



How we created a tool to find innovative solutions to homelessness

Access Ventures wanted to dedicate resources to alleviate regional poverty and homelessness; Render developed a replicable program to bring multiple innovators and solutions to our community.

Services

Program Development
Project Management
Marketing
Storytelling

Clients

Access Ventures





Homelessness is a challenge in most American cities. In 2017, Access Ventures desired a new approach to addressing that challenge and alleviating poverty regionally in Louisville and Southern Indiana.

Initially, addressing homelessness required a deeper understanding of the landscape, the resources our community was already providing, the gaps in available support, and an analysis of how to best address the need. Something that stood out to us initially during our research was Louisville's eviction rate. In 2017, when we first started working with Access Ventures to address homelessness, the eviction rate in Louisville was 4.82%. At the time, that was 3x higher than New York City, and double the national average.



Digging deeper we found that Louisville was evicting, on average, 16 households a day, resulting in about 6,000 evictions a year. For reference, Chicago, a city with a population triple the size of Louisville, evicts only 1,000 more households a year. Louisville's eviction rate quadrupled that of our neighboring midwestern city. Additionally, these numbers were before the Covid-19 pandemic, which has only exacerbated the eviction crisis.

According to The Eviction Lab, “the lack of affordable housing sits at the root of a host of social problems, from poverty and homelessness to educational disparities and health care. That means understanding the eviction crisis is critical to effectively addressing these problems and reducing inequality.” Since the ripple effect created by evictions can extend well beyond homelessness, addressing this issue is critical to the long-term health and vibrancy of our communities.

Our thesis for this work was that if we can work to alleviate the impacts of the affordable housing crisis, we are working upstream from homelessness, and working to reduce households entering homelessness tomorrow.



Two ways to address the lack of affordable housing include 1) creating more affordable housing units, and 2) increasing the purchasing power of those at risk of eviction. Both ways are needed, but the high eviction rate showed us that people had homes, they just couldn't afford to stay in them.

Our research into this subject underscored all of the ways it is expensive to be poor in America, and specifically, we identified that the ancillary costs of housing make it difficult for people to make rent and prevent eviction. With this analysis in mind, we created a tool that would bring innovative ideas for solving these problems to market within the region.

We designed, built, and launched the Reconstruct Challenge, a reverse pitch competition where we communicated the problem we were working to solve regionally and worked to actively find innovators from around the country who were working on solutions to address the problem. The Reconstruct Challenge is unique in that we intentionally kept our “problem statement” wide—the goal was to capture solutions that might not have obvious implications for housing at first glance, but by mitigating those ripple effects upstream of homelessness, could create real impact in unexpected ways.





e, legal and easy way to rent a
room to another generation



EMPTY NESTERS

E.g. A spare room and desire to age in home

- ✓ Extra Income
- ✓ Friendship
- ✓ Chore help (optional)

We built a panel of 30 evaluators from across the country working in different related industries to provide feedback on each proposed solution and score each application. We hosted a live pitch event in front of over 300 local leaders and stakeholders, and our expert selection committee determined the six finalists.

Each of the six finalists received \$300,00 in grant funding from Access Ventures to pilot their proposed solutions in the Louisville market. Depending on pilot results, finalists were eligible for funds from a total pool of \$1M for further support.





\$48M+

of food stamp benefits unlocked
for families in Kentucky

10

mortgages supported
and subsidized

20,385

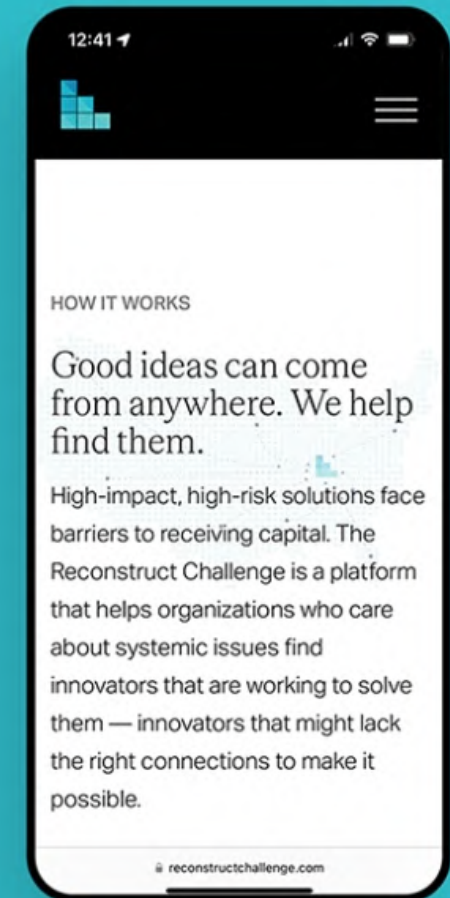
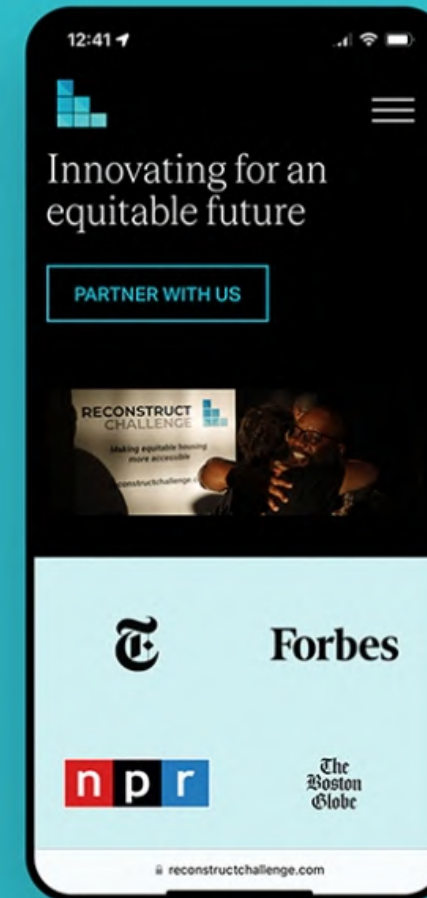
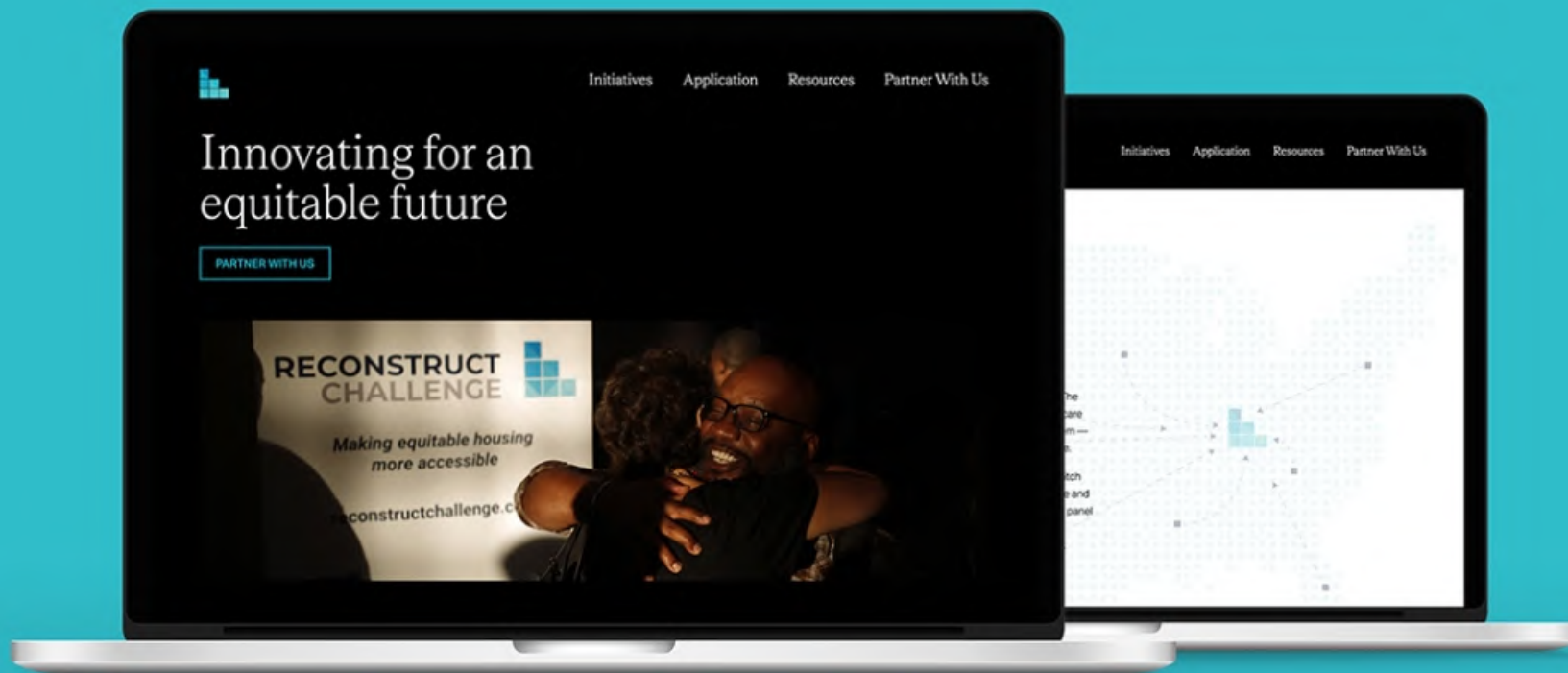
lives impacted

114

affordable housing units
made accessible

The success of the Reconstruct Challenge dedicated to housing encouraged Access Ventures to use the same tools to address other social challenges. We worked with a local creative agency, Bullhorn, to build a website to showcase the impact of our housing challenge as well as formalize the Reconstruct Challenge as a replicable program that can be used to solve other community problems. Access Ventures asked for our help to launch a second Reconstruct Challenge dedicated to addressing the challenges surrounding employment and the barriers to employment that exist for low-income families.

You can find more information about Reconstruct employment at reconstructchallenge.com





**Work
with us**

Website

workwithrender.com

Phone

502 286 9191

Email

info@workwithrender.com