

EWDD'S WEEKLY UPDATES



SUCCESS STORIES WEEK OF APRIL 4, 2022

MICROENTERPRISE RECOVERY GRANT PROGRAM

Financial Recovery Grants for Eligible
Microenterprises in the City of Los Angeles

\$8.5 MILLION
in grant funding



To learn more & to apply, visit: bit.ly/MicroenterpriseGrant

Applications will close April 15, 2022

APPLY BY 4/15 - MICROENTERPRISE GRANT

Applications are due at 11:59 PM Friday April 15, 2022 for the Microenterprise Recovery and Equity Fund grant programs. Up to \$15,000 in grants will be available to microenterprises to aid their economic recovery from COVID-19. Eligible businesses must be for-profit, have five employees or less (including the business owners), and be located and operate within the City of Los Angeles. Funds can be used for operating expenses, including but not limited to payroll, lease payments, insurance, and inventory. For additional information, including the full list of eligibility requirements and a link to the application portal, visit bit.ly/MicroenterpriseGrant.

The Women's Equity Fund grant program supplements the Microenterprise Recovery Grant Program, with \$1 million set aside specifically for women-

owned businesses. The Equity Fund grant program is led by LA City Council President Nury Martinez. Eligibility requirements are the same as the Microenterprise Recovery Grant. For additional information, visit: bit.ly/EquityFundLA.

EWDD's BusinessSource Centers (BSC) are available to provide technical assistance to help small businesses prepare their applications. To reach your nearest BSC, visit bit.ly/LABusinessSource. Approximately 1,835 small businesses have submitted applications since March 25, 2022. EWDD's team is working diligently to review the applications. Selected applicants will be referred to their local BSC to collect and upload the required documentation. The applicant will be given two weeks to provide the requested documentation. If documents are not received by the end of the two-week period, the applicant will be disqualified and their application will be withdrawn.



EQUITY FUND

Funding to supplement the Microenterprise Recovery Grant Program, targeted toward women entrepreneurs

\$1 MILLION in funding

LOS ANGELES CITY COUNCIL PRESIDENT
NURY MARTINEZ
COUNCILWOMAN, 8TH DISTRICT

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Sibling team Linda (left) and Armando (right) Mejia are co-owners of Village Mart & Deli. They purchased the deli in 2018 to expand healthy food options in El Sereno. Armando's daughter Riana Mejia is pictured on the far right.

EL SERENO DELI PROMOTES HEALTHY FOOD

EWDD provides Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) funding to the [Los Angeles Food Policy Council \(LAFPC\)](#), which spearheads the [Healthy Neighborhood Market Network \(HNMN\)](#). The program assists neighborhood market owners to build the capacity to operate as successful healthy food retailers in underserved communities. This financial support from the program allowed sibling team Linda and Armando Mejia, co-owners of [The Village Mart & Deli](#), to expand healthy food options in El Sereno.

A VISION FOR HEALTHIER FOOD OPTIONS

The Village Mart & Deli is a community hub for El Sereno residents and commuters alike. The store has been a popular stop on Soto Street for more than 30 years, and sister and brother team Linda and Armando Mejia were regular customers before taking over the store in 2018. Buying the deli was a labor of love for the owners, but without prior food business experience, they had to learn on the job with little external support. From the beginning, the owners were committed to serving fresh, high quality food in their deli, so partnering with the LA Food Policy Council's Healthy Neighborhood Market Network (HNMN) program was a natural fit.

“My family and I have lived in this neighborhood for a long time, and I always drove by this corner thinking ‘this could be something so great!’ I began going into the store and asking if I could do things for them to fix up the store, like

paint and put up some shelves. Eventually, the old owner said she was selling and asked if I would buy it. I called my brother Armando right away. I had a vision for this place and I wanted to do this,” Linda said.

BRINGING HEALTHY FOOD TO THE NEIGHBORHOOD

Since 2018, LAFPC has worked alongside Linda and Armando to develop plans toward building a healthier food option in the neighborhood. The LAFPC helped them gain a better understanding of current store practices, assess store needs, and supported the owners with the skills and infrastructure necessary to feel confident in their business plan and offer healthier options.

In 2021, the team focused on starting El Sereno’s first farm stand. There are very limited food options in the neighborhood, with the nearest grocery stores located up to two miles away. In pursuit of giving the El Sereno neighborhood the same access to fresh, healthy food options available in more affluent neighborhoods, the owners are working with their HNMN business counselor to cultivate relationships with local suppliers and producers.

Once Los Angeles is in a safe position to host larger community events, which is currently limited by COVID-19 health concerns, the owners hope to hire local chefs to perform healthy cooking demonstrations to showcase how to incorporate local, seasonal produce into familiar recipes.

“It’s never been about the money for us, it’s always been about making this place great for the community. We don’t have any farmer’s markets or anything like that in El Sereno. We want to be able to provide our neighborhood with fresh, delicious food,” Armando said.

The Village Market & Deli is located in [LA City Council District 14](#) at 220 El Soto Street.



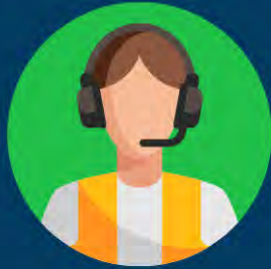


SPRING INTERNS GROW JOB EXPERIENCE

The Boyle Heights Technology [Youth Source Center \(YSC\)](#) recently recruited 60 youth for paid internships that will allow them to build job skills during their spring break. The youth participants are ages 14-18 years old and are enrolled in 120-hour internships. For many of the selected participants, the internship offers them their first hands-on job experience. The interns (several are pictured above) will participate in an array of workshops including resume writing, soft skills training on topics such as smart relationship workshops, and short-term job certification training. The students will also take part in beautification projects at their respective schools throughout Boyle Heights and northeast Los Angeles.

“I would like to thank all the student interns for making a commitment and all the local schools that are worksites for our interns,” said EWDD Project Assistant Juan Romero. The internships are funded by the Operation Calworks Program. The California Work Opportunity and Responsibility to Kids (CalWORKs) public assistance program that provides cash aid and services to eligible families.

EWDD METRICS



WorkSource Centers assisted:

1,113 Walk-in visits
1,176 Phone calls and emails
434 Unemployment Insurance



YouthSource Centers - HIRE LA's Youth:

8,818 Applications
2,225 Youth in application pool
3,764 Youth enrolled



BusinessSource Centers assisted:

133 Microenterprises
34 Small Businesses
18 Sidewalk Vendors
127 Virtual Workshops



The Economic & Workforce Development Department is headquartered in the Garland Building located at 7th street and Garland Ave in downtown Los Angeles.

[1200 West 7th Street](#)
[Los Angeles CA 90017](#)

213-744-7300
711 for TRS (TTY)

If TTY/TTD is needed to contact us, please use 711 for Telecommunication Relay Services (TRS)

If you have any questions, comments, or wish to have a contribution considered for inclusion in an upcoming "Updates," please feel free to contact Jamie Francisco at (213) 744-9048 or Jamie.Francisco@lacity.org
