



Adelante Mujeres
Equitable Small Business Development Action Plan

Research Summary: *The following is a consolidation of the feedback received from participants in six listening sessions. The sessions were held between August - October 2019.*

Number of Participants: 64

Cities Researched: Beaverton, Cornelius, Forest Grove, Hillsboro, and Tigard

Size of Business: Microbusiness 1-5 employees

Industries represented: Food Based, Construction, Janitorial, Professional Services, Agriculture, Retail, Wholesale, Childcare, and others

Coaching and mentorship

- Have the support of someone to help them through the process, from concept phase to expansion mode
- Peer-to-peer mentoring and advanced mentoring in their industry
- Technical assistance on paperwork needed to establish a business formally
- More opportunities to share challenges and best practices with other Latino business owners

Lack of information

- Not knowing where to go for permits and other compliance information
- Not knowing which industries require additional training or certifications
- Unaware of the services provided in the government offices

Language access

- Compliance documents not in Spanish
- Limited bilingual staff in the government offices
- Limited programs, seminars, and training in Spanish from service providers

Resources and support

- Unaware of the support provided by city staff, such as pre-application meetings, grants, and procurement opportunities
- Unaware of the existence of nonprofits who serve micro businesses, chambers of commerce, incubator programs, etc.

Knowledge of government systems

- Lack of knowledge on zoning, land use, and other city code enforcement
- Understanding that as community members they have access to services from the city in which they reside
- Admit that they should be more involved in government decision making

Business basics



- Knowledge of how to do the labor or service part of the business, however not completely versed in the management or operations of a business
- Want more training and seminars in all topics; industry specific training is a plus
- Advanced training for those already in business and ready for expansion

Limited financial resources

- Cost of doing business is a barrier for startups
- Cost of registration for a business license in each city in which they sell
- Access to capital to expand their business – hiring, renting space, marketing, etc.

Cost of property of rental space

- Cost of rental space increasing; unaffordable for most microbusinesses; this limits their expansion potential

Technology

- Majority of business information such as applications for permits are found online
- Not fully versed in technology such as basic online search skills, mobile applications, software, and other online services

Unity of business owners

- Feeling like they did not support each other
- When one business owner becomes successful, hesitant to share best practices with others
- Want more opportunities to work together with others in their own industry

Capacity/knowledge of city staff

- Some cities have limited staff capacity to support aspiring and existing business owners
- Limited bilingual staff in the economic or community development departments
- Other bilingual staff, not in the economic development department, have limited knowledge of small business resources or processes

Access to customers

- Want more business-to-business opportunities
- Affordable access to business fairs and expos
- Support with online marketing, general advertising, and market research

Notes and Success

- Appreciate that the cities are interested in getting feedback such as this
- Valued having been invited to the listening sessions and having the opportunity to share with others
- Those that had used services from the economic development departments and the nonprofit service providers were satisfied with the support
- Encouraged to be more civically engaged in order to support the growth of Latino- owned businesses in the county