



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Farmers & Merchants Bank Dedicates \$90,000 to Downtown Long Beach Alliance's Business Education and Grant Program

*Partnership designed to cultivate and support Downtown Long Beach Entrepreneurs,
Small Business and Women-Owned Businesses*

LONG BEACH, CA (February 20, 2020) – Farmers & Merchants (F&M) Bank has partnered with the Downtown Long Beach Alliance (DLBA) to support its Small Business and Women-Owned Business Grant programs by committing \$90,000 over a three-year period in an announcement made today by Kraig Kojian, DLBA President & CEO.

Since the dissolution of the Redevelopment Agency in 2012, the DLBA has sought alternative ways to fund programs to ensure support of entrepreneurs and small business owners throughout Downtown by providing necessary resources that can be used for startup costs or help existing businesses grow and expand.

“We are extremely grateful to F&M Bank for its contribution to this important grant program, which provides access to capital for startups and small businesses and reduces a serious barrier to success,” said Kojian. “Our dedication to build a strong Downtown business ecosystem is reflected in this program and we are pleased to continue it with the generous support of F&M Bank, a long-time Downtown partner.”

DLBA's Entrepreneur Education Series (EES) and Woman-Owned Business Accelerator (WOBA) started in 2017 with the intent of helping both entrepreneurs start a business in Downtown, as well as supporting the continued growth for Downtown small business owners. Since then, a combined total of 350 businesses and entrepreneurs have participated in both programs with a total of 20 entrepreneurs chosen to receive a small business grant in the range of \$2,000 - \$3,500. Four women-owned businesses received grants ranging from \$3,500 to \$10,000 through the WOBA program. The partnership with F&M Bank will carry the program into its fourth year with awards being granted throughout the year.

“F&M Bank, based in Downtown Long Beach for the last 113 years, is proud to support the development of Small Businesses and Entrepreneurs in Downtown Long Beach through our three-year commitment as a Legacy Partner with DLBA”, said Phil Bond, F&M Bank Executive Vice President and Chief Credit Officer. “As a supporter of DLBA, and true to our values of Honesty, Integrity, the Home, the Church and Service Above Self, we are dedicated to promote economic inclusion by growing small businesses and cultivating entrepreneurs in our local economy.”

Anyone interested in participating in this year's Entrepreneur Education Series can sign up using the interest form located on [Downtown Long Beach Alliance's website](#). Classes are expected to start mid-April and run until the end of May.

###

About DLBA: The Downtown Long Beach Alliance is a non-profit, community-based organization whose mission is to cultivate, preserve and promote a healthy, safe and prosperous Downtown. By balancing the interests of the residents, as well as businesses, the DLBA creates tangible progress by way of vested interest and solidified partnerships across local, municipal, and commercial lines. For additional information, visit www.downtownlongbeach.org.

About Farmers & Merchants Bank: Founded in Long Beach in 1907 by C.J. Walker, Farmers & Merchants Bank provides white-glove service to clients at 25 branches across Orange County, Long Beach, the South Bay and Santa Barbara, as well as through robust Online and Mobile Banking platforms. The Bank offers commercial and small business banking, business loan programs, home loans, and a robust offering consumer retail banking products, including checking, savings and youth accounts. Farmers & Merchants Bank is a California state-chartered bank with deposits insured by the Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation (Member FDIC) and an Equal Housing Lender. For more information about F&M, please visit the website, www.fmb.com.

CONTACT:

Austin Metoyer

DLBA Economic Development and Policy Manager

562-506-2960

austinm@dlba.org