

Murfreesboro's Morning Brew Coffee wants you to be an investor — here's how

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Crowdfunding platform Mainvest isn't a donation, but a investment program where individuals can support small businesses.



Tayo Duvall, MTSU women's tennis coach, and her husband, Brett Duvall, opened Morning Brew Coffee and Biscuits at 405 N. Front St. in Murfreesboro. The shop sells made-to-order specialty coffee drinks, teas and smoothies; biscuits, pastries, muffins and cookies; and offers free Wi-Fi. Nancy DeGennaro/DNJ

When Tayo and Brett Duvall opened Morning Brew Coffee and Biscuits in August 2019 at 405 N. Front St. in Murfreesboro, they gave everything they had to make it happen.

"We basically did the build out and paid for it ourselves," said Tayo Bailey-Duvall, who juggles working at the shop and serving as the women's tennis coach at Middle Tennessee State University in Murfreesboro.

In search of a way to expand their business within a limited budget, the Duvalls discovered Mainvest, a relatively new funding platform that connects homegrown businesses with individual community investors.

"It's almost like a crowdfunding company. ... But it's an investment, not a donation," Duvall said. "People who make investments in your efforts or whatever business, they get money back every quarter."



Morning Brew Coffee and Biscuits is located at 405 N. Front St. in Murfreesboro. (Photo: Nancy DeGennaro/DNJ)

How Mainvest works

Established in 2018, Mainvest was launched in Massachusetts. In 2019, Tennessee became the first expansion market.

The Mainvest model is a revenue sharing note, explained Luke Arterburn, director of expansion for the company. You can become a participant starting at \$100.

While revenue sharing is similar to traditional business loans, repayment isn't based on a set monthly amount. Instead, the business shares a set percentage of revenue for a quarter until the investment is repaid during a pre-agreed time frame, plus a return, Arterburn explained.

"(Mainvest) is flexible ... and fulfills a huge need businesses ... to fund expansion and operation without taking on really inflexible terms and putting up personal security (such as a home)," Arterburn said.

So if revenue fluctuates seasonally, the business is still able to stay afloat.

"Having the community invested and involved in our growth also means we have an opportunity ... to do a little bit more with our shop," Duvall said.

Morning Brew started by serving an array of gourmet coffee drinks and smoothies, along with pastries, biscuits and bagels. Since then they've added acai bowls, soups and sandwiches.

The Duvalls plan to finish interior renovations as well as add a deep freezer, install a larger pastry case, purchase a sandwich steamer and add more soup containers.



Morning Brew Coffee and Biscuits owner Tayo Duvall blends up the keto-friendly Bullet Proof coffee drink. (Photo: Nancy DeGennaro/DNJ)

Other Tennessee participants in Mainvest

In addition to Morning Brew, there are currently four other small businesses in Tennessee participating in Mainvest:

- [Otto's Bar](#) in Nashville is seeking investment for a new bar concept.
- [Chivanada](#), a food truck that serves Latin fare in Nashville, plans to build out a physical restaurant.
- [Tempo Nashville](#), a coffee shop, plans to upgrade the current space and expand offerings.
- [The Naked River Brewing Company](#) in Chattanooga wants to increase beer can production and add seating in the taproom.

So far, Arterburn said, over 20 small businesses have reached their funding goals.

And Duvall hopes the program helps Morning Brew reach their goals, too.

Although buying equipment and completing renovations are planned, the Duvalls are also in the process of growing their arts and entertainment offerings. There's a painter coming in February and a musician in March.

Coffee with veterans is held the first Friday each month and a networking group meets there regularly.

"We want to host those types of things ... where the community can come in and use our space, get some coffee and hang out," Duvall said.

Eventually, Duvall hopes Morning Brew becomes a nonprofit shop with the sole purpose of giving back to the community.

The Duvalls are already moving toward that business model with Philanthropy Fridays, where a different charity is chosen to receive a portion of proceeds from the day.

"We are just looking for the community to invest in us," Duvall said. "And we are looking for ways for us to get involved in the community and give back."

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