

**Merced Hispanic Chamber of Commerce**

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Primary Project Contact:

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Ms. Stephanic Dietz  
City Manager  
City of Merced  
678 West 18<sup>th</sup> Street  
Merced, CA 95340

April 28, 2022

Dear ARPA Community Funding Selection Committee:

The Merced Hispanic Chamber of Commerce (MCHCC) was founded in 1947 by a group of dedicated leaders in Merced who realized the enormous potential of the Hispanic business community. The Hispanic Chamber was formed so that the needs of this community would be well represented through the public and private sectors. The mission of the MCHCC is to promote Hispanic-owned small businesses and to further the economic development of all Merced businesses through advocacy, networking, marketing, educational or training opportunities, language assistance, and by creating valuable partnerships within our community. MCHCC provides members with the tools to establish, improve, and sustain their businesses. Chamber membership is key to strong economic development in our community. Support for entrepreneurs is key to the MCHCC mission.

“Working for you and your community” is MCHCC’s tag line because it is true. The Chamber actively engages in projects to benefit the community at large, in addition to its programs for supporting small businesses. The downtown night market known as The Mercado was launched

on a \$2,000 budget in May of 2020, not long after the initial covid19 pandemic lockdown. Despite a small budget, MCHCC successfully designed and implemented this community-driven project. The Mercado continues to host many vendors, entertainers, artists, and nonprofits in bimonthly night markets downtown. Participation increases with every event. Mercedians are loving the Mercado.

With the popularity of the Mercado, MCHCC has seen many new business vendors working to launch their small enterprises by offering their services and wares to the community through this inexpensive venue. To encourage their entrepreneurship, the Chamber seeks to host a series of “challenges” for small business startups. The goal of these “challenges” is to create visibility and encourage sales for new ventures, especially those led by youth, seniors, veterans, and Hispanics.

At each Mercado, a different group of vendors would be featured. Applications for “challenge” participation would be collected and ranked by a subcommittee of the MCHCC Board of Directors in order of business viability and likelihood of success. The top five vendors would be invited to participate in the “challenge.” Vendor fees would be waived for the featured competitors. Outstanding new businesses would be chosen by the public attending the Mercado. People would visit all five competitor vendors to acquaint themselves with their products, services, and sales styles. To encourage public participation, everyone who turns in a “challenge” ballot would have a chance to win raffle prizes. The competitor earning the most votes from the public would win a grand prize to help them launch their new business. Remaining competitors would receive consolation prizes for their participation. All competitors would have MCHCC support to move forward with their business plans.

MCHCC has spearheaded many different types of projects over the years, some annually and others just once. The Chamber generally works on tight budgets to produce big projects. In the past five years, some projects have been especially successful:

Kicking off with Mercy Gulch Day downtown Merced in May of 2017, MCHCC has hosted an annual 5k run with High School track coach, Alfonso Garcia, to facilitate the race and Sue Emanivong of Tsunami Collaboration to support organization. Given a budget of only \$3,000, the event drew hundreds of runners and good times were had by all. Alfonso Garcia may be contacted at 209-658-1156, 1800 N. Buhach Road, Atwater, CA 95301. Sue Emanivong is available at 209-760-6850 or [tsunamicollaboration@gmail.com](mailto:tsunamicollaboration@gmail.com).

In March of 2018, MCHCC collaborated with Luis and Irene de la Cruz to establish the annual Latina Luncheon to honor exceptional community service, professional achievements, and healthy family life in the Hispanic community. Every year, accomplished Latinas are recognized and honored with a catered meal and awards ceremony on a budget of merely \$3,000. Although the de la Cruzes are no longer involved in the Latina Luncheons, they may be reached at 209-261-0007, or [dlcirene@aol.com](mailto:dlcirene@aol.com).

Beginning in January of 2019, under the direction of Board member Dr. Diana Odom Gunn, MCHCC incorporated an affiliated 501(c)3 Scholarship Foundation to fundraise and distribute educational awards to deserving Hispanic high school students applying for colleges or universities after graduation. With the support of Steve Teitjen and the Virginia Smith Trust, the

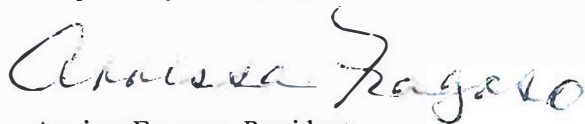
MCHCC Scholarship Foundation has successfully helped students every year with these desperately needed scholarship awards. Diana Odom Gunn may be contacted at 408-784-4732 or [dodomgunn@comcast.net](mailto:dodomgunn@comcast.net). 2021 P Street, Merced, CA 95340. The current Scholarship Foundation President is Geneva Rojas at 209-430-5592, 12961 Le Grand Road, Le Grand, CA 95333. Steve Teitjen, Superintendent of Schools at 632 W. 13<sup>th</sup> Street, Merced, CA 95341 or call 209-381-6601.

Between January 2019 and December 2021, MCHCC ran "Project with a Purpose". The Chamber interned three to four students at a time through consecutive school semesters. Students learned important event planning, administrative skills and social networking with the Chamber staff and membership. Collaborator Juan Morales Aguayo, Employer Relations and Internships Coordinator from the Office of Leadership, Service, and Career, at the University of California, Merced, can be reached at 209-228-2462.

Taken together with many years of annual events and special projects, MCHCC has demonstrated the ability to rise to every occasion as a successful Chamber. MCHCC is making a difference in the growth and stability of small businesses and in the quality of life for residents of the City of Merced.

Thank you for your careful consideration of this proposal.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Anissa Fragoso". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, stylized initial 'A'.

Anissa Fragoso, President  
Merced Hispanic Chamber of Commerce

## INDIVIDUAL STAFF EXPERIENCE

### Administrative Staff:

Current administrative staff, Sarah Herrera, will serve as the primary contact for business outreach and needs assessments. Staff will schedule appointments, coordinate resources, perform clerical duties and interact regularly with Chamber members participating in this project. Must read, write, and speak fluently in Spanish. At least five years of progressively responsible experience in an administrative assistant. Experience in sales, marketing, and computing (including word processing, spreadsheets, Quickbooks, social media management, and website maintenance.) Outstanding customer service and keen attention to detail. Self-motivated.

Sarah Herrera is currently the administrative assistant for MCHCC. Sarah will provide administrative support to this project by collecting vendor and competitor applications, organizing the Board of Directors' evaluations, and managing public balloting to identify winners. Sarah brings over five years of experience which includes account management, marketing, general business operations, and exemplary customer service skills. Sarah is fully bilingual in Spanish and English.

## PROPOSED PROJECT AND SCOPE OF SERVICES

### Background

In the post-covid economy, new small businesses are opening every day. The pandemic shattered the occupational goals of many people and they are re-tooling for self-sufficiency and self-direction. Local vendor fairs are booming with new entrepreneurs testing the market for their goods and services. The Merced Mercado, hosted by the Merced County Hispanic Chamber of Commerce (MCHCC) is a hot bed of new business opportunities in the City of Merced. MCHCC wants to encourage these new entrepreneurs to succeed in their enterprises.

### The entrepreneurial challenge match at the Mercado

The Merced Mercado hosts about 65 local vendors at each bimonthly event. Of those, roughly 25 are new enterprises coming to the market. The goal of the current project is to stimulate these new enterprises and encourage the entrepreneurial spirit of the Mercado. New small businesses will be defined as those serving the public for three years or less. Among the new small businesses, certain demographic groups will be featured at most events, with one event open to everyone.

Vendor applications will be revised to include an application for the upcoming entrepreneurial challenge match. Competitions will be featured at each bimonthly Mercado during the grant period (excepting the winter hiatus). Challenge applicants will be screened for eligibility to comply with participation criteria so that targeted groups are identified for consideration.

There is no targeted group for the July 2022 event and all vendors will be eligible to compete. In September 2022, only junior entrepreneurs will be eligible--vendors age 21 years or younger. In November 2022, only senior entrepreneurs will be eligible--vendors age 50 years or older. Following the winter break, eligible competitors will be military veterans in March 2023, and Hispanic vendors in May 2023.

### The competitions

Eligible applications will be screened by a subcommittee of the MCHCC Board of Directors for the feasibility, marketability, and likely success of the business concept. Five competitors will be selected for each competition. Those five vendors will be featured at the Mercado event. The public in attendance will be given ballots to vote for their favorite of these five businesses. Ballots will be tallied as they come in. Ballots will also serve as raffle tickets for participation prizes for the attendee voters. The business earning the most votes on these ballots will be awarded the grand prize to help launch their business. The remaining four competing businesses will receive a consolation prize to offset additional expenses incurred for their participation in this competition. All five competitors will complete an evaluation of their experience with the entrepreneurial challenge. All competitors will have the support of MCHCC to launch their new businesses, from business plans to ribbon cutting.

Selected businesses will setup their vendor booths on Bob Hart Square. These businesses will be promoted with the regular advertisements of the Mercado event. During the event, selected businesses will be featured and the competition will be announced frequently. Press coverage for these businesses will be encouraged. Attendees will be given one ballot per person (over about age 12) to vote for their favorite business. Ballots will be collected at the MCHCC booth and the vote totals will be summed. The winner will be announced near the end of the event and awards presented on Bob Hart Square. The business receiving the most votes will be named the grand prize winner.

#### Awards, Incentives and Prizes

The five competitors will enjoy the support of MCHCC to launch their new businesses. The grand prize winner will earn a \$500 cash bonus to defray some costs of their business start-up. The other four competitors will earn \$100 cash bonuses toward their participation costs. Voting members of the public will have one chance per person to win raffle prizes. There will be five raffle prizes per competition. The raffle prizes will be \$25 gift cards for locally owned small businesses. The raffle provides participation incentives for the public.

#### Outcomes Assessment

The goal of the entrepreneurial challenge is to support and encourage new entrepreneurs. New business interest in these competitions will be indicated by the number of applications received for each event. Public interest and support for these new businesses will be shown by the number of ballots received from attendees and their patronage promises will suggest new business viability.

Other measurable outcomes include the competition application information, especially past profit and future revenue projections. Sales during the competition will be compared to those values and are expected to exceed past profits because of the featured promotion. Sales projections will also be compared to revenue averages at six months after businesses launch.

Evaluations of the entrepreneurial challenge completed by competitors will gage their costs and income from participation, as well as general profit and loss information. This information will be used for comparison with future profits as those businesses launch under the wing of MCHCC after each competition. Profit improvement is expected.

After the challenge matches, competitors will be given needs assessments and prescribed individual interventions to strengthen their business plans. Specific interventions will depend on assessments for direction. MCHCC will provide support to achieve a successful business launch and host a grand opening for each competitor. Each participating business will be followed over time to document success or failure of the enterprise over the first 6 months post-competition.

PROJECT TIMELINE

<b>Mercado Markets 7/1/2022-6/30/2023</b>	<b>Featured challengers</b>	
Project launch		7/1/2022
July 2022	Open competition	7/7/2022
September 2022	Young (< 21 years)	9/1/2022
November 2022	Seniors (> 50 years)	11/3/2022
March 2023	Military veterans	3/2/2023
May 2023 (Cinco de Mayo)	Latinx heritage	5/4/2023
Project close		5/30/2023

PROGRAM BUDGET  
For the project period of July 1, 2022 through June 30, 2023

<u>Project Expenses</u>	<u>Cost</u>	<u>Funding Source</u>
<b>Project Staff</b>		
<b>Administrative Assistant</b> (internal position) 8 hrs/market, 40 hrs total @ \$17/hour	\$ 680	City Community Grant
<b>Competition Expenses</b>		
<b>Vendor fees</b> waived for selected competitors 5 competitors/market, 5 markets @ \$45 each	\$1125	City Community Grant
<b>Prizes</b>		
<b>Competition Grand Prize</b> 5 market competitions, 1 prize @ \$500 each	\$2500	City Community Grant
<b>Competition Consolation Prizes</b> 5 market competitions, 4 prizes each @ \$100	\$2000	City Community Grant
<b>Raffle Prizes</b> for ballot drawings 5 market competitions, 5 prizes each @ \$25	\$ 625	City Community Grant
<b>Administrative Expenses</b>		
<b>Targeted Marketing</b> Newspaper ad, flyers, other media	\$1000	MCHCC
<b>Copy costs</b> for competitions Forms, ballots, etc,	\$ 300	MCHCC
<b>Indirect Costs</b> 10%	\$ 800	City Community Grant
<b>TOTAL PROJECT COST</b>	<b>\$9030</b>	
	\$1300	MCHCC
	<b>\$7730</b>	<b>City Community Grant requested funding</b>

## REFERENCES

### **Tsunami Collaborations, Inc.**

Sue Emanivong, 209-720-6850, [tsunamicollaboration@gmail.com](mailto:tsunamicollaboration@gmail.com)  
2859 Oleander. Merced, CA 95340

Partner for inaugural MCHCC annual 5k Run on Mercy Gulch Day downtown Merced

### **Merced Boys and Girls Club**

Nellie McGarry, 209-201-5693, [chubbs1@sbcglobal.net](mailto:chubbs1@sbcglobal.net)  
615 W. 15<sup>th</sup> Street, Merced, CA 95340

Partner for Merced Jams, a shared fundraiser. Mayor Serratto, Supervisor Pedrozo, and Maria Soto were basketball contestants.

### **Students With Aspiring Goals (SWAG)**

Devon Hilliard, 209-676-0335, [dhilliard.swag@gmail.com](mailto:dhilliard.swag@gmail.com)  
1404 W. Main Street, Merced, CA 95340

Partner for Merced Jams, a shared fundraiser. Mayor Serratto, Supervisor Pedrozo, and Maria Soto were basketball contestants.

APPENDIX  
Herrera Resume

## **Sarah Herrera**

1705 Redwood Ave  
Atwater, CA 95301  
Herreras63@yahoo.com

### **Profile Summary**

Outstanding member of society with 8 years of professional experience in management exceeding in sales growth, marketing strategies, and team building. Able to create direct approaches to meet or exceed all designated intentions of the task. Expert knowledge includes management reviews in preparation of descriptive reports, office or store space utilization to ensure proper allocation of floor space, arrange meetings and/or conduct individual discussions with using personnel to gain their concurrence in recommendations and department. Training Coordinator for personnel in safety regulations. Reliable and adaptable with the ability to maintain a positive work environment, accomplishing task in a thorough and timely manner.

### **Key Skills**

- Clear Oral Communication
- Training Skills
- Task Delegating
- Computer Skills
  
- Leadership Experience
- Bilingual (English and Spanish)
- Sales and Marketing Experience
- Phenomenal Customer Service

## Education

El Paso Community College <b>Associate of Arts Degree, Accounting, Business, and Economics</b> 12 credits	El Paso, TX October 2018-Present
University of Alaska Fairbanks <b>Certificate of Applied Business, Management</b> 15 credits	Fairbanks, AK May 2016-May 2018

## Experience

Merced County Hispanic Chamber of Commerce <b>Administrative Assistant</b>	Merced, CA August 2021- Present
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Manage accounts of 100+ chamber members maintaining the customer profile database up to date electronically and by file. Meeting new and possible members providing information about our membership. Using Quick books and providing support to our Treasurer in handling all payment coming to and being made by the chamber. Creating and distributing weekly newsletter to all our membership and partners. Keeping our members informed of various resources available to them that could help assist them with their business growth. Maintaining our chamber website to reflect a professional and up to date look. Answering calls, emails and mail that come into the chamber in a timely manner and with excellent customer service. Ensuring that the information is received correctly and relayed to the proper department or individual of the chamber. Personally, distributing chamber materials throughout the County of Merced. Overseeing that our calendar is well kept and not over book. Meeting with businesses and organizations to keep the chamber actively involved in current events and issues. Project Coordinator of The Mercado Night Market coordinating vendors, programs, and marketing material.

El Paso Hispanic Chamber of Commerce <b>Membership Coordinator</b>	El Paso, TX February 2019-August 2019
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Managed accounts of nearly 1,200 chamber members problem solving any issues in regards to membership and maintaining the customer profile database. Planned and coordinated monthly networking events with 50+ attendees as well as creating the agendas for each different event. Provided support to the Executive assistant, Department Directors, and the Chief Executive Officer of the chamber with a demonstrated ability to improvise, improve procedures, and meet crucial deadlines. Provided excellent customer service by building strong relationships with members and sponsors. Helped staff with sales strategies for signing on new and recurring members. With the CEO, I helped to develop and implement a new program that was designed to increase and retain membership. Handled credit card information retaining customer confidentiality to the highest degree. Protected sensitive client information when the occasion called. Managed a committee of 30+ business owners and company representatives, assuring members interest were consistently addressed. Designed and published weekly mass email

communications. Created a new ceremony guide to assist members on planning their celebration events.

Retail  
**Person in Charge**

Fairbanks, AK  
April 2016- May 2018

Trained and coached 10+ associates in basic skills training from customer service, department policies and procedures, safety policies and procedures, organizing, prioritizing, and scheduling work assignments. Achieved 30% sales growth in promotional event from previous year by marketing and advertising sales promotions. Responsible for ensuring efficient workflow to meet organizational objectives. Responsible for proofreading advertisements. Resolve customer complaints and problems with innovative solutions. Conducted and led daily staff meetings to maintain consistent communication. Supervised hourly shift employee's (5-6 associates per shift).

Wyndham  
**Community Marketing Agent**

San Antonio, TX  
March 2015- March 2016

Community brand ambassador in the Wyndham Destinations sales experience. Developed and practiced marketing and sales tactics. Collected data and analyzing details on potential clients. Established and enhanced client relationships with incentives. Managed customer inquiries and reservations. Writing formal invitation for tour reservation using customer relation management program. Organized departures and pick ups for guest. Processed required deposits from clients to secure a place at our marketing presentation.

Wyndham  
**Manifest Dispatcher for Sales and Marketing**

San Antonio, TX  
December 2013-March 2015

Answer inbound calls from over 100+CMA, guest, or other locations directing them to the right department. Customer service and data entry into separate systems. Collected and secured sensitive client information keeping documents filed in organized system. Live updating and tracking sales, running periodic and end of day reports. Create, track, and process tours on CRS system. Enter accurate tour appointment information into database and provide confirmation number by phone and/or e-mail. Utilize Office Microsoft (Word, Excel, Power point) and multi-line phone system.

**Awards**

- Employee of the month for June
- Employee of the month for July
- Employee of the month for September
- Reservations employee of the year 2014

Sbarro

San Antonio, TX

**General Manager**

January 2012- August 2013

Direct and coordinate all operations of business. Develop the team by conducting interviews and hire qualified staff. Train all personnel in their field including cross training. Ensure all administrative services are done in a timely and thorough manner. Count all inventory in a weekly basis. Keeping track of all food loss. Ordering food and supplies while keeping under the required budget amount given by corporate. Scheduling labor using past years sales and allowed hours. Ensures all OSHA, local health and safety codes, and company safety and security policies were being met. Controlled profit and loss, by following cash control/security procedures, maintain inventory, managing labor, reviewing budgets, and taking appropriate actions.