



STRATEGIC ALLIANCE

SAN DIEGO ETHNIC CHAMBERS OF COMMERCE



July 06, 2020

Honorable Greg Cox, Chair
Honorable Jim Desmond, Vice Chair
Honorable Dianne Jacob
Honorable Kristin Gaspar
Honorable Nathan Fletcher
San Diego County Board of Supervisors
1600 Pacific Highway, Room 335
San Diego, CA 92101

RE: ITEM 12 - SAN DIEGO COUNTY SMALL BUSINESS STIMULUS PROGRAM

Dear Chair Cox and Supervisors:

The Strategic Alliance is comprised of San Diego County's largest ethnic chambers of commerce (Asian Business Association San Diego, Central San Diego Black Chamber of Commerce, San Diego County Hispanic Chamber of Commerce) and was formed to promote mutual cooperation through advocacy, education, training and assistance at the regional and community levels, in order to help grow and empower minority owned businesses in San Diego County. Our goal is to ensure these businesses are equipped with the resources and technical assistance necessary to be successful.

San Diego County's return to economic growth depends upon the recovery of the small business sector, which represents the vast majority of net new job creation. Yet small businesses face significantly greater barriers to recovery and growth at their scale, including high healthcare costs, government regulation, tax burden and compliance, capitalization and cash flow, HR and contracting, and managing the tension between quality and growth, as self reported by small business owners. ¹

For minority business enterprises, these obstacles are amplified by cultural and language barriers, historic race and ethnicity policy decisions, and location traits that place minority enterprises and their communities in a persistent competitive and recovery disadvantage. To rectify this, special attention is needed from policy makers in government, business, and community sectors to assure equitable opportunity and access to all. Because minority businesses start from a competitive disadvantage when compared to non-minority enterprises, investments and policy changes aimed at supporting minority owned enterprises must be fast-tracked in our region.

The Strategic Alliance, in partnership with regional associations representing cultural and economic corridors, is recommending the Board of Supervisors support inclusive economic policies with an equity first framework specific to Item 12, the San Diego County Small Business Stimulus Program. The Strategic Alliance and its partners requests the following:

1. **PRIORITIZE FUNDING.** Per each supervisorial district's disadvantaged and vulnerable populations, allow preference to small businesses in locally and federally designated economic corridors, such as Promise Zones, Opportunity Zones, LMI Census Tracts, and applicants who are minority, women and veteran owned.
2. **EQUITABLE APPLICATION PROCESS.** Avoid a first-come, first-serve application process, provide grant funding with a pre-application period, and provide application information in-language.
3. **OUTREACH.** Working with the Strategic Alliance, in partnership with Business Improvement Districts and Community Based Organizations, identify and provide funding for outreach in historically underserved communities as outlined in Item 1, for available grant funding opportunities, and to perform technical assistance services as outlined in Item 4.

4. **TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE.** Identify and provide funding opportunities for accredited technical assistance providers, such as the San Diego and Imperial Small Business Development Center Network (SBDC) via the Strategic Alliance, to perform accredited no-cost counseling services to businesses outlined in Item 1, and identified through Item 3. Examples of services include disaster relief capital assistance, business plan assistance, compliance with state and local COVID-19 reopening protocols, among others.

These items are consistent with the County of San Diego's Live Well Communities Action Plan's mission to "create the opportunity for all residents—regardless of geographic location, age group, gender, race/ethnicity, or socio-economic level—to achieve the Live Well San Diego vision by engaging the community, strengthening services and serving for results." The top priorities of the Action Plan are important in addressing the needs of communities of color: "Seek diverse and inclusive representation and feedback; Create a shared vision for equity and a safe place for real conversation about race and place; improve access and coordination and improving healthy and financial strength."²

Adopting inclusive economic policies with an equity framework, with services provided by the Strategic Alliance, fit within the Board of Supervisors' "Enhancing Contracting Opportunities and Accountability Framework"³ adopted on August 6th, 2019, with priority goals to: "1) increase opportunities for participation and diversification of the supplier base; 2) simplify the contract process and remove barriers to participation; and 3) further public accountability and compliance". This would not only provide the opportunity for our region's diverse and most vulnerable small businesses to recover, but prepare them to compete for and participate in county contracts.

Further, our recommendations support Policy A-71, San Diego County Economic Development, citing "Emphasis and priority in the use of County resources to carry out this policy will be given to the following programs and activities...Public-private sector activities and projects, including proposals to retain, expand, or attract business investments that (1) improve the educational and job skill levels of the region's work force, to promote upward job mobility and increased per capita income levels, especially for women, minorities and the working poor;"⁴

As we look to the recovery and resiliency of our local economy, our goal is to be a strong partner with the County of San Diego and help deliver its 2020-2025 Strategic Plan mission of "efficiently providing public services that build strong and sustainable communities"⁵ through the objectives outlined above.

Respectfully submitted,

Strategic Alliance

Asian Business Association San Diego, Central San Diego Black Chamber of Commerce, San Diego County Hispanic Chamber of Commerce

Adams Ave Business Association
Barrio Logan Association
City Heights Business Association
Convoy District Partnership
Diamond Business Association, Inc.
El Cajon Boulevard Business Improvement Association
Hillcrest Business Improvement Association
Jacobs Center for Neighborhood Innovation
Logan Heights Community Development Corporation
Logan Avenue Consortium
North Park Organization of Businesses, Inc.
Ocean Beach Merchants Association
San Ysidro Improvement Corporation

¹Index of Small Business Optimism, National Federation of Independent Businesses

²[County of San Diego Live Well Communities Action Plan](#)

³[County of San Diego "Enhancing Contracting Opportunities and Accountability Framework"](#)

⁴[County of San Diego Board of Supervisors Policy A-71 - San Diego Economic Development](#)

⁵[County of San Diego 2020-2025 Strategic Plan](#)