

# Catherine Esselman

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XAVIER UNIVERSITY, 1999-2003, BACHELOR OF ARTS, Spanish Major, Communications Minor

## CAT CONSULTING, LLC

Economic Development through  
Retail, Creativity and Equity

EST 2022

## CITY OF INDIANAPOLIS, DEPT. OF METROPOLITAN DEVELOPMENT

Created and implemented the city's first  
downtown retail strategy, specifically  
addressing mixed-use development and the  
retail storefronts on key commercial corridors.

## STARTUP317 2017-PRESENT

- An intentional program to scale small CPG businesses in Downtown Indianapolis
- Inclusive Economic Development in action by securing high-traffic storefronts for historically underrepresented individuals and businesses in the community to scale and accelerate their brand
- Since 2023, three new storefronts in our retail accelerator program at the Stutz, and one signed a lease for traditional a storefront space

Surveyed and inventoried downtown retail real estate to determine opportunities and alignment with new developments.

Provided counsel and strategy for dozens of small businesses seeking downtown locations to relocate or expand.

Advised the administration on new developments, redevelopment scenarios, and retail opportunities for local, creative brands.

## GANGGANG CULTURE

2022-PRESENT

CCLLC was selected to manage and lead a new grant funded pilot program, In The Mix. It is GANGGANG's signature commercial real estate and retail initiative, which provides direct investment and space to eligible business owners. Since 2023 the program achieved:

- 3 new storefronts opened in Downtown Indianapolis
- Business coaching and advisory services for over 30 small businesses.
- Secured critically important real estate that was used for NBA All-Star
- Guided real estate strategy for GANGGANG CULTURE

## CAPITOL IMPROVEMENT BOARD

2023-PRESENT

- Developed and designed Indianapolis' Official Visitor Center and Gift Shop, The INDEX. The new concept provides museums, venues, and cultural icons an opportunity to make an impression with their merchandise and exhibits in the heart of downtown Indianapolis.
- Budget over \$1M, including feasibility, design, partnerships, staffing, and ongoing marketing support.

## DEVELOP INDY 2019-2022

Economic Development  
Department of City of Indianapolis

- Economic Development Project Manager, housed at Indy Chamber
- Interim Executive Director City Market
- Murals for Racial Justice, Summer 2020

## DOWNTOWN INDY 2014-2019

Director, Real Estate

- Marketing and Promotion of Economic Development Opportunities
- Created Startup 317, Pop Up Shop Program
- Developed Downtown Employee Appreciation Week
- Managed Downtown Living Tours

## PENN REAL ESTATE 2009-2014

Owner/Broker

Represented both owners and tenants on the acquisition and disposition of commercial real estate assets. Sectors including multi family, office and retail

## SITE CENTERS 2005-2009

Director of Leasing

- Responsible for new tenant leasing of retail centers in the West Region, totaling more than 3M square feet.
- Assisted with new project development and feasibility studies.

PLEASE CONTACT CATHERINE FOR MORE INFORMATION: [33catmarie@gmail.com](mailto:33catmarie@gmail.com)

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On the boards of LISC and SEND, Assistant Basketball Coach (8-year-olds), avid thrifter, retail enthusiast, and budding yogi

My career has progressed in the last ten years by collaborating with and convincing public and private partners on new approaches and methods for addressing old problems and inequities in small-scale commercial real estate. I have created opportunities for partnerships of property owners and entrepreneurs by closing the gaps between supply and demand.

Some recent projects [Cat Consulting](#) completed include The city of Indianapolis and its downtown retail strategy; we [created new policy initiatives](#) that address first-floor vacancies in our key commercial corridors and the end users who could creatively occupy them.

I am also contracted with our convention and tourism arm for the state and developed a new concept storefront that serves as a retail and visitor center, directly across the street from our convention center. The shop was recently featured in [Indy Monthly Magazine](#) and [@indexpanam](#) on Insta

Another large contract has been with [Ganggang Culture](#), we have opened three storefronts in partnership with J.P. Morgan Chase and The Urban League and partnered with property owners to lease spaces. I also secured the real estate that was used back in February for [NBA All Star](#).

## SUPERPOWERS

- Community Developer
- Coalition builder
- Large scale event activation
- Corridor development
- Cross sector alliances
- Creative Entrepreneurship
- Storefront Strategist
- Public Private Partnership
- Non-traditional incentive structures
- Innovative leasing strategies
- Collaborator
- Relational
- Intentional place-keeping
- Talent attraction and retention
- Centering of marginalized communities
- Stairstep approach to independence
- Deal structure with longer runways
- Real estate focused, people centered
- Opportunity costs evaluating
- Sources and uses budgets
- Measurable profit increases
- Impact investor
- Breaking down barriers and silos
- Reinventing traditional metrics of success
- Inclusive Growth strategies
- Public speaking and media appearances

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