

Yeelen Beauty Makerspace Opens DC's First Shared Hub for Independent Beauty Brands

Mayor Bowser and DC leaders celebrate Yeelen Beauty Makerspace, a hub giving indie beauty founders access to manufacturing and business growth.

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-- [Yeelen Beauty Makerspace](#)

celebrated the official ribbon cutting of DC's first shared manufacturing hub for independent beauty brands. The standing room only event brought together city leaders, including DC Mayor Muriel Bowser, small-business champions, and local entrepreneurs to mark an important step toward greater access to beauty manufacturing.

A [2022 McKinsey & Company report](#)

found that while the beauty industry is worth \$60 billion, only \$2.5 billion goes to Black-owned businesses—even though Black consumers spend \$6.6 billion each year on beauty products.

Yeelen Beauty Makerspace is a 3,000-square-foot co-manufacturing and tech hub designed to reduce time-to-market and upfront capital needs for small and indie brands that was made possible with generous support from Deputy Mayor for Planning and Economic Development, Wacif, JPMorganChase, Inspire Access, BRED, and SEED Commons.

"Manufacturing access is the missing bridge for so many promising beauty founders," said Rahama Wright, Founder & CEO of Yeelen Beauty Makerspace. "Today, we turned that bridge into a runway—where production equipment, technical support, and training meet a community committed to inclusive growth."

Mayor Bowser highlighted the importance of the makerspace for DC's economy. "This is what



At the ribbon cutting ceremony, DC Mayor Muriel Bowser and Ward 7 Councilmember Wendell Felder mix body scrub with Rahama Wright, Founder and CEO of Yeelen Beauty Makerspace, DC's first shared manufacturing hub for independent beauty brands.

investing in and believing in our community looks like—a hub where beauty entrepreneurs and small beauty companies can manufacture locally, collaborate, and scale beyond their home kitchens,” said Mayor Bowser. “This is exactly the kind of innovation we’re proud to support through our DC Locally Made Manufacturing Grant, and we can’t wait to see all the DC success stories that begin at Yeleen Beauty Makerspace.”

Members of Yeleen Beauty Makerspace can use manufacturing equipment to make and package their products, plus safe storage for materials. They also get access to business classes, connections to suppliers, and programs that help them confidently price, package, and sell their products.

Local beauty entrepreneurs like Alicia Blair, owner of HerSol Beauty, a vegan hair and skin care company, see the space as a game-changer. “What excites me about the Yeleen Beauty Makerspace is the access to professional equipment—like filling and labeling machines—that would otherwise be outside my budget. This space will allow me to scale, save time, and reach more people with products that truly make a difference,” said Blair.

“This is about jobs, ownership, and fair supply chains,” Wright added. “By lowering barriers to manufacturing, we can help hundreds of founders grow revenue, hire locally, and bring more clean, effective products to market.”

At the ribbon cutting, Mayor Bowser also announced the launch of the [Fast Beauty Initiative](#), which will reduce training hour requirements for cosmetology and barbering licenses, making it faster and less costly for aspiring professionals to start their careers. Approved by the Board of Barber and Cosmetology, the new rules will move into formal rulemaking this fall.

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About Yeleen Beauty Makerspace - Yeleen Beauty Makerspace is a shared manufacturing facility and community hub in Washington, DC, created to help small and indie beauty brands, particularly founders of color, scale faster and more affordably. The makerspace provides production lines, formulation support, and business education, alongside a network of partners and mentors that accelerates growth from concept to commercial scale. Yeleen Beauty Makerspace was founded by entrepreneur Rahama Wright, who also founded Shea Yeleen, an ethical skincare brand distributed by major retailers and built on a supply chain that creates living-wage jobs for women in West Africa.

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