

For quite some time, Boston has consistently ranked near the top of the list for venture capital invested per capita in the United States. Supported by its myriad top tier schools, Boston is a leading source of innovation. So it comes as little surprise that according to the [2015 Global Startup Ecosystem Ranking](#), Boston is the second best city in the world for women entrepreneurs (while Miami is the fastest growing).

However, what might be surprising is that female business startups still lack the resources they need in order to succeed. The same can be said of [Los Angeles](#) and [Chicago](#).

As noted by the organization Women Entrepreneurs Boston, “Women make up more than half of Boston’s residents, yet 1 dollar out of every 23 dollars in commercial bank loans goes to women-owned businesses, while only three percent of venture capital investments go to businesses led by women.”

While there’s still much to be done to close the gap, Boston has a solid foundation of networks, incubators, and conferences that can assist its female entrepreneurs, as well as many resources that are intended specifically for them. The city is paving the way for female entrepreneurs to thrive through city initiatives, networking events and mentorship opportunities. We’re lucky to have some extraordinary female founders who are at the forefront of the Boston startup scene — [Diane Hessian](#) and [Bobbie Carlton](#) — helping us to curate this comprehensive list.

City Government & Non-Profit Resources

• Women Entrepreneurs Boston

In 2015, Mayor Martin J. Walsh launched [WE BOS](#) in order to bring more equity to the city’s thriving business ecosystem. WE BOS helps to connect female business leaders and provides opportunities to foster skills, get technical assistance, and plug into the existing business network.

• Women’s Advancement Department

As part of Walsh’s initiative, the [Office of Women’s Advancement](#) was launched to advocate for equity in the workplace and assistance in developing business skills. Working across the private, public, and nonprofit worlds, the office not only advocates but also provides workshops on skills such as salary negotiation.

“Mayor Marty Walsh is committed to the success of women, and Megan is his go-to person.

This office does a lot, but one of their best initiatives is a program to help women negotiate compensation. They have helped hundreds of women all over the city with this super high quality program.” - Diane Hessian, Chairman of C Space.

- **Women’s Entrepreneurial Council**

[WEC](#) is a conglomeration of the many organizations whose mission is to help female entrepreneurs. The group facilitates communication and coordination amongst the network of female-led businesses, and membership is open to the leadership of any organization that focuses on female entrepreneurs.

- **Center for Women & Enterprise**

The [CWE](#) is a great resource for women who just starting their business. The organization has helped tens of thousands of aspiring businesswomen with education, training, and assistance in getting a women’s business enterprise certification. Scholarships are also available.

“The top organization for women entrepreneurs — especially across all socioeconomic classes and types of businesses. This organization has been around for a long time and has fabulous programming — even if you want to open up a cookie business instead of a tech firm.”

- **Wonder Women Boston**

An open community of women from a variety of backgrounds—from professionals to creatives to students—[Wonder Women Boston](#) connects women from across the sectors of business, nonprofit, and community leadership.

- **Girls Who Code**

[Girls Who Code](#) is a national nonprofit whose goal is to close the gender gap in technology. Aimed at young women, the group has produced a pipeline of future female tech leaders.

- **RailsBridge Boston**

This group provides workshops for women wanting to learn how to use Rails or Ruby software for web development. [RailsBridge Boston](#) is focused on women who have little to no programming experience.

- **The Commonwealth Institute**

[The Commonwealth Institute](#) is a non-profit focused on advancing the careers of business women in leadership positions. Members include CEOs, senior corporate executives, entrepreneurs, executive directors of nonprofits and solo professionals.

“Commonwealth Institute is an organization focused on women who are leading companies. Some of the companies are growth companies and some are just smaller boutique firms. They are known for excellent programming.” - Diane Hessian

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Networks & Membership Organizations

- **The Boston Club**

[The Boston Club](#) is one of the largest communities of female executives and professionals in the northeast. The club offers programming and events, but also a directory for board placements and searches and a chance to post job listings.

“A typical women-executive club, with fabulous members and programming, and a world-class dedication to getting women on boards — as well as holding corporations accountable when they don’t have diversity.” - Diane Hessian

- **WEST**

Geared towards women working with science, technology, and engineering, [WEST](#) provides a learning community of programs and events that help to build business skills and connect members.

- **Boston Business Women**

Members of [Boston Business Women](#) are given access to conferences, workshops, and

mentorships that aid women in attaining their business goals. They also get discounts on local gyms, restaurants, and retail and marketing opportunities.

- **New England Network for Women**

Owned and operated by Stacey Mac, the [New England Network for Women](#) organizes cocktail parties and networking events for female entrepreneurs. The group also arranges overnight excursions and weeklong trips to places such as Costa Rica, for an alternative, more relaxing way connecting.

- **SheStarts**

[SheStarts](#) began in 2014 as an informal networking event. Quickly it grew into an environment not only for networking, but for coaching on business skills such as pitching concepts and telling brand stories.

- **SheEOs**

[SheEOs](#) is a meetup for women who are founders of high-growth startups in Boston. Members meet monthly to network, as well as hear from pertinent speakers.

“SheEOs is a network of over 100 women CEOs in Boston, most of whom are running early stage companies. It is a nurturing, interesting group of women who meet monthly and who also exist to help each other with everything from finding job candidates to raising money.”
- Diane Hessian

- **She Geeks Out**

Through a combination of events, networking and education, [She Geeks Out](#) provides the opportunity for women — predominantly in tech, science, biotech and new media - to get together, discuss and learn.

“She Geeks Out is a network of younger women in tech, some of whom are founders and some who work in tech companies. Meetings are full of energy and promise, and they are expanding. This is a great group, especially if you are a millennial, and a fabulous place to find good talent.” - Diane Hessian

- **Mass Innovation Nights (MIN)**

[Mass Innovation Nights](#) is an event that helps local entrepreneurs increase visibility for

their new products. Each month features a set of ten new companies.

“Mass Innovation Nights is a great resource for all entrepreneurs. Every month we help launch at least 10 new products for free, by using social media. We promote the products via our website, our weekly newsletter (a great resource for information on local opportunities) and via social media over a 30-day period, leading up to a monthly live event where a crowd of social media savvy guests tweets, blogs and posts video and pictures. In a single night we can generate lots of good visibility for local entrepreneurs and their new products. Of course, women entrepreneurs can launch with us any time (plan ahead, there is a waiting list) but every year we do at least one Female Founders event to coincide with Boston’s annual Women Entrepreneurs (WE BOS) week.” - Bobbie Carlton, founder of Innovation Nights, Innovation Women and Carlton PR & Marketing.

- **Innovation Women**

[Innovation Women](#) assists entrepreneurial, technical and innovative women with finding speaking engagements.

“Innovation Women is a speaker’s bureau for entrepreneurial, technical and innovative women. The goal is to get more women on stage at events and conferences, especially technical conferences where the lack of diversity can lead to some pretty boring conversations. We say that visibility equals opportunity. Speaking engagements can drive ‘customers, connections and cash’.” - Bobbie Carlton

- **Greenhorn Connect**

[Greenhorn Connect](#) helps build connections among entrepreneurial Bostonites through increased awareness of resources. The web portal offers a detailed schedule of what’s going on each month, and members are encouraged to submit events to the calendar.

“Managed by The Capital Network (also, an awesome resource if you are going for funding).” - Bobbie Carlton

Accelerators and Incubators

- **Future Boston**

[Future Boston](#) focuses on advocating for progressive and cultural growth in the city. Accelerate Boston, one of its programs, is designed to support entrepreneurs working in the

creative economy by offering mentorships and networking opportunities.

- **Smarter in the City**

Supporting entrepreneurs from underrepresented communities, [Smarter in the City](#) offers support to startups in the form of free workspace for five months, stipends, and mentorships that include seminars, presentations, and networking functions to connect teams to possible investors.

- **Mass Challenge**

[MassChallenge](#) is an accelerator that offers four month programs with access to workspace and industry experts who volunteer to assist startups. Access to educational programs, a global network of entrepreneurs, and grant awards.

“Mass Challenge is one of the top accelerators and business plan competitions in the world. They are also very focused on helping women entrepreneurs, and nearly 1/2 of their 125 companies for the last round had a least one woman founder. They measure it! If you are building a business and need mentoring, community, and visibility, this is THE place to be. And the space is super cool.” - Diane Hessian

- **WIN Lab Boston**

A year-long residency program for women entrepreneurs, the [WIN Lab](#) provides weekly programming from September to April, and includes access to presentations, workshops, and investors.

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Conferences

- **EMBLEM's Women and Minorities Entrepreneurship Conference**

Developed for women, minority, and LGBTQ business owners, [EMBLEM's Women and Minorities Entrepreneurship Conference](#) focuses on entrepreneurs who have raised less than \$2 million since starting. The conference provides an exhibition opportunity for startups where “one co-founder must be female, a minority, OR a member of the LGBTQ community,” but anyone can attend.

- **Women in Enterprise Summit**

The [Women in Enterprise Summit](#) focuses on gender equality in the entrepreneurial world. Executives from across sectors hold discussions on areas of female leadership, marketing, finance, innovation, and politics.

- **IDEAS UMASS Boston**

Created by the Boston Globe in 2004, [IDEAS UMASS Boston](#) is an annual conference that presents local and regional leaders and thinkers from across different sectors. Speakers provide insight into their ideas and innovations and creative, inclusive workshop-style sessions. The next brainstorm will take place on October 26, 2016.

- **The Massachusetts Conference for Women**

[The Massachusetts Conference for Women](#), started in 2005, hosts the largest gathering of business women in the state. Dozens of leading entrepreneurs and executives host presentations and skill-building workshops, and there is a big chance to network with many.

- **CWE Women Business Leaders Conference**

This [conference](#) hosts educational sessions for WBENC-certified businesses and other women business owners. Keynote speakers come from major companies and academia, and offer presentations on subjects such as negotiation and finance (both business and personal).

- **The Boston Women's Venture Summit**

Created by Capital W, the [Boston Women's Venture Summit](#) aims to connect women to capital. It features speakers, pitching, workshops and other relationship-building opportunities.

“Capital W is one of the great conferences for women looking to navigate the world of fundraising. There are opportunities for pitching as well as educational sessions and panels

that are known for their candor and insight.” - Diane Hessian

Publications

- **The Boston Globe Business section**

This might seem obvious, but the Pulitzer Prize-winning [newspaper](#) has a top notch business section that dishes out excellent articles on business trends, projections, and news.

- **Boston Business Journal**

[The Boston Business Journal](#) provides solid coverage of vertical industries—education, food and lifestyle, real estate and marketing are just a few—as well as up-to-date reporting on major business developments in the Boston area.

- **BostInno**

[BostInno](#) provides news articles on the startup world, tips for everyday business matters, and think pieces on a variety of local industries and trends.

“BostInno is the top publication for the innovation economy in Boston. It keeps you updated on what is happening, who is doing well, what changes are occurring, and what events are worth attending. Easy to read, fun, cool.” - Diane Hessian

- **The Hitchhiker’s Guide to Boston Tech**

[The Hitchhiker’s Guide to Boston Tech](#) is a great resource for getting to know Boston’s tech ecosystem. Links to various education, networking and industry resources abound, including a [list of Twitter handles](#) for Boston’s entrepreneurs.

- **StartHub**

[StartHub](#) is a public-private partnership serving as “Greater Boston’s homepage for the startup ecosystem”. Find news, events, jobs, investors, courses, workspaces, startups, incubators and other resources at this one stop shop.

“StartHub offers news about Boston’s tech and startup community, events, opportunities — but, you can also find a great roundup of videos and area voices blogging about a number of useful topics.” - Bobbie Carlton

- **VentureFizz**

[VentureFizz](#) is a digital platform for members of the Boston entrepreneurial community. The site features a robust job board, updates on deals, a comprehensive blog and an event calendar.

“In addition to a great events calendar, VentureFizz is also a great place to recruit and look for jobs.” - Bobbie Carlton

- **Boston Startups Guide**

[Boston Startups Guide](#) offers an up-to-date collection of startups, job openings, guides and more for the entrepreneurial community in Boston. Check out their carefully curated list of events for women in tech.

More from the Resource Center:

- [Small Business Loans for Women](#)
- [National Resources for Female Entrepreneurs](#)
- [An Introduction to Small Business Lending](#)