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## **ENTREPRENEURIAL RESOURCE CENTER (ERC) LAUNCHING IN SAN BERNARDINO**

Existing and aspiring entrepreneurs and small business owners in the City of San Bernardino are about to have a new resource available to help them launch and grow businesses, thanks to an innovative initiative developed by the City and California State University, San Bernardino (CSUSB).

The newly created Entrepreneurial Resource Center (ERC), led by CSUSB's Inland Empire Center for Entrepreneurship (IECE), will be an easily accessible hub for small business services, centrally located in downtown San Bernardino at Studio D, 330 N. D Street. Studio D is a newly established co-working and business hub designed for entrepreneurs at every stage that is committed to building a dynamic and diverse entrepreneurial ecosystem in the City. The ERC will bring together a wide range of entrepreneurial support programs and organizations to provide a complete set of training, business counseling, and access to resources for small business owners and entrepreneurs in the City.

"The new center will improve access to resources for all aspiring and existing entrepreneurs, increase the rate of business creation, and foster greater success and long-term sustainability for local small businesses," said Mike Stull, a professor of entrepreneurship and director of the IECE and the CSUSB School of Entrepreneurship. "The ERC will also seek to address disparities in small business ownership and entrepreneurship through a deliberate focus and outreach to underrepresented groups in the City."

Each partner is making a significant commitment to ensure the success of the ERC, including the City of San Bernardino investing of \$1.87 million over three years, and the IECE investing \$1.9 million of resources through its major business assistance programs including the Inland Empire Small Business Development Center (IESBDC) and Inland Empire Women's Business Center (IEWBC). The City and CSUSB project that the ERC will be operational in October 2023.

The ERC grew out of the City and the University's participation in the Aspen Institute Latinos & Society Program's City Action Lab, a unique initiative that focuses on Latino majority cities and communities to strengthen local entrepreneurial ecosystems. San Bernardino was one of six cities nationally chosen to

participate in the program, which focuses on generating long-term, inclusive economic growth through business ownership.

Out of the City-University partnership with the Aspen Institute, the ERC emerged as one of the ways CSUSB, as an anchor institution in the region, could strategically work with the City.

“The creation of the Entrepreneurial Resource Center stands as a testament to the unwavering partnership between California State University, San Bernardino and the City of San Bernardino,” said Tomás D. Morales, president of the university. “The ERC will serve as a beacon of opportunity, a hub of creativity, and a catalyst for economic growth, providing budding entrepreneurs the resources and support they need to turn their visions into reality. Together, we embrace the spirit of innovation, resilience, and inclusivity, confident that this center will unleash the potential of our community and drive us towards a brighter, more prosperous future.”

“I applaud the City of San Bernardino and CSUSB’s strategic alliance – the Entrepreneurial Resource Center. This is a game changer for the San Bernardino small businesses ecosystem,” said Domenika Lynch, vice president of the Aspen Institute and executive director of the institute’s Latinos & Society Program. “The ERC will consolidate business support resources in a one-stop shop and increase opportunities for innovation and access to capital necessary to start and scale small business. I am delighted that the Aspen Institute’s City Action Lab could help catalyze this endeavor.”

“In just a few months, the ERC will be assisting San Bernardino’s small and family-owned businesses startup, grow, and thrive,” said San Bernardino Mayor Helen Tran. “We are pleased to be partnering with Cal State San Bernardino on this and thank President Morales and his entire team for joining us by investing in the entrepreneurial spirit of our residents.”

“The City’s Economic Development Division is dedicated to fostering growth within the local business community, and our partnership with California State University, San Bernardino to establish the ERC exemplifies this commitment,” added Amanda Hernandez, San Bernardino Economic Development Manager. “By harnessing the collective expertise and resources of both entities, the ERC aims to cultivate a dynamic ecosystem that empowers entrepreneurs and provides essential tools for their success.”

“The ERC is just the beginning of an integrated effort with the University, the City and other stakeholders to revitalize San Bernardino’s downtown,” said Robert Nava, CSUSB vice president of University Advancement. “Bringing the university’s academic capital in the form of services, such as those provided by IECE, from the campus to downtown will not only be a catalyst of activity for the City’s core, but also a driving force to move the community forward.”

The IECE, housed at the Jack H. Brown College of Business and Public Administration at CSUSB, is one of the largest university-based centers in the world and has a 20-plus year track record of providing business assistance programs, having served more than 173,000 business owners and achieving an economic impact of more than \$534 million.

“The ERC in San Bernardino is an excellent example of how local communities such as the City of San Bernardino and the University can work collaboratively to generate long-term, inclusive economic growth through entrepreneurship,” said Tomas Gomez-Arias, dean of Jack H. Brown College.

### **About CSUSB’s Inland Empire Center for Entrepreneurship**

The Inland Empire Center for Entrepreneurship (IECE) at Cal State San Bernardino is the largest and most experienced organization in the Inland Empire dedicated to supporting small business and entrepreneurship on campus for the Jack H. Brown College of Business & Public Administration’s School of Entrepreneurship, and within the community throughout the Inland Southern California region. Established in 1999, the IECE has served over 173,000 individuals and business owners with comprehensive business counseling, mentoring, innovative training programs and engaging events. These services have resulted in the creation and retention of nearly 42,000 jobs and an economic impact of \$534 million. The center is

committed to diversity, equity, inclusion and continues to expand its reach to all business owners to support them through the post-pandemic repopulation and beyond. The top-tier segments of the IECE include the Women's Business Centers ([IEWBC.org](http://IEWBC.org)) ([CVWBC.org](http://CVWBC.org)), the Small Business Development Center (IESBDC) ([ociesmallbusiness.org](http://ociesmallbusiness.org)) and the Cross Border E-Commerce-Asia program (CBEC Asia) ([cbecasia.com](http://cbecasia.com)) and the Spirit of the Entrepreneur Awards ([spiritawardsie.com](http://spiritawardsie.com)).

To learn more about IECE and all of the programs available visit [entre.csusb.edu](http://entre.csusb.edu).

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