

EWDD'S WEEKLY UPDATES



SUCCESS STORIES WEEK OF MARCH 14, 2022



Deandrea Jones (left) received valuable assistance from South Los Angeles BusinessSource Center Business Coach Terry Gubatan (right) to open her brick-and-mortar restaurant Wah Gwaan Jamaican Restaurant and Bar.

WAH GWAAN - FROM CATERING TO STOREFRONT

The South [LA BusinessSource Center \(BSC\)](#) helped Deandrea Jones, owner of

Wah Gwaan Jamaican Restaurant and Bar, apply for a loan to open her first brick-and-mortar location.

After operating a successful Jamaican food catering company for more than five years, Deandrea was encouraged by her customers to open her first restaurant.

Deandrea discovered a rare opportunity to lease a prime location in Leimert Park, due to a pandemic-related vacancy. Excited to bring healthy Jamaican cuisine to the area, while also adding a Black-owned business to a neighborhood susceptible to gentrification, Deandrea signed the lease. Soon after, an inspector with the City of LA examined the facility and informed her of necessary equipment and facilities upgrades in order to be permitted to open.

For months, Deandrea worked with an underwriter to assemble the required documents to apply for an SBA loan. When her loan was denied, she faced the possibility of being unable to meet her contractual obligations. Deandrea was referred to the South LA BusinessSource Center, operated by [VSEDC](#), where she received valuable business guidance and assistance to successfully open the restaurant.

After assessing Deandrea's business—its contracts, vendors, employees, and client list—the sustainability of her business was clear. VSEDC pre-qualified her as a client, and recommended she apply for a Community Loan—a loan funded by VSEDC that is designed to provide access to capital to underserved markets.

The loan process usually takes at least four weeks to finalize, but Deandrea's previous efforts to prepare for the SBA loan put her ahead of schedule and she was approved in just over two weeks. Initially, Deandrea sought a loan of \$50,000. VSEDC's underwriter determined she would need more, and raised her loan to \$65,000. Within weeks, she had the money to cover the lease, buy new equipment, cover payroll and inventory, and leave enough remaining capital to open a bank account. The opening of Wah Gwaan was back on track.

"I'm so proud of Deandrea's perseverance," says VSEDC Business Coach Terry Gubatan. "A lot of people would have stopped midway at the first barrier, but she persisted until she saw it through." Ahead of the restaurant's grand opening later this month, she hired two new employees from the Watts [WorkSource Center](#) and will hire two more full-time and two part-time employees.

Wah Gwaan Jamaican Restaurant and Bar is located at 4371 Crenshaw Boulevard in [LA City Council District 8](#).



YOUTH INTERNS LEARN ABOUT ENVIRONMENT

EWDD's 14 [YouthSource Centers \(YSCs\)](#) help connect young Angelenos with internships that allow them to build work experience, explore careers and contribute to their local community. This past Saturday, several interns from the Boyle Heights Technology YouthSource Center (YSC) started their hands-on internship hours at Ascot Hills Park with [Northeast Trees](#) Nursery. Participants learned about native plants and how to care for them. Participants will also have the opportunity to learn about water irrigation, planting native seeds and the importance of open space in our communities.

Boyle Heights YSC participant Alexandra Granados received her high school diploma in December 2021. She also completed her paid internship in February 2022 at [Taking the Reins](#), working in the barn with the horses. The program encourages young women to learn life skills and build confidence through working with horses. Alexandra was just hired to provide free COVID-19 testing in South Los Angeles. This summer, Alexandra plans to enroll in a cosmetology

course at a local vocational school. Boyle Heights YSC staff are so proud of the accomplishments of all the youth interns!



LINKS to COVID-19 RESOURCES

JOB RESOURCES

LA JOBS PORTAL: jobs.lajobsportal.org

VIRTUAL ORIENTATIONS: bit.ly/LAjoblosshelp

BUSINESS RESOURCES

LA REGIONAL COVID FUND: lacovidfund.org

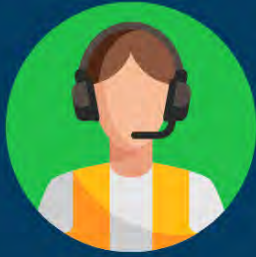
SMALL BUSINESS PROGRAM: ewddlacity.com/index.php/small-business-loans

BusinessSource Centers: bit.ly/LABusinessSource

WorkSource Centers: bit.ly/EWDDWorkSource

YouthSource Centers: bit.ly/EWDDYouthSource

EWDD METRICS



WorkSource Centers assisted:

- 1,370** Walk-in visits
- 405** Phone calls and emails
- 1,770** Unemployment Insurance



YouthSource Centers - HIRE LA's Youth:

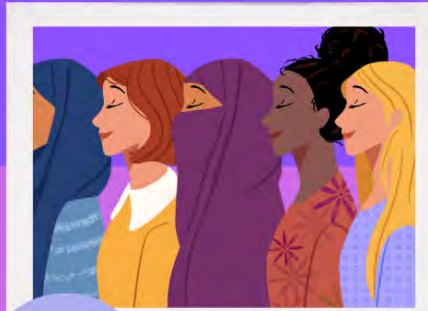
- 8,438** Applications
- 2,127** Youth in application pool
- 3,596** Youth enrolled



BusinessSource Centers assisted:

- 136** Microenterprises
- 48** Small Businesses
- 21** Sidewalk Vendors
- 122** Virtual Workshops

Women's History Month



\$17M

During COVID-19, EWDD helped Women-Owned Businesses access \$17M in capital

*(January 1, 2020 - February 2022)



\$32M

Since 2012, EWDD has helped Women-Owned Businesses access \$32M in capital

*(January 1, 2012 - February 2022)

EWDD supports entrepreneurs in the City of LA.
To learn more, visit: bit.ly/LABusinessSource



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

