

SMALL BUSINESSES GRANT PROGRAM
Proposal for the County of Fresno

SCOPE OF WORK

BACKGROUND

The Fresno Area Hispanic Foundation (FAHF) is a 501(c) (3) nonprofit organization with a mission to promote education and self-sufficiency through economic development that strengthens our community. Since 2004, FAHF has been committed to fostering entrepreneurship as a means towards economic self-sufficiency and empowering women entrepreneurs to succeed in the Central San Joaquin Valley. It currently administers two federally funded microloan programs in Fresno County offering financing and technical assistance to low-income and underserved micro- and small businesses. FAHF's Loan Committee is comprised of six (6) experienced bankers representing major global, national and regional financial institutions such as Bank of the West, United Security Bank, Tri Counties Bank, Self-Help Credit Union, Fresno First Bank, and Union Bank. It also owns and operates the Downtown Business Hub, a business incubator program located in downtown Fresno that has generated over \$3 million of private investment into the local economy. FAHF has a proven track record of providing technical assistance to over 8,000 startup and existing businesses, including its Womanpreneur and Latinpreneur programs which have been able to assist women entrepreneurs throughout the eight county region. In addition, FAHF has been able to help businesses access over to \$8 million in financing that resulted in the creation and/or retention of 12,000+ jobs.

STATEMENT OF NEED

As a result of COVID-19, small businesses have been economically impacted the hardest. Many have closed temporarily – or permanently – due to the inability to generate sales.

While some federal relief fund options (CARES Act) have been useful for established businesses, many small businesses in the County of Fresno have not been able to access these funds due to the lack of education, knowledge, and adequate preparation. Many simply do not know the first step to apply. It also concerns our organization that many small businesses are being offered high-cost loans from unscrupulous companies. This debt will further deteriorate our business community.

Small businesses are struggling to make ends meet. We want to be the bridge to help them access grant funds to navigate operations through the rest of the year. Although some small businesses are re-opening, they are unable to operate at full capacity due to new regulations from the state and county.

For many small businesses in our region, especially Hispanic businesses, the hope to continue is disappearing. The shuttering of these small firms means that thousands of jobs will also disappear so we must act now. More than ever before, small

entrepreneurs, who have started a business with all of their personal savings and efforts, need our help to mitigate lost income and continue providing benefit to their communities.

SMALL BUSINESS GRANT PROGRAM PROPOSAL

The FAHF proposes to operate the County of Fresno’s Small Business Grant Program and provide up to \$5,000 in grants to small businesses with 10 or less full time employees, throughout Fresno County. The operations of this program will prioritize underserved, minority businesses that have not been able to access any federal funding (such as the Paycheck Protection Program (PPP)), and are in desperate need of capital. FAHF will provide them with personalized, one-on-one assistance through the process of submitting the grant application.

OBJECTIVE

The objective of the County of Fresno’s Small Business Grant Program is to serve as the bridge for small businesses to access grant funds and navigate operations through the rest of the year. Although some small businesses are re-opening, they are unable to operate at full capacity due to new regulations from the state and county due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

OUTCOMES

The primary outcomes of the County of Fresno’s Small Business Grant Program are business and job retention. FAHF will effectively and efficiently disburse grants to small businesses, according to the grant guidelines (County of Fresno), targeted to but not limited to minority-owned and women-owned businesses.

Grant funds will be disbursed to businesses that have not received a PPP Loan, EIDL Loan or other CARES Act relief funding, including a County of Fresno grant.

TENTATIVE TIMELINE OF ACTIVITIES (subject to change according to grant terms and conditions set by the County of Fresno)

ACTIVITY	TIME FRAME
Program Marketing / Outreach to Businesses <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Digital, television, print media, and radio marketing campaign will begin • Direct outreach to small businesses will begin 	August 17
Open Grant Application Cycle <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide One-on-One Assistance to Submit Application • Continue program marketing and outreach efforts 	August 24 – September 20
Application Review <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Select Eligible Applications • Randomly Select Recipients for each corresponding district 	September 21

<p>Grant Agreements/Disbursements</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide one-on-one Assistance in Gathering Required Documentation from Selected Businesses • Disburse Grant Funds 	<p>September 28</p>
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The grant application will be provided in English and Spanish. FAHF team members will provide guidance and hands-on assistance to small businesses, virtually, for the safety of all parties involved.

In partnership with The Hidden Wealth Foundation and California Hmong Chamber of Commerce, team members will provide assistance in English, Spanish, Punjabi and Hmong. An online platform will be used to securely upload all confidential documentation and will store the information for any future audits. In previous experience, we have found that small business entrepreneurs are technology challenged and do not have experience in uploading electronic documents, making it one of the reasons why they do not apply for such funding. FAHF will be hands-on in assisting businesses submit the grant application.

MARKETING

Women-owned business is the fastest growing segment of the nation’s economy, and there is no difference in our community. The primary target will be women entrepreneurs and minority-owned small businesses, including but not limited to businesses in the Hispanic, Punjabi, African American, Hmong among other minority communities that have not been able to access any relief funds.

Through a digital marketing campaign, television commercials, printed media ads, radio ads, and direct door-to-door outreach, in partnership with local minority serving non-profit organizations, we will promote the program within the County of Fresno in English, Spanish, Hmong, and Punjabi. FAHF will also keep businesses informed with up-to-date State and County safety measures to operate their businesses safely. Our partners will help us in promoting in Punjabi and Hmong. Additionally, FAHF will reach out to other current partnerships to promote the program which includes chambers of commerce, economic development organizations (government and non-profit organizations). During FAHF’s weekly webinar sessions, we will also promote the program with all webinar participants.

Television marketing will be done through local television networks like KSEE 24, ABC 30, FOX 26, CBS 47, Telemundo, and Univision 21, which is the leading television network for the Hispanic community in the Central Valley.

Additionally, through our partnership with the Mexican Consulate of Fresno, we will conduct radio interviews to promote the program in addition to sharing information about it during live, co-hosted virtual events.

PROGRAM STAFFING

The staff of the Fresno Area Hispanic Foundation (FAHF) has over thirty (30) years of combined experience in the microenterprise development arena. FAHF began its direct loan program in the beginning of 2015; however, it has provided technical assistance to low-income entrepreneurs since 2004. Much of its microenterprise development activities revolved around marketing/outreach and the provision of technical assistance (TA) to Hispanic/Latino and other limited resource entrepreneurs throughout the San Joaquin Valley. FAHF has partnered with local CDFIs such as Access Plus Capital (formerly Fresno CDFI), Valley Small Business Development Corporation and Opportunity Fund, to bring together entrepreneurs and the resources (TA and loan capital) they need for the startup, strengthening and/or expansion of their businesses.

FAHF currently has seven (7) team members, including a consultant with over 20 years' experience in small business financing, and an AmeriCorps VIP team member. FAHF will assign 3 team members to be fully dedicated to support the program and will seek 2 additional supporting team members. All team members are bi-lingual (in Spanish, English, and/or Hmong) and have the capacity to provide technical assistance with the grant application. The FAHF team will be available to answer calls during business hours and guide entrepreneurs step-by-step, through the application process. These ongoing activities will contribute to the success of the County of Fresno's Small Business Grant Program.

Additionally, FAHF staff will be responsible for ensuring that all goals of the project are met and reporting is provided in accordance with the terms and conditions as required by the County of Fresno.

Current FAHF team members:

Name	Title
AmeriCorps VIP	Small Business Assistant
Blong Lee	Loan Program Consultant
David Preciado	Small Business Advisor
Dora Westerlund	Chief Executive Officer
Sandra Vidrio	Business Development Officer
Yurubi Ramirez	Office Manager/Small Business Assistant
Yery Olivares	Chief Operating Officer

ORGANIZATIONAL CAPACITY

For over 10 years, the FAHF has administered federally funded programs. In 2009, FAHF was awarded a \$1.7 million grant from the U.S. Dep. of Commerce, Economic Development Administration (EDA), to establish its Downtown Business Hub incubator, a program for 15 years. With approximately 4 years left of this grant, FAHF has been in compliance with all reporting requirements and financial management policies and

procedures. As a result of a positive relationship EDA, in 2015, FAHF received a \$370,836 revolving loan fund to administer and use for lending to small businesses in the City of Coalinga. Additionally, in 2017, FAHF was awarded \$125,000 grant from the U.S. Department of Treasury, CDFI Fund, to provide technical assistance to underserved entrepreneurs seeking financing capital. FAHF has complied with all administration and reporting requirements and has since, received an additional award in early 2020. Most recently, FAHF has been awarded a \$500,000 loan fund from the U.S. Department of Agriculture to use for lending purposes for low-income entrepreneurs in rural communities of the Central Valley. Prior year and current federal grants have provided FAHF staff with the experience to to manage and administer federal funds and execute according to grant terms and conditions.

PROPOSED BUDGET

GRANTS	
ADMINISTRATIVE COSTS	
TOTAL BUDGET	\$ 250,000