



**Economic & Workforce  
Development Department (EWDD) Weekly Updates**  
**NEWS FOR THE WEEK OF JANUARY 3, 2022**

## Success Stories



### **A NEW, HEALTHIER CHAPTER FOR MULTIGENERATIONAL MARKET**

EWDD provides Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) funding to the [Los Angeles Food Policy Council \(LAFPC\)](#), which spearheads the [Healthy Neighborhood Market Network \(HNMN\)](#). The program builds the capacity of corner stores by assisting neighborhood market owners to operate as

successful healthy food retailers in underserved communities. This financial support allowed Mandeep Singh, owner of the Pickford Market, to increase its healthy food options. Here is his story.

Located near Washington Boulevard and Vineyard Avenue, [Pickford Market](#) is a multigenerational store that has served LA's Mid-City community for nearly three decades. Owner and operator Mandeep Singh (pictured above), was motivated to work with the Healthy Neighborhood Market Network (HNMN) because he believes corner stores play a major role in a community's health.

"I want to end the stigma that healthy food is more expensive and make healthy food more accessible to my customers," he said. "I feel it is my responsibility to introduce healthy products in order to encourage healthy eating habits for my customers, especially the kids."

In December 2020, Pickford Market underwent a brick and mortar transformation process that was made possible by the grant funding.

"The new shelving and store layout allowed us to expand in critical categories resulting in additional sales. We are using the updates to establish a customer base for healthy snacks," he said.

The transformation of the store created space for the market to add nuts, dried fruits, chickpeas and healthy snack bars. The LAFPC helped Singh build the market's capacity for new healthy items, explore product placements, and engage in more community-based conversations about healthier food options. In addition, the HNMN helped Pickford Market refresh their logo. The new branding incorporates an avocado and the font used by the LA Dodgers, a logo that pays homage to LA's food and baseball culture.

In mid-December 2021, Pickford Market teamed up with nearby Alta Loma Elementary School to provide more than 400 students reusable bags filled with healthy snacks, a reusable water bottle and t-shirts. The teachers also received gift baskets.

The event provided an opportunity to foster civic youth engagement and promote conversations about healthy food options with students, their families, and the community-at-large.

"Participating in the HNMN program has expanded what my family and I thought was possible for our business," says Mandeep. "I want the store to grow with the community and address the needs and wants of our customers."

Pickford Market is located in [LA City Council District 10](#).

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### GO RAMS! CRENSHAW YSC PARTICIPANT SCORES INTERNSHIP

Joseph Merchain, a participant from the Crenshaw YouthSource Center (YSC), was selected last fall for an internship with the Los Angeles Rams. Joseph (pictured far left) split his time between the Rams headquarters in Agoura Hills and SoFi Stadium. He reported to Johnathan Franklin, director of social justice and football development for the Rams. During his internship, Joseph met with supporters and was on the field Sunday afternoon for the September 26 game against the Tampa Bay Buccaneers (the Rams won 34-24).

The Rams selected Joseph after hearing about his upbringing and life goals. They agreed that Joseph was a perfect candidate for the Rams organization and that his job responsibilities would assist the Rams in carrying out its mission to provide opportunities to uplift local communities.

At the end of the internship, they said “Joseph has been a joy to work with, his work ethic and perseverance is an inspiration to us all. We thank you and your team for the partnership as well, and look forward to the continued opportunities to positively impact our communities.”

The Crenshaw YouthSource Center is operated by EWDD partner, the Brotherhood Crusade. The center is located in LA City Council District 9.



Crenshaw YouthSource Center participant Joseph Merchain (pictured above) carries items in a parking lot at SoFi Stadium, the home base for the Los Angeles Rams.



### **SOUTH VALLEY BSC HELPS TAMALES RESTAURANT MAINTAIN STEAM**

The South Valley [BusinessSource Center \(BSC\)](#) assisted husband and wife team Juan and Neris Gonzalez with finding COVID-19 financial relief grants

that helped them keep their [Tamales House](#) restaurants afloat during the pandemic.

Located in North Hills and Reseda in the San Fernando Valley, the Tamales House restaurants gained popularity for using quality ingredients to cook the traditional Mexican dish. The couple (Neris pictured above left, Juan pictured above right) who are also business partners, said that part of their success is due to an authentic tamales recipe Juan learned while studying gastronomy in Mexico, along with the work experience he gained as a waiter for high-end restaurants in the late 1990s.

“Before starting our business, my wife Neris and I sold tamales to local body shops and factory workers,” Juan said. “We always had good feedback and our clientele grew. We believed in our product and decided to open a restaurant.”

In 2005, Neris and Juan opened their first restaurant in North Hills. They opened their second restaurant located in Reseda in 2017.

Sales continued to increase until 2020, when the COVID-19 pandemic left Neris and Juan with feelings of uncertainty.

“No one knew how long the lockdown would last,” Juan said. “The rent was due and we had to close and lay off the employees in both locations.”

With both restaurants closed, rent, utilities and payroll costs began to accumulate. Juan began to seek financial assistance and was referred to the South Valley BSC. In September 2021, he started working with Senior Business Advisor Yoryana Aguilar, who advised the Gonzalezes on various relief grants to help their business recover from COVID-19.

With the help of the South Valley BusinessSource Center, Neris and Juan applied for the California Small Business COVID-19 Relief Grant Program. They were awarded a \$25,000 grant that helped them cover rent expenses, retain 16 full-time jobs and create an additional four jobs to help with the increased holiday demand. The South Valley BSC also assisted Neris and Juan in successfully applying for the City of LA Comeback Checks Program. They received their \$5,000 grant in early December 2021.

“The South Valley BusinessSource Center has done a great job helping me keep my doors open. Because they have gained my trust, I definitely will recommend them to friends and family who own businesses,” Juan said.

The Tamales House restaurants are located at:

Reseda: 7622 Reseda Blvd in [LA City Council District 4](#)

North Hills: 15404 Nordhoff St in [LA Council District 7](#)

To view their menu, check out their website: <https://www.fiestatamale.com>.

**LINKS to COVID-19 RESOURCES  
JOB RESOURCES**

**LA JOBS PORTAL:** [jobs.lajobsportal.org](https://jobs.lajobsportal.org)

**VIRTUAL ORIENTATIONS:** [bit.ly/LAjoblosshelp](https://bit.ly/LAjoblosshelp)

**BUSINESS RESOURCES**

**LA REGIONAL COVID FUND:** [lacovidfund.org](https://lacovidfund.org)

**SMALL BUSINESS PROGRAM:** [ewddlacity.com/index.php/small-business-loans](https://ewddlacity.com/index.php/small-business-loans)

**BusinessSource Centers:** [bit.ly/LABusinessSource](https://bit.ly/LABusinessSource)

**WorkSource Centers:** [bit.ly/EWDDWorkSource](https://bit.ly/EWDDWorkSource)

**YouthSource Centers:** [bit.ly/EWDDYouthSource](https://bit.ly/EWDDYouthSource)

# EWDD Metrics

## WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT DIVISION

<b>WORKSOURCE CENTER CONTACT PERFORMANCE (COVID-19) December 27, 2021 to December 31, 2021</b>	
Number of walk-ins	431
Number of walk-ins by appointment	162
Number of call/emails	1,114
Number of calls regarding Unemployment Insurance (UI)	172

<b>YOUTH WORKFORCE DATA FY 20-21 (HIRE LA'S YOUTH) Week ending December 31, 2021</b>	
Number of applications	6,090
Number of youth in lottery pool	1,418
Number of youth enrolled	2,793
YouthSource Center (YSC) enrollments	963
YSC enrollment goal	2,100
Percent complete	46%

## ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT DIVISION

### LOS ANGELES BUSINESS SOURCE CENTERS (LABSCs) METRICS

December 27, 2021 to December 31, 2021

<b>LABSCs Reporting:</b>	North Valley, West Valley, South Valley, South LA, East LA, Mid City, Central West, Hollywood and Harbor
Microenterprises assisted	56
Microenterprises enrolled	6
Small businesses assisted	27
Small businesses enrolled	2
Number of BSC Clients who attended virtual workshops	0
Sidewalk vendors assisted	5
Sidewalk vendors enrolled	5



The Economic & Workforce Development Department is headquartered in the Garland Building located at 7th street and Garland Ave in downtown Los Angeles.

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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](mailto:Jamie.Francisco@lacity.org)