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Together for Los Angeles Collaborative for Small Business Recovery Marks One Year of Operations

Coalition Recommends Long-Term Small Business Disaster Preparedness Programs

July 1, 2022, Los Angeles – The Together for Los Angeles (TFLA) Collaborative for Small Business Recovery is marking its one-year anniversary this week by continuing to provide technical assistance to small businesses still impacted by COVID-19, releasing the 2022 TFLA *Small Business Recovery Report and Resource Guide*, and making the case for long-term Los Angeles small business preparedness and economic resilience.

“The pandemic continues to disproportionately impact the economic security and resiliency of our micro and small businesses, particularly those owned by women and BIPOC,” said Kelly LoBianco, Executive Director of Economic and Workforce Development for LA County. “To ensure a more equitable recovery, we needed to work differently. As a proud member of the TFLA Collaborative, we are building resiliency so that small businesses in LA County can launch, grow, and thrive – no matter what tomorrow brings.”

"Together for LA bonded organizations dedicated to a common cause, encouraging and supporting the success of LA's mom and pop shops. The City of LA is proud to be part of a collective offering resources that are paving the way for a sustainable and equitable recovery for LA's vibrant small business community," said Carolyn Hull, General Manager for the City of Los Angeles Economic and Workforce Development Department (EWDD).

“Los Angeles County saw more than 700,000 people lose their job at the start of the COVID-19 pandemic, and many of the businesses we lost were women-owned or diver-owned. Together for LA is an innovative “no wrong door” solution for small business technical assistance for those entrepreneurs who might not have the time or capacity to know where to look,” said Bill Allen, President and CEO of the Los Angeles County Economic Development Corporation. “This program is a stellar example of how economic resiliency can look across the country when we all collaborate for the health and prosperity of everyone in our community. But there is still much-needed work to be done.”

"We are proud to be part of this Collaborative, one of the most important initiatives we have seen during the pandemic - to ensure a resilient small business community. The diverse small businesses in LA County fuel a global economy. Their success is of paramount importance. Through streamlined, easy access to funding, information and resources, together we support the small business community with a safety net of relief, recovery and resiliency." Maria S. Salinas, President & CEO, Los Angeles Area Chamber of Commerce

Motivated by multiple reports that women and Black, indigenous, and people of color (BIPOC)-owned small businesses disproportionately did not access small business resources and the severity of the economic downturn caused by COVID-19, TFLA founders began to explore ways to work together in the summer and fall of 2020, and with the generous support of the Wells Fargo Open for Business Fund, they launched the Collaborative in July 2021. The founding members agreed to share information about their research, technical assistance programming, and as needed, originate joint programs to accelerate LA's economic recovery.

"Economic health is societal health." Dr. Lucy Jones, Director of the Dr. Lucy Jones Center for Science and Society said, "Business recovery is a requirement for all of us to recover from an earthquake or other disaster."

"Beyond survival strategies, the future of small business resiliency should be focused on strategies for growth and how we can leverage partnerships, like Together for LA, to make that happen. We know that small businesses need more funding, and our region needs more partners willing to bring innovative capital products to the LA market that are low-cost and flexible compared to traditional financing sources." Miranda Rodriguez, Deputy Director, LISC LA.

TFLA has created an online directory of 1,017 Los Angeles-based business support organizations and provide technical support to access more than \$4 billion in public, private, and philanthropic assistance from all over the country for women- and minority-owned small businesses in the region.

To share this information, TFLA founding members sent out more than 1 million targeted communications to small business and microenterprises in Los Angeles County, directly provided more than 350 micro-enterprises and small businesses with targeted 1-1 technical assistance support and saved over 1,300 jobs.

TFLA direct technical assistance to small businesses has included topics such as access to capital, grant application assistance, marketing and social media training, workforce development, layoff aversion, procurement, and emergency preparedness.

Stephen Jordan, CEO of the Institute for Sustainable Development presented the Report findings: "Los Angeles cannot afford to have a repeat of the economic costs it has endured because of the COVID-19 pandemic," Jordan said. "If we had the technical assistance capabilities before the pandemic that Together for LA has now built, we could have prevented more businesses from failing and saved more jobs. Let's keep this going for the future."

When asked what small business owners continue to need to be more resilient, Javonne Sanders founder of Toss It Up, a Black-owned salad company in Los Angeles, emphasized that "small business owners wear many hats." Virtual assistance, skills development, community training centers, and funding are several ways to close the gap."

Together for LA partners include Los Angeles County Economic Development Corporation (LAEDC), The Los Angeles Area Chamber of Commerce, Local Initiatives Support Corporation Los Angeles (LISC LA), The Dr. Lucy Jones Center for Science and Society, The Institute for

Sustainable Development (ISD), City of Los Angeles and Los Angeles County; who are working together to advance a more equitable, sustainable and resilient economic recovery.

Wells Fargo created the \$420 million Open for Business Fund to spearhead their small business recovery efforts and support those hardest hit by the pandemic, such as racially and ethnically diverse populations. LA is one of five markets nationwide to be awarded significant funding (up to \$20 million) from the Open for Business Fund as part of its effort to build business value and long-term resiliency of small businesses.

The TFLA *Small Business Recovery Report and Resource Guide* was released at the Future of Small Business Resiliency in Los Angeles Symposium held on Friday, June 24.

The 2022 Together for Los Angeles “Small Business Recovery Report and Resource Guide” can be found [here](#).

About Together for Los Angeles: Together for LA is a strategic partnership to strengthen and support women and diverse-owned small businesses in LA County, as they strive to recover from the economic crisis wrought by the COVID-19 pandemic – with no cost technical assistance and connections to small business resources made available through a generous grant from Wells Fargo’s Open for Business Fund.

For more information, please visit www.togetherforla.org.

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