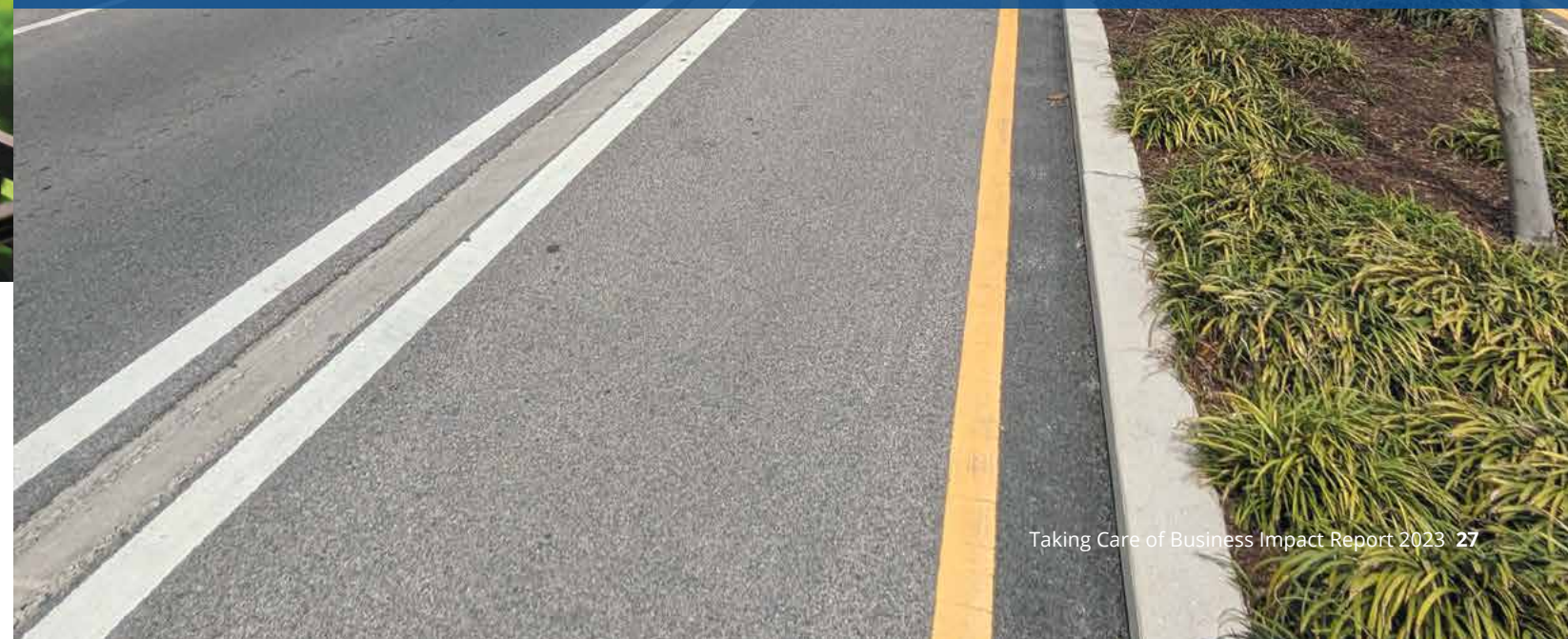


Nor Halal serves South Philadelphia's South Asian community with vegetables and other ingredients specific to Burmese and other cuisines.



GROWTH OPPORTUNITIES

GOAL 4 Expand opportunities for local organizations and minority-owned cleaning companies to grow





East Passyunk Revitalization Corporation (PARC) subcontracts with ACAM Management to hire and manage their TCB crew. The crew members uniformed in red, along with PARC and ACAM's leadership, accepted an award at the 2023 TCB Pep Rally.

\$2,161,000

in subcontracts across 3 minority-owned cleaning companies in 2023. This is a 900% increase since 2020.

TCB contracts with neighborhood nonprofits that know the litter challenges of their communities best. Some of these organizations subcontract with for-profit, locally owned and operated cleaning companies to manage their cleaning crews. TCB subcontracts help build the businesses' capacity to compete for larger government and private contracts in the future.

Leveraging Opportunity

Jeffrey Fortune didn't set out to own a cleaning business. He started cleaning as a young man to save money toward other ventures. But as fortune would have it, his business, ACAM management, is now 25 years old and provides a range of sanitation services throughout Philadelphia.

Through its partnership with TCB, ACAM has been able to invest directly into its business, including freeing up funds that would have otherwise been needed for sales and marketing. Those dollars were instead reallocated to purchase a new pickup truck, power washer, and leaf blowers. As a result of TCB, ACAM was also able to pay down debt incurred during the pandemic.

"Like many others, we lost significant revenue due to the shutdown of commercial indoor business — but our bills still had to be paid. The TCB program has been a much-needed source of dependable revenue," said Jeffrey.

To Jeffrey, the most significant benefit has been the ability to create jobs and hire more employees — particularly for individuals whose opportunities are commonly limited in the workforce. Many of his employees are returning citizens or in recovery.

"This program gives us the opportunity to expand, reload, and bring more people on board. For me as a business owner, it's a great thing to be able to expand our business, but for me personally, it's a lot more than that," said Jeffrey. "Having a supported job is vital for anyone struggling and looking to get back on track. I'm 110% invested in this concept and its ability to give inspiration and hope to the person who doesn't see opportunity when they look around."

As a South Philly native, it gives Jeffrey pleasure to keep the neighborhood clean, and presentable. He is proud when store owners and neighbors acknowledge the work that he and his cleaning ambassadors do. But what is most important to him is that the work is done with purpose.

He says, "Anyone can sweep, but you have to give meaning to it. As a company, thanks in part to the assistance we've received from TCB, we've swept all over the city, but our purpose is to make these areas safe, to foster pride in the neighborhoods we serve, and to give opportunity to those that need it most."

Jeffrey Fortune





Trina Benjamin

U.S. Small Business Administration Recognizes Trina Benjamin, Owner of TWB Cleaning

The U.S. Small Business Administration named Trina Benjamin, owner of TWB Cleaning Contractors, as its Eastern Pennsylvania District Minority-Owned Small Business of the Year for 2023. TCB nonprofits subcontract with TWB to hire and manage their cleaning crews.

Over 10 years, TWB has grown from one employee and no sales in its first year, to more than 40 employees and annual sales of more than \$500,000. As a Philadelphia-based company, which takes pride in hiring formerly-incarcerated residents, it recirculates its revenue into the local economy.

TWB's clients include the City of Philadelphia, Enon Coulter Community Development Corporation, the Enterprise Center, and Wells Fargo. TWB's TCB subcontracts enabled the company to scale up its staffing and equipment, increase revenue streams, and compete for contracts with corporate clients.



TCB provides a staff base that organizations can leverage and cross-train to meet other community goals, like planting trees in South Kensington.

Prioritizing Connection

South Kensington Community Partners (SKCP) is a small, place-based nonprofit, described as something of a hybrid between a civic association and community development organization. Its core programming ranges from clean and green initiatives to foreclosure prevention, housing and utility assistance through the Neighborhood Advisory Committee program, and acting as a neighborhood "help desk." Its service area spans Eastern North Philadelphia. At the heart of SKCP's mission is connection.

Located in one of the most rapidly gentrifying neighborhoods in the city, SKCP is working to support a circular economy that responds to the economic development that accompanies the changing landscape but one that includes longtime residents, businesses, and their concerns.

Recognizing that many longtime residents may be priced out of parts of its service area, SKCP practices "place-based hiring," prioritizing the hire of current residents but also those who have some history and connection to where the work happens. Thus, the organization's mission of connection increasingly includes a focus on the commercial life of the area, connecting businesses to resources including local job seekers. The TCB program has come along at a critical time and is an important, even defining, tool for the success of this work.

SKCP is no stranger to cleaning and greening initiatives, having supported community gardens and park stewards, planted hundreds of trees, and partnered with Pennsylvania Horticultural Society with its LandCare workforce program for more than a decade.

While that program allows the organization to hire and train seasonal workers, TCB goes an important step further in offering year-round employment opportunities and training.

Many of SKCP's cleaning ambassadors often gain additional skills in landscaping, tree care, and green infrastructure through cross-training. They work as LandCare technicians, planting and caring for trees across the neighborhood. They also monitor Green Stormwater Infrastructure through Philadelphia Water Department's Soak It Up Adoption program. The organization's next goal is to extend its fee-for-service business to individual blocks and homeowners associations. This expansion aims to leverage the resources and support provided by the TCB program to generate more employment opportunities while enhancing the cleanliness, greenery, and connectivity of neighborhoods for residents and businesses alike.

Partnerships

TCB relies on vital partnerships within and beyond government to create impact in our neighborhood's commercial areas.

The partner organizations that TCB contracts with strengthen environmental resilience efforts, especially for the historically underserved neighborhoods and commercial areas they serve. Our partnerships are bountiful.

The Sanitation Department (Sanitation) supports TCB by dedicating crews to haul away the trash collected by many TCB crews. Sanitation also educates businesses and residents about their responsibility to keep sidewalks clean through its Streets and Walkways Education and Enforcement Program (SWEEP). Cleaning ambassadors work hand in hand with Sanitation and SWEEP as "eyes and ears" on the street who maintain clean commercial areas and consistently report issues such as graffiti and illegal dumping to City departments for resolutions.

Multiple agencies provide workforce trainings for cleaning ambassadors to attain credentials highly valued by employers, such as career readiness, workforce safety, and mental health resources. This ultimately builds the future workforce pipeline and careers in sustainability and beyond.

Through the work of the Office of Clean and Green initiatives, the Parker Administration is dedicated to organizing government agencies, community members, and businesses to maintain clean public spaces, enhance the economic success of businesses, and grow employment opportunities. Together, we each have a role in reducing waste, increasing recycling, and working towards a more sustainable future for all Philadelphians.

Denis Murphy
Deputy Commerce Director,
Office of Corridor Improvements
and Business Services,
Department of Commerce



Allison Carafa of South Kensington Community Partners works closely with SWEEP Officer Mason to coordinate sanitation education and enforcement efforts. They are just one example of a TCB organization partnering across City agencies to holistically address litter.



2023 TCB Contract Holders

CENTRAL PHILADELPHIA

Philadelphia Chinatown Development Corporation
Chinatown (Between 9th & 12th from Arch to Spring Garden)

LOWER NORTHEAST PHILADELPHIA

Fishtown Kensington Area Business Improvement District
Frankford Avenue (Delaware to Lehigh) • Front Street (Poplar to Montgomery)

Frankford Community Development Corporation
Frankford Avenue (Adams to Bridge) • Kensington Ave (Adams to Frankford) • Adams Avenue (Kensington to Frankford) • Oxford Ave (Griscom to Frankford) • Margaret Street (Frankford to Darrah) • Pratt Street (Griscom to Darrah) • Granite Street (Frankford to Darrah)

Impact Services Community Development Corporation
Castor Avenue (Aramingo to Amber) • Kensington & Allegheny • Port Richmond Industrial District

New Kensington Community Development Corporation
Allegheny Avenue (Tulip to Richmond) • Frankford Avenue (Lehigh to Clearfield) • Front Street (Montgomery to York) • Kensington Avenue (York to Cambria) • Richmond Street (Allegheny to Ann) • Somerset Street (Kensington to Frankford)



NORTH PHILADELPHIA

Allegheny West Foundation
Allegheny Avenue (17th to Fox) • Hunting Park Avenue (Allegheny to 22nd) • Lehigh Avenue (17th to 26th) • North 22nd Street (Lehigh to Allegheny)

Beech Community Services
Cecil B. Moore Avenue (Broad to 24th)

Called to Serve Community Development Corporation
Broad, Germantown & Erie Intersection

Enon Coulter Community Development Corporation
Broad Street (Kerbaugh to Wyoming, Tabor to Champlost, Spencer to Godfrey, Wyoming to Wagner) • Hunting Park Avenue (Old York to 16th) • Old York Road (Wyoming to Wagner) • Roosevelt Boulevard (local from Old York to 16th)

Esperanza
Hunting Park Avenue (5th to 9th) • N 5th Street (Erie to Roosevelt Blvd) • Rising Sun Avenue (Erie Ave to N 5th & Wyoming to the Roosevelt Blvd) • Wyoming Avenue (5th to Castor)

Fairmount Community Development Corporation
Girard Avenue (College to 31st)

Francisville Neighborhood Development Corporation
Ridge Avenue (Broad to College)

HACE
Allegheny Avenue (A to Howard) • American Street (Huntingdon to Indiana) • Front Street (Gurney to Westmoreland) • Gurney Street (Front to A) • Lehigh Avenue (6th to B)

Lower North Philadelphia Community Development Corporation
Ridge Avenue (Jefferson to 31st)

North 5th Street Revitalization Project
N 5th Street (Roosevelt Blvd to Godfrey)

North Broad Renaissance
North Broad Street (Spring Garden to Erie)

One Day at a Time, Inc.
Susquehanna Ave (Broad to 20th)

South Kensington Community Partners
American Street (Master to Cecil B. Moore) • Girard Avenue (Front to 10th)

Spring Garden Community Development Corporation
Broad, Fairmount & Ridge Triangle • Fairmount Avenue (Broad to Pennsylvania) • Spring Garden Street (Broad to Pennsylvania) • Pennsylvania Ave (Spring Garden to Fairmount)

Hartranft Playground Alliance
Germantown Avenue (York to Somerset) • Lehigh Avenue (11th to Hutchinson)

NORTHEAST PHILADELPHIA

Oxford Circle Christian Community Development Association
Bustleton Avenue (Magee to Cottman) • Cottman Avenue (Horrocks to Bustleton) • Castor Avenue (Roosevelt to Cottman) • Five Points • Rising Sun Avenue (Roosevelt to Cottman)

Tacony Community Development Corporation
Torresdale Avenue in Wissinoming & Tacony Neighborhood

NORTHWEST PHILADELPHIA

East Falls Community Development Corporation
Ridge & Midvale • River Road (North Ferry to Calumet)

Enon Coulter Community Development Corporation
Cheltenham Avenue • Lower Ogontz Avenue • Ogontz Avenue Old York Road & Oak Lane • Stenton Avenue • Vernon Road • Wadsworth Avenue • Washington Lane

Germantown United Community Development Corporation
Germantown & Cheltenham • Greene Street (Schoolhouse Lane to Rittenhouse) • Maplewood Mall • Wayne Avenue (Cheltenham to Rittenhouse)

Ready, Willing, and Able
Germantown Avenue (Berkley to Coulter) • Berkley Street • Wayne Avenue

Chew and Cheltenham Community Development Corporation
Chew & Cheltenham • Chew & Phil Ellena • Chew & Washington

SOUTH PHILADELPHIA

Greater Philadelphia Community Alliance
Point Breeze Avenue • West Passyunk Avenue • West Snyder Avenue

Passyunk Avenue Revitalization Corporation
Broad & Passyunk • Snyder Avenue (Front to 17th) • South Broad Street (Washington to Oregon) • Washington Avenue (Front to 25th St)

SEAMAAC, Inc.
South 7th Street (McKean to Porter)

United Merchants of South 9th Street
9th Street in the Italian Market

WEST & SOUTH WEST PHILADELPHIA

ACHIEVEability
60th Street (Arch to Catharine) • 63rd Street (Market to Arch & Race to Media) • Market Street (56th to 63rd)

African Cultural Alliance of North America
52nd & Baltimore • Chester Avenue (54th to 58th) • Elmwood Avenue (65th to 70th) • Woodland Avenue (47th to 70th)

Business Association of West Parkside
North 52nd Street (Poplar to Parkside) • Lancaster Avenue (52nd to 59th) • Lansdowne Avenue (52nd to 56th) • Parkside Avenue (Belmont to 52nd)

Centennial Parkside Community Development Corporation
West Girard Avenue in Parkside

Lancaster Avenue 21st Century Business Association Community Development Corporation
Lancaster Avenue (34th to 52nd)

The Enterprise Center Community Development Corporation
52nd Street (Arch to Baltimore) • Market Street (45th to 56th)

Wynnefield Overbrook Revitalization Organization
54th Street (Upland to Lebanon) • 63rd Street (Overbrook to Lancaster) • Haverford Avenue (Brockton to City Ave) • Lancaster Avenue (59th to 63rd) • Lansdowne Avenue (59th to 63rd)

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CITY OF PHILADELPHIA