

**Digital Small Business Education Technical Assistance (TA) Program**

Goal: Develop a LBEP digital education program that builds on the current micro-grant TA program as an additional resource to help small businesses develop resiliency by incorporating digital tools (online presence, electronic payments, website marketing, smart phone based-apps, etc.) into their daily business operations for sustainability and growth.

Situation Analysis: Community-Based Organizations (CBO’s) that LBEP has engaged to outreach to ethnic small businesses have reported that for many, there is a lack of digital literacy and access that prevents them from effectively working with the business owners. And, thus, difficult for the business owners to work with financial institutions, government agencies and basic online business operations. ***In today’s COVID impacted world, being digitally connected, is now an absolute necessity for small businesses resiliency.*** The digital divide is well documented in Long Beach, however, it has mostly been focused on students and seniors. Small business, particularly in communities of color, also are experiencing a digital divide that has direct impact on their long-term viability. More info on Digital Inclusion Initiative at: <http://www.longbeach.gov/ti/digital-inclusion/>

Potential Programming:

* **Program Development & Training – Provided By LBEP Consultants (OmniWorks)**
	+ Grant funding needed to provide for program development and delivery to small business for digital education including:
		- Customer relationship- branding, email lists, social media
		- Business operations- cashless payments, accounting, online banking, loan/grant applications to government, financial institutions, etc.
		- Sales channels- Shopify, Etsy, website, app-based programs
		- Training – access to webinars for business owners and employees

**Implementation:**

* LBEP/OmniWorks to work with existing CBO’s business navigators (funding also to expand navigator resources) to deliver program to community businesses. The navigators could potentially also provide this service to Long Beach business improvement districts (BIDs).

**Long Beach Economic Partnership – Catalyst for Collaboration**

* LBEP will take the lead in developing an initiative that addresses the digital divide for small businesses that can be replicated in other markets. This can complement other city initiatives on digital education, digital health, etc.
* Adding digital education to current cash / financial management training will better position small businesses to access private and government sector capital programs.
* LBEP is serving as a foundation and catalyst for community-based organizations (traditionally focused on social services) to build their capacity to serve ethnic small business.