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**CONTACT**

Michael Berman  
DLBA Communications  
Michaelb@DLBA.org  
562-708-6295



**DLBA ANNOUNCES NEW ROUND OF GRANT FUNDS TO DRIVE GROWTH OF WOMEN-OWNED BUSINESSES**

**(LONG BEACH, CA – Aug. 24, 2021)** The [Downtown Long Beach Alliance](#) (DLBA) today announced grant applications for its popular Woman-Owned Business Accelerator (WOBA) program will open on September 15.

In its fourth year, the DLBA grant program enables up to five women-owned businesses to share \$10,000 of funding provided by Long Beach-based Farmers & Merchants Bank (F&M). Grant winners receive technical assistance and coaching from the Institute for Innovation & Entrepreneurship at California State University, Long Beach. For the second consecutive year, DTLB-based Fuller Management Corporation will also offer full-service, customized, comprehensive business development and coaching to program participants.

“DLBA is excited to once again work with our long-time program partners to invest and grow women-owned businesses in Downtown Long Beach,” said Austin Metoyer, DLBA Economic and Development Policy Manager. “We encourage all Downtown businesses that are majority-owned by women, including those in the start-up phase, to apply for the WOBA grant program. Especially during this recovery period, it’s a great opportunity for smaller companies to access funding and support.”

The WOBA program application details can be found on the DLBA website [here](#). The main grant criteria include:

- Located within the DLBA’s Downtown Business & Parking Improvement Area ([DPBIA](#))
- Active DTLB business license or willingness to relocate within DPBIA boundaries
- For-profit or non-profit business
- Fewer than 24 employees

“The objective is to provide both a direct economic boost and valuable coaching and technical support to women entrepreneurs that leads to growth and stability,” said Dr. Wade Martin, Director of the Institute for Innovation and Entrepreneurship at California State University, Long Beach. “It is important to tailor support to the specific needs of each business or entrepreneur. The support is not only the financial award, but also the mentoring and coaching needed to leverage the monetary award most effectively. “The Institute is proud to partner with DLBA to support the businesses and owners.”

The deadline to submit an application is October 6 and the grants are expected to be awarded in November.

“Farmers & Merchants Bank supports the entrepreneurs of Downtown Long Beach and recognizes the importance of continuing to invest in women-owned businesses, which is an investment in our future,” said F&M Bank President Henry Walker. “We are pleased to continue our ongoing partnership with DLBA and its partners through this grant program as well as other initiatives to stimulate our Downtown economy.”

Last year's WOBA grant winners included Orsa Modica, Modica's Deli, Maggie Stoll, sole proprietor of clothing and gift shop Burke Mercantile, and co-owners Crystal Early and Natalie Mumford of the fashion shop 3 Women.

"The WOBA program is a wonderful opportunity to work with differing types of companies within the Downtown Long Beach footprint. As a minority-owned, woman-owned small business, it is an honor to work alongside women entrepreneurs who are as driven and passionate about their craft as we are," said Kena Fuller, Owner/Executive Director, Fuller Management Corporation.

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**About 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), or follow on Facebook @downtownlongbeach, and on Twitter and Instagram @DLBA.

#### **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](#) from San Clemente to 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 of 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](http://www.fmb.com).

#### **About CSULB Institute for Innovation & Entrepreneurship**

The mission of the CSULB Institute for Innovation & Entrepreneurship (IIE) is to provide programming and guidance for innovators and entrepreneurs that leads to success. The IIE is a central hub for innovators and entrepreneurs in Long Beach, with programming and services to support long-term economic growth that is inclusive and sustainable for our diverse community. For more information on all of our programs and activities, please visit [www.csulb.edu/iie](http://www.csulb.edu/iie).

#### **About Fuller Management Corporation:**

Established in 2010, Fuller Management Corporation is a privately held business development, coaching, and advisement firm based in Long Beach, California. Specializing in small business development, we proudly serve organizations ranging from single person operation to 100+ personnel. With emphasis in targeted niche markets, FMC provides customized business development services designed to support client growth and sustainability in an array of professional industries, tailored to the needs of each organization. For more details, please visit <https://fullerpros.com/>.

