



**MICHIGAN CENTRAL**

## **Michigan Central @ SXSW**

### **Overview**

Michigan Central is a cultural district and innovation community in Detroit, where innovators, designers and entrepreneurs come together to solve some of the world's most pressing challenges, particularly those involving physical, economic and social mobility. By providing access to cutting-edge tools and resources, Michigan Central empowers global innovators, culture makers, and community members to collaborate on groundbreaking solutions and test them in real time in the real world. Since opening in April 2023, Michigan Central has already become a thriving ecosystem that is home to more than 80 startups, and brings entrepreneurs, artists, Fortune 500 companies, philanthropy, governmental institutions, investors, creative thinkers and the larger Detroit community together to collaborate and test ideas in one place.

[www.michigancentral.com](http://www.michigancentral.com)



## **Michigan Central Station Opening Celebration Begins June 6, 2024**

Opened in 1913, Michigan Central Station once served as the gateway to Detroit. Designed by the same architectural firms behind New York's famed Grand Central, Michigan Central Station was considered to be one of the grandest depots in the United States. As tastes and technology changed in regards to travel, the Station closed in 1988, and for more than three decades, it was an infamous

symbol of Detroit's financial decline and disinvestment. In 2018, Ford Motor Company acquired the property, and Bill Ford Jr. envisioned a new life for the iconic structure as the centerpiece of a one-of-a-kind mobility innovation hub, Michigan Central, that will help Detroit reclaim its status as the world's home of innovation.



More than 3,000 workers from the skilled trades have spent the last six years meticulously restoring the Station to its original Beaux Arts glory. This June, for the first time in 36 years, the Station will open its doors to the public. This is the next step in making Michigan Central an iconic, anchor institution that offers inspiring experiences, programs and spaces for Detroit and the world.



## Michigan Central Programming

- **Innovation at Michigan Central:** In April 2023, the vacant former Book Depository building reopened as the home of Newlab at Michigan Central, housing entrepreneurs and inventors focused on the development of new sustainable and equitable solutions to mobility challenges. Newlab at Michigan Central's on-site shop space and purpose-built prototyping labs gives startups access to cutting-edge tools to develop the tech of the future that may otherwise be inaccessible due to barriers such as cost, maintenance, and storage.

- **The Michigan Central Art Program:** Driven by Detroit's arts and culture community, this program aims to integrate Michigan Central into the global arts scene while rooted in the local community. Centered on art, mobility, and society, the focus is on bringing communities together, overcoming physical divides, and sparking conversations on mobility and accessibility in Detroit and beyond.
- **Skills Programming:** Through training programs, Michigan Central is building up the talent that already exists here in Detroit – equipping Detroiters with the skills they need to land these in-demand jobs and help address the chronic issue of the underrepresentation of women and people of color in tech.

## Key Programming Highlights

### Innovation (Newlab at Michigan Central)

- Partnerships/projects include:
  - Michigan Central has partnered with the State of Michigan to create the Advanced Aerial Innovation Region, a first-of-its-kind urban airspace infrastructure for piloting new drone and related technologies, developing real-world applications, and addressing accessibility, safety and regulatory challenges.
  - Michigan Central is home to America's first dynamic EV-charging road, through a multi-year collaboration with Electreon, the State of Michigan, and the City of Detroit.
  - With the Port of Monroe, Michigan Central is working to create a real-world, multimodal logistics technology testing lab to strengthen the global supply chain.
  - These are just a few projects going on at Michigan Central. Key growth stats include:
    - 84 startups as of February 2024
    - Nearly 500 employees across all companies
    - 51% of startups have at least one underrepresented founder
    - 50%/50% split on startups from Michigan vs. elsewhere
    - Startups have raised a combined \$600M in venture capital
    - 25,000+ visitors/407 events since launch in April 2023
- <https://michigancentral.com/innovation>



## Art

- Projects/partnerships include:
  - The first phase of the Art Program included original art installations at Bagley Mobility Hub, where local artists Patrick Ethen, Senghor Reid, DeMaciio and MasPaz created one-of-a-kind pieces that engage and celebrate the communities.
  - Lauren Ruffin and Kelly Kivlan were hired in early 2024 to lead strategy and curation of Michigan Central's arts program. They are working to cultivate a program that will create a sense of identity and community in Detroit, as part of Michigan Central's commitment to foster creativity and innovation at the intersection of art and technology.
  - The program is still in the early stages, but will include spaces, resources, collaborative opportunities and other programs for artists to hone their craft.
- <https://michigancentral.com/michigan-central-art-program>



## Skills

- Projects/partnerships include:
  - Newlab at Michigan Central hosts Black Tech Saturdays, a program designed to expand representation within the ecosystem and support underrepresented founders with connections and resources.
  - Michigan Central partnered with Builders & Backers and Heartland Forward to support aspiring entrepreneurs to test new ideas through a grant, startup bootcamp, and connections to local resources and programs to help launch their businesses.
    - In the past, 53% of their founders have been women and 57% have been Black, indigenous, or people of color.
  - Michigan Central partnered with Google to launch Code Next Detroit, a free computer science education program that meets Black, Latinx and Native American high school students in their own communities and provides the skills, mentorship and access to technology to build computer science-related careers.
    - Since launching, Code Next Detroit has grown to serve 150 Detroit youth.
  - In partnership with ChargerHelp! (a Black- and woman-owned company), Michigan Central launched an EV charger repair technician course to help Detroit residents become the nation's first nationally certified EV charger techs. The first cohort graduated in early 2024 with new cohorts kicking off throughout the year.

- As part of Michigan Central's work with CODE313, which focuses on STEM education for Detroit youth, Michigan Central hosted a drone demo day – more than 300 participants engaged in this effort to learn more about aerial technology. This event was so successful that MC/CODE313 is launching a program designed to help high school students learn the technical skills for the FAA drone piloting exam before graduating.
- <https://michigancentral.com/community/skills-programming>

