

EWDD'S WEEKLY UPDATES



SUCCESS STORIES WEEK OF MARCH 7, 2022



LACI HELPS FOUNDER CULTIVATE SUSTAINABILITY

EWDD provides financial support to early-stage entrepreneurs through cohort based, accelerator style incubator programs. This week's EWDD Updates features a success story from the [Los Angeles Cleantech Incubator \(LACI\)](#),

which was created with a mission to create a more equitable green economy in the City of LA.

Far too often women and people of color are overlooked and underrepresented in the startup and cleantech worlds. [SEED founder and CEO Sabrina Williams](#) (pictured above) is why LACI exists. She came to LACI in 2020 with an environmental plan in need of access to cleantech mentors, ways of embedding in the local ecosystem, and growing her business. Sabrina entered LACI through the Community Development Block Grant (CDBG)-funded Incubation Founder Business Accelerator (FBA) program and continued getting support as a portfolio company in the Incubation Core program. Being able to benefit from two CDBG funded business programs, SEED has grown into an agtech company addressing sustainability practices and food security in low-income, transitional and homeless populations.

[SEED, which stands for Sustainable Entrepreneurial Ecosystem Development](#), is dedicated to providing healthy, carbon-rich soil opportunities for small and underserved farmers to bring credits to the carbon market — the same economic opportunities corporate farms have.

SEED recently received a \$25,000 Friends and Family grant from Hello Alice and Project Entrepreneur, a program of UBS Bank, to expand. This additional funding will allow the business to produce new units of their “full-service, technologically-advanced ‘farm in a box’”.

Located in the Arts District of Los Angeles, California with most of their impact in Central and South Los Angeles, Sabrina and Chief Branding Officer Andraleia Villand are currently using the mentorship provided at LACI to work on closing their seed funding round from local and regional investors to increase production and create new jobs in the city. As part of LACI’s Incubation program, SEED was able to run pilots at Pacoima Community Garden, San Pedro Community Gardens, Carmelina Garden West L.A., and Stanford Avalon Community Garden to gain valuable experience and data as they focus on sustainable development within underdeveloped communities.



KEBAB RESTAURANT CARVES FIRST LA LOCATION

Samvel Dumanyan previously owned a well-known restaurant in Armenia and he was searching for help to start a food business in Los Angeles. In January 2020, he discovered the West Valley [BusinessSource Center \(BSC\)](#). With extensive guidance from business consultant Elya Narinyan, Samvel was able to open [Sam's Kebab](#) in Van Nuys.

During their first consultation, Elya informed Samvel (pictured above with his family) about the different food business options, from catering to full-service restaurants. She also introduced him to the [City's Sidewalk and Park Vending Program](#), which he preferred as a more accessible option, as he could begin the permit application process immediately.

The West Valley BSC assisted Samvel with obtaining all the required licenses and permits, which allowed him to start working as a street vendor. But within two months, COVID-19 struck. Elya continued to provide Samvel with information on available grants and loans to help sustain his business during the pandemic. With assistance from the BSC, Sam received \$5,000 from the City of LA's COVID-19 Street Vending Recovery Program. In December 2020, he also received a California Rent Relief Grant.

Samvel still dreamed of creating a restaurant just like he had done in Armenia. Even during this difficult time, as the City recovers from COVID-19, the West Valley BSC staff recognized that it is a good time to find restaurant sites and negotiate lease agreements.

Elya collaborated with her contacts and other clients to find the best location for his restaurant. Samvel previously had two unsuccessful attempts at doing this on his own. Eventually, he discovered his dream location and launched his full-service restaurant.

After remodeling and setting up all the necessary equipment in order to follow CDC health and safety requirements, Samvel's business went through a successful health department inspection and received an A!

According to Samvel, the West Valley BSC became a great help for him and his family. They are incredibly grateful for the BSC's assistance and are currently waiting to hire additional staff. He said that now, his family can withstand the pressures of COVID-19 and put a smile on people's faces through the services they provide.

[Sam's Kebab currently has a 4.5 star rating on Yelp](#). Reviewers frequently praise the family-owned business' customer service and delicious kebabs.

Sam's Kebab is located at 14511 Victory Blvd, Van Nuys, in [LA City Council District 6](#).

LINKS to COVID-19 RESOURCES

JOB RESOURCES

LA JOBS PORTAL: jobs.lajobsportal.org

VIRTUAL ORIENTATIONS: bit.ly/LAjoblosshelp

BUSINESS RESOURCES

LA REGIONAL COVID FUND: lacovidfund.org

SMALL BUSINESS PROGRAM: ewddlacity.com/index.php/small-business-loans

BusinessSource Centers: bit.ly/LABusinessSource

WorkSource Centers: bit.ly/EWDDWorkSource

YouthSource Centers: bit.ly/EWDDYouthSource

EWDD METRICS



WorkSource Centers assisted:

1,172 Walk-in visits
1,912 Phone calls and emails
242 Unemployment Insurance



YouthSource Centers - HIRE LA's Youth:

8,247 Applications
2,031 Youth in application pool
3,519 Youth enrolled



BusinessSource Centers assisted:

127 Microenterprises
50 Small Businesses
23 Sidewalk Vendors
126 Virtual Workshops

Women's History Month



\$17M

During COVID-19, EWDD helped Women-Owned Businesses access \$17M in capital

*(January 1, 2020 - February 2022)



\$32M

Since 2012, EWDD has helped Women-Owned Businesses access \$32M in capital

*(January 1, 2012 - February 2022)

EWDD supports entrepreneurs in the City of LA.
To learn more, visit: bit.ly/LABusinessSource



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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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