

BUSINESS, LOCAL GOVERNMENT AND POLITICS, NEWS

EDIC MEANS BUSINESS IN LYNN

BY ALLYSHA DUNNIGAN | March 10, 2021

LYNN — The Lynn Partnership Program will provide digital business training, mentoring, technical support and seed funding to 15 early-stage Latino entrepreneurs in the restaurant, retail and service sectors, courtesy of a \$100,000 grant from the Baker-Polito administration.

The Lynn Partnership Program will receive the money through the Economic Development & Industrial Corporation of Lynn (EDIC/Lynn), which applied for the grant on its behalf.

The North Shore Latino Business Center (NSLBC) will receive \$45,000 and another \$45,000 will be directed toward Entrepreneurship for All (EforAll). Another partner, Tech Goes Home, will be provided \$10,000 to give a Chromebook to 13 clients and students and offer a computer technical assistance course.

“Lynn has been one of the most impacted communities as a result of COVID-19 and businesses have been hit particularly hard,” said state Sen. Brendan Crighton (D-Lynn). “Mayor (Thomas M.) McGee and the EDIC, along with the North Shore Latino Business Association and EforAll, have been pivotal in providing economic lifelines to local businesses. This funding will enable them to continue to assist those facing major financial impacts due to the pandemic.”

Lynn was one of 30 projects in 23 communities that were awarded a total of \$2.5 million in funding through the state’s Urban Agenda Grant program last week. Launched in 2015, the program grants support community-based solutions to assist with workforce and small business challenges.

The program promotes economic strength in urban neighborhoods by highlighting partnerships focusing on unique local assets and community responses to specific challenges.

The EDIC will act as the fiscal agent and coordinate reporting requirements, but the day-to-day work and client interaction will take place at the NSLBC and EforAll, according to James Cowdell, EDIC/Lynn executive director.

“This is a collaborative team effort between the partners,” said Cowdell.

This year’s awards are the largest since the Urban Agenda Grant Program began. A total of \$8.5 million in grants have been awarded through the program over the past six years.

“Directing these critical resources to support community-led partnerships in neighborhoods disproportionately impacted by the pandemic helps expand our fight against COVID-19,” said Gov. Charlie Baker. “We are proud to make these targeted investments in programs that address key needs of urban communities across our Commonwealth, providing vital support to fight the pandemic while also helping to strengthen these communities for the future.”

The funds will allow the North Shore Latino Business Association (NSLBA) to provide training to people who are not familiar with the digital world and continue to offer mentoring opportunities, financial resources, and management at a higher scale.

Frances Martinez, the executive director of NSLBA, said the support of EDIC/Lynn, EforAll, and Tech Goes Home will provide a great opportunity to be able to offer more resources to their most important impacted group, which is small businesses.

“During the pandemic, the NSLBA and EDIC worked nonstop making sure to identify the need in the economy sector,” Martinez said.

The Lynn Partnership Program is hoping that the funds will provide critical business training, mentoring and seed funding to early-stage entrepreneurs, particularly people that have lost their jobs during the pandemic and are turning to entrepreneurship to provide for their families.

“As we continue to navigate the pandemic, Urban Agenda grants are a key tool to help local residents address challenges in communities and neighborhoods especially hard-hit by COVID-19,” said Lt. Gov. Karyn Polito. “From job training, to programs that mentor entrepreneurs and provide assistance for small businesses expanding their digital profile, these grants harness the communities’ momentum by supporting innovative programs that help them grow and thrive.”

The partnership will also offer digital training and necessary equipment to entrepreneurs to help them strengthen their business operations and improve revenue. It will also assist small businesses in accessing critical funding to sustain their businesses.

This year’s Urban Agenda had a specific focus on COVID-19 relief opportunities and helping gateway cities especially within minority- and women-owned businesses, according to EDIC/Lynn.

“We feel very fortunate to have been approved for the full \$100,000 and look forward to seeing the work happen over the upcoming months,” said EDIC Project Coordinator William Bochnak.

The Urban Agenda Grant Program is now exclusively part of the administration’s Community One Stop for Growth, a recently established single-application portal that provides access to a variety of competitive community and economic development grant programs. This portal redefines the Commonwealth’s role as an active partner in economic development strategy, priorities, and investment.

“Recognizing the effectiveness of these grants, we are pleased to add the Urban Agenda Grant Program to our One Stop for Growth portal, which will elevate the program’s visibility for prospective applicants,” said Housing and Economic Development Secretary Mike Kennealy. “By including Urban Agenda in the One Stop portfolio, we can apply the same process to rapidly review and approve or refer applicants to this key program to ensure these resources are put to uses that have the highest impact.”



Allysha Dunnigan

Allysha joined the Daily Item in 2021 after graduating with a degree in Media and Communications from Salem State University. She is a Lynn native and a graduate of Lynn Classical High School.

Allysha Dunnigan can be reached at adunnigan@itemlive.com
