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**MEDIA CONTACT**

Broc Coward  
Chief Operating Officer  
Email: [BrocC@dlba.org](mailto:BrocC@dlba.org)



**DOWNTOWN  
LONG BEACH  
ALLIANCE**

**ENROLLMENT OPENS FOR DOWNTOWN  
ENTREPRENEUR EDUCATION SERIES & SMALL BUSINESS GRANT**

*Farmers & Merchants Bank Sponsors \$20,000 in Grants in Annual Downtown Long Beach Alliance Program*

**(3/15/21 – LONG BEACH, CA)** The [Downtown Long Beach Alliance](#) is pleased to announce the third year running of its popular Entrepreneur Education Series & Small Business Grant program, which is presented in partnership with the [Institute for Innovation & Entrepreneurship](#) at California State University, Long Beach with grants for small businesses funded by Downtown-based [Farmers & Merchants \(F&M\) Bank](#).

The free online program, which begins April 10, is open to any Downtown-based entrepreneurs and small business owners, and those seeking to locate Downtown. Focused on providing the tools and skills necessary to start and run a successful business, the curriculum is ideal for those with new business concepts, in the start-up stage, or for existing business owners looking to refresh their skills.

F&M Bank has committed \$20,000 to fund grants for up to seven program participants. To be eligible for grant funding, program participants must complete 10 modules over the five-week course curriculum. In addition, participants must either already have an existing business in Downtown or be willing to locate in Downtown. Online classes will take place via Zoom. Participating business owners and entrepreneurs will then be eligible in the sixth week to pitch to a panel of judges to compete for prize money. Grant recommendations will be made by the judges representing the DLBA, F&M Bank, and the Institute. Awardees will be named during the final “Pitchfest,” and will be approved by the DLBA Economic Development Committee meeting.

“We are proud to support the entrepreneurs and small business owners of Downtown Long Beach,” said W. Henry Walker, President of F&M Bank. “Since 1907, F&M has had the pleasure of investing in the future and foundation of our communities,”

“The Institute is excited to continue our partnership with DLBA and welcome F&M Bank to the team. All of us are committed to supporting Long Beach entrepreneurs and small business owners with the tools to achieve their goals and grow their businesses,” said Wade Martin, Director of the Institute for Innovation & Entrepreneurship. “We are committed to economic growth in Long Beach through supporting startups and small businesses. That is the focus of this exciting program and partnership.”

Austin Metoyer, Economic Development & Policy Manager for DLBA, noted that there are no eligibility requirements to enter the program and participate in its coursework. “Business education topics are designed to set participants on a strategic path to realize their goals,” he said. Topics covered during the five-week course include: business planning, creating a business model, marketing, finance, business location, and legal and human resources matters.

To learn more about the program or to apply, visit <https://downtownlongbeach.org/invest/entrepreneurship-and-investor-resources/entrepreneur-and-small-business-education-series/>.

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**About the Downtown Long Beach Alliance:** DLBA 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](http://www.downtownlongbeach.org), follow on Facebook @downtownlongbeach, and follow on Twitter and Instagram @DLBA.



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