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## **DLBA Sponsors New Entrepreneurs of Color Program for Downtown Long Beach**

*10 Downtown business owners to receive \$2,500 in seed funding*

**(LONG BEACH, CA – February 15, 2022)** The [Downtown Long Beach Alliance \(DLBA\)](#) is cosponsoring a new Entrepreneurs of Color grant program through Launch Long Beach, which provides support to historically underrepresented communities with funding and other resources for start-ups and existing businesses.

“Encouraging successful entrepreneurship in Downtown Long Beach is one of the most effective ways to create jobs and stimulate the local economy, especially as we come back from the effects of the coronavirus pandemic,” said DLBA Economic Development and Policy Manager Austin Metoyer. “DLBA’s Entrepreneurs of Color grants are an opportunity to showcase how investing in under-invested communities pays dividends.”

DLBA, in partnership with [Waterford Property Company](#) and [Turnbridge Equities](#), is providing \$2,500 in seed money to 10 selected business owners in the first cohort of the Entrepreneurs of Color program which is now in progress. The program is administered through Launch Long Beach, a collaboration started by [Ubuntu Institute of Learning](#) in concert with DLBA and [Cal State Long Beach’s Institute for Innovation & Entrepreneurship](#).

“Entrepreneurship is one of the most effective vehicles for eradicating poverty in under-invested communities; however, entrepreneurs of color often lack the skills, support and funding necessary to be successful,” said Leigh Lester, Ubuntu Institute of Learning Founder and Executive Director.

The Entrepreneurs of Color grant program and involvement in bringing Launch Long Beach to Downtown align with DLBA’s recently updated Strategic Plan that sets the organization’s direction for the next five years. This includes strengthening existing businesses and encouraging entrepreneurship. Interested business owners can apply to join the next cohort at [LaunchLongBeach.org](#).

Launch Long Beach, established in late 2021, was created to help fill the gaps in the entrepreneurship ecosystem. Beyond the newly launched Entrepreneurs of Color grant program, Launch Long Beach connects entrepreneurs to capital grants, micro-loans, technical assistance, educational workshops, networking and mentorship.

“Our aim at Launch Long Beach is to culturally and holistically fill the gaps for the underinvested and underserved in Long Beach in a collaborative effort with local businesses and corporations, community service organizations, higher learning institutions and the local government,” Lester said. “Launch Long Beach provides tailor-made solutions for entrepreneurs of color designed by entrepreneurs of color.”

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**About DLBA:** DLBA is a non-profit, community-based organization whose mission is to cultivate, preserve and promote a healthy, safe, and prosperous Downtown for all. 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](#), or follow on Facebook [@downtownlongbeach](#), and on Twitter and Instagram [@DLBA](#).