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**MAYOR LEE CELEBRATES SMALL BUSINESS WEEK &
HIGHLIGHTS INVESTMENTS TO BOOST SMALL BUSINESSES**

City's Businesses & Entrepreneurs Celebrated for Innovation & Success in Supporting Growing Local Economy; New Investments in Neighborhoods Help Small Businesses Thrive & Strengthen Diverse Communities

San Francisco, CA— Mayor Edwin M. Lee today launched the celebration of San Francisco's Small Business Week (May 21st –28th) where local businesses, entrepreneurs and workers are being recognized and celebrated for their contribution to the local economy and unrivaled neighborhoods.

"Small businesses are the true strength of San Francisco's economy, and I am honored to celebrate their remarkable contributions to our City," said Mayor Lee. "Small Business Week is an opportunity for us to recognize and honor the innovative and entrepreneurial spirit of our small businesses and our talented workforce whose commitment to San Francisco creates one of the most unique and diverse small business economies in the world."

A large majority of all businesses in San Francisco are small. These small businesses employ more than 326,000 individuals, which keeps our economy robust and diverse. San Francisco is hosting a series of events and workshops that focus on small business and commercial district support and resources. The theme for the 12th Annual San Francisco Small Business Week is *Celebrate Small Businesses: Tapping Into Opportunities*. The City provides a multitude of business opportunities, resources, and works to create an entrepreneurial environment to support those embarking on a journey to start and grow their business.

"This year's Small Business Week celebrates the accomplishments of our local small businesses, and highlights the amazing service organizations that provide essential assistance with licenses and permits, resource referrals, microloans, classes, mentors, and more—to help new entrepreneurs get started and existing small business owners flourish," said Mark Dwight, Rickshaw Bagworks Founder and CEO and San Francisco Small Business Commission President.

This year, Mayor Lee is recognizing and honoring six small businesses for their contribution and commitment to the San Francisco community.

Local Hire: Gus's Community Market - 2111 Harrison Street

Community Leadership: San Francisco Federal Credit Union (Excelsior Branch) - 4800 Mission Street

Community Impact: Black Bark BBQ - 1325 Fillmore Street

Community Innovation: Green Apple Books - 506 Clement Street

Business Strengthening: Dragon Papa - 752 Grant Avenue

Heritage: La Mejor Bakery - 3329 24th Street

“I feel happy and empowered not only for my business, but for the community because it serves as proof that we can succeed as women and small business owners even in these times of uncertainty we can succeed and still serve our neighborhood,” said Carmen Elias, Owner of La Mejor Bakery.

Mayor Lee also announced \$1.62 million in grant awards through the Office of Economic and Workforce Development’s Invest In Neighborhoods Initiative to strengthen neighborhood commercial districts by implementing neighborhood improvement projects and providing a variety of technical services related to neighborhood economic development for organizations citywide:

- **Small Business Disaster Relief Fund:** Provide mini-grants to qualified small businesses directly impacted by a disaster.
- **Business Retention and Relocation:** Supplement existing legal services and lease assistance to businesses wishing to stay and grow in San Francisco.
- **Neighborhood Asset Activation:** Expand services and activation to assist community facilities including those that are vacant and underutilized in their role as vital neighborhood institutions.
- **Customized Support for Cultural Districts:** Support ongoing Calle 24 (Lower 24th Street) and greater Mission Neighborhood efforts in developing and implementing a community driven strategy.
- **Peer and Expert Mentorship for Women:** Expand services and support to women owned businesses.
- **Fillmore Commercial District Activities and Juneteenth Festival:** Provide marketing and branding support, merchant outreach, and fund the Juneteenth Festival in the Lower Fillmore.
- **Community Benefits District (CBD):** Support neighborhoods in their interest to explore feasibility and formation of a CBD and current CBDs seeking to augment their services.
- **Quality of Life Programs:** Various programs that support neighborhood public space activation, festivals, community building, and partnerships with service providers.

“San Francisco has created an environment for our small business to be resilient, celebrate our accomplishments, and shout from the rooftops that supporting the arts is a powerful cause. We have been able to grow as we support and contribute to the character of our local neighborhood, Mission Bernal, and provide employment opportunities for members of the community to flourish professionally with us,” said Eden Stein, Owner and Curator of Secession Art and Design, a recipient of Invest In Neighborhood’s services. Stein is also the president of the Mission/Bernal Merchants Association.

In the past five years, the Mayor’s Invest in Neighborhoods has provided over 140 neighborhood grants totaling almost \$5 million to promote, beautify, and activate our neighborhoods; completed 605 assessments to assist small businesses in complying with the American Disabilities Act (ADA); administered 617 loans totaling over \$23.5 million to small businesses, creating 752 jobs; granted 66 local businesses a total of \$2.2 million for façade and tenant improvements; transformed 10 small businesses so that they provide healthy food options in communities that are underserved; and visited more than 35,000 businesses with on the ground assistance and support from the Jobs Squad team.

About Small Business Week

San Francisco Small Business Week is from May 21st through 28th and is led by the Office of Small Business to honor and support the thousands of small businesses and entrepreneurs that call San Francisco home. As part of National Small Business Week, it celebrates the contributions and achievements of small business owners by offering a series of educational and networking events designed to inspire, educate and connect the members of our business community. For more information on San Francisco Small Business Week, go to: sfsmallbusinessweek.com.

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