

Memorandum



CITY OF DALLAS

DATE April 11, 2021

TO Honorable Members of the Workforce, Education, and Equity Committee

SUBJECT **Welcoming Economies Program for Immigrant Entrepreneurs**

Background

While making up 24% of the overall population, immigrants represented 32.2% of entrepreneurs in Dallas in 2016. To promote the economic inclusion of immigrant entrepreneurs, the Office of Equity and Inclusion – Welcoming Communities and Immigrant Affairs Division (WCIA) collaborated with the Office of Economic Development – Business and Workforce Inclusion (BWI) to apply for the Welcoming Economies Program, administered by Welcoming America. City of Dallas was one of five participants selected, including the City of Tulsa, the City of Cincinnati, and a Washington D.C.-based nonprofit.

As an awardee, WCIA and BWI will be receiving support to advance local policies, programs, partnerships, and practices that include immigrants as part of their local or regional economic strategy. The City of Dallas will receive a total of 9 hours of hands-on technical assistance and coaching, two virtual training sessions with subject area experts on immigrant economic inclusion strategies, four virtual peer learning opportunities. Technical assistance and coaching will be facilitated in partnership with [Global Detroit](#) (linked), a national leader in advocating for and executing strategies to drive equitable local, regional and statewide economic growth through immigrant inclusion.

The Welcoming Economies Program is a competitive opportunity for municipalities and nonprofit members of the Welcoming Network to access support from Welcoming America and Global Detroit to advance economic inclusion for immigrants and contribute to local economic development. Previous winners of the program include Champaign County, Illinois, City of Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, and City of Louisville, Kentucky.

Scope of Work

In alignment with the City of Dallas Economic Strategic Action Plan and the Welcoming Dallas Plan, WCIA and BWI will work together to accomplish two main goals: expanding the capacity of the Dallas B.U.I.L.D. (Broaden Urban Investments to Leverage Dallas) program and creating a citywide micro-grant for immigrant entrepreneurs.

Expanding the capacity of the Dallas B.U.I.L.D. Program to become more accessible for immigrant entrepreneurs

Through this grant, WCIA and BWI would increase the capacity of the Dallas B.U.I.L.D program by engaging immigrant entrepreneurs to 1) understand how the B.U.I.L.D

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program could be adapted to meet the needs of immigrant business owners in a post-pandemic environment and 2) to ensure program communications and outreach are done through culturally competent channels. Finally, WCIA and BWI hopes to create safe and culturally competent internal systems for tracking immigrant business utilization of the Dallas B.U.I.L.D program to better understand trends.

This goal aligns with the Economic Development Strategic Action plan by operationalizing strategy #1 “Expand Dallas’ Entrepreneurial Ecosystem” and strategy #6 “Attracting Foreign-Born Entrepreneurs.” As recommended in the plan, a key part of accomplishing this goal will be engaging and creating formalized feedback loops with immigrant entrepreneurs.

To improve transparency and accountability, WCIA and BWI hope to also create internal systems and metrics within the Dallas B.U.I.L.D program that can reflect usage trends among immigrant business owners. Through this process, we aim to identify and implement tactics for Dallas B.U.I.L.D to expand its capacity and become more inclusive for immigrant entrepreneurs.

Pilot a citywide micro-grant competition that funds immigrant entrepreneurs and celebrates the economic contributions of immigrants in Dallas

WCIA and BWI aims to replicate the Dallas B.U.I.L.D Small Business Grant and pilot a micro-grant competition that focuses on immigrant entrepreneurs. WCIA and BWI would select immigrant entrepreneurs who would receive a cash prize and be featured on City of Dallas communication platforms. Similar to the Dallas B.U.I.L.D Small Business Grant, all immigrant entrepreneurs who apply would be contacted and connected with applicable resources and services that support their business.

Through the micro-grant competition, WCIA and BWI aims to promote economic inclusion by celebrating the economic contributions and resilience of immigrant entrepreneurs in Dallas, while also referring immigrant business owners with supports that help their business thrive. WCIA and BWI will identify a process to distribute the award prize to immigrant entrepreneurs that follows local, state and federal regulations.

Goals, Outputs and Metrics

Goal #1: Expanding the capacity of the Dallas B.U.I.L.D. Program to become more accessible for immigrant entrepreneurs

Outputs

- Host three meetings with partner chambers and immigrant representative groups to conduct needs analysis
- Identify opportunities for adapting the Dallas B.U.I.L.D program to needs
- Create a system for tracking immigrant business utilization of the Dallas B.U.I.L.D program

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Metrics

- Equitable participation rates
- Hours of technical assistance – creating continuity plans
- Number of continuity plans signed by immigrant business owners
- How are businesses faring after creating a continuity plan

Goal #2: Pilot a citywide micro-grant competition that funds immigrant entrepreneurs and celebrates the economic contributions of immigrants in Dallas

Outputs

- Creating a system that is inclusive of home-based businesses and women led businesses
- Campaign using media channels that reach target audience
- Creating a system for providing support to applicants that qualify but may not have been chosen
- Creating a system for individuals who are chosen to receive the reward
- Communications campaign that highlights immigrant contributions

Metrics

- Number of immigrant business owners that apply
- Location of their business area that has identified vulnerable per Equity Impact Index
- Immigrant women participation is reflective of demographics
- Number of cultural channels- ethnic media promotional spots
- Number of media stories that highlight the narrative of immigrant contributions to Dallas economy

We look forward to partnering with Business and Workforce Inclusion to implement and track the progress of the Welcoming Economies Grant. Please contact me if you have any questions.

Liz Cedillo-Pereira
Chief of Equity and Inclusion

[Appendix]

c: Honorably Mayor and City Council Members
T.C. Broadnax, City Manager
Chris Caso, City Attorney
Mark Swann, City Auditor
Biliera Johnson, City Secretary
Preston Robinson, Administrative Judge
Kimberly Bizzor Tolbert, Chief of Staff to the City Manager

Majed A. Al-Ghafry, Assistant City Manager
Jon Fortune, Assistant City Manager
Joey Zapata, Assistant City Manager
Dr. Eric A. Johnson, Chief of Economic Development and Neighborhood Services
M. Elizabeth Reich, Chief Financial Officer
Directors and Assistant Directors

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Appendix

Dallas B.U.I.L.D Grant

<http://www.dallascitynews.net/small-business-grant-program-give-3000-eligible-small-businesses-nonprofits>

Dallas B.U.I.L.D. Small Business Grant Program Application

<https://www.zoomgrants.com/gprop2.asp?donorid=2385&rfpid=3220>

Welcoming Dallas Strategic Plan:

<https://dallascityhall.com/departments/wcia/DCH%20Documents/COD-WCIA-Booklet.pdf>

New Americans in Dallas Economic Brief:

http://research.newamericaneconomy.org/wp-content/uploads/sites/2/2018/02/G4G_Dallas_FINAL_DIGITAL.pdf

Welcoming Economies Program:

<https://www.welcomingamerica.org/news/welcoming-economies-pilot-program-celebrates-2020-success>