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Merced Hispanic Chamber of Commerce

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Primary Project Contact:

Annissa Fragoso
MCHCC President
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Merced, CA 95340
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Ms. Stephanie Dietz
City Manager
City of Merced
678 West 18th Street
Merced, CA 95340

March 4, 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.

Merced businesses have suffered serious losses from repeated closures and expensive safety protocols to contain covid-19. Businesses are balking at every expense, including valuable Chamber memberships. MCHCC has experienced two years of declined memberships. In 2020, new memberships dropped to near zero and 2021 was just slightly better. MCHCC must recruit

members to endure. Currently, only about 55 business members enjoy Chamber resources. MCHCC seeks to double that membership through the current outreach and recruitment effort. The return of memberships to their pre-pandemic level will ensure the sustainability of the Chamber through this pandemic, this endemic, and well into the future.

The Merced Hispanic Chamber of Commerce proposes outreach to the businesses hit hardest by pandemic losses. To facilitate this recruitment, we seek to offer one year of free membership to those businesses more affected covid-19. MCHCC can facilitate resources for businesses to adapt to the pandemic and thrive despite it. Outreach would involve door-to-door canvassing of small businesses, especially those struggling to survive. Through one-on-one resource matching with Chamber partners (such as Bitwise, SBDC, and Healthy House), MCHCC makes education, training, marketing resources, and Spanish language materials accessible to this community. MCHCC would recruit up to 50 new members in need to link and connect them to rapid response resources which will help them to overcome covid19 pandemic losses, adapt to the changing economy, and sustain themselves into the future.

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.

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.

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. 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. 13th Street, Merced, CA 95341 or call 209-381-6601.

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,

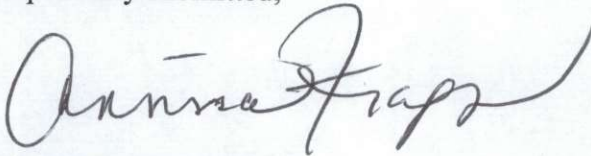
under the direction and support of project creator Gil Cardon, and support of the City of Merced, MCHCC successfully designed and implemented this community-driven project. The Mercado continues to host many vendors, entertainers, artists, and nonprofits in bimonthly night markets downtown. Participation increases with every event. Gil Cardon is available to you at 209-315-5838 or at 1812 Canal Street, Merced, CA 95340.

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 challenge as a successful Chamber. MCHCC is making a difference in the growth and stability of small businesses and in the quality of life for City residents. Now, MCHCC seeks to outreach to distressed businesses and provide them with free Chamber memberships. Chamber memberships will ensure the survival of MCHCC and improve the adaptation of small businesses in the City of Merced.

Thank you for your careful consideration of this proposal.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Annissa Fragoso". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large, sweeping flourish at the end.

Annissa 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 contacting targeted businesses, making appointments for interviews and follow-ups, managing documentation, tracking expenses, and marketing the project to potential members. 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 & SCOPE OF SERVICES

Background and Purpose

The covid-19 pandemic wrought havoc on small businesses throughout the City of Merced. As businesses became increasingly stressed, they withdrew from participation with the supports that facilitate business adaptation and endurance. Every expense was avoided, including membership in local Chambers of Commerce. The Merced Hispanic Chamber of Commerce was impacted by simultaneous non-renewals of memberships and weak recruiting of new members. The capacity of MCHCC has been seriously affected. MCHCC relies on memberships to function effectively. The purpose of the current proposal is to recruit new members by offering to mitigate covid-19's negative effects on revenue with free membership offers one of the most serious victims of the pandemic. In turn, MCHCC will make resources available to members to improve their revenue potentials. This program will sustain MCHCC and enhance the functioning of impacted businesses.

Community Outreach

MCHCC will identify the small businesses most deeply affected by pandemic closures such as entertainment venues, party supplies, small retail stores, restaurants, and bars. We will contact identified businesses and offer free memberships and services to small business owners throughout the City of Merced.

Business Recruitment

Upon acceptance of the MCHCC free membership offer, covid-19 affected businesses will be interviewed to assess their needs. Depending on their identified strengths and weaknesses, new members will be connected to education and training, support for technology (especially internet presence and transaction facilitation), language resources to overcome barriers, and social networking to build stable resource alliances.

Project Evaluation Survey

Three months after recruitment, new members will complete a short survey to measure performance improvement, resource utilization, capacity building, and attitudes to future economic development.

Project Outcomes and Reporting

Success of this project will be primarily indicated by the successful recruitment of the target 50 new memberships from identified distressed small businesses. Project Evaluation Surveys will further show increasing capacity for sustainability and future growth.

Project Timeline

Project Goal	Start date	End date
Project Opening	7/1/2022	
Community Outreach	7/1/2022	5/1/2022
Business Recruitment	7/1/2022	6/15/2022
Project Evaluation Survey	10/1/2022	6/30/2023
Project Closing		6/30/2023

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>
<u>Project Staff</u>		
Administrative Assistant (internal position) 10 hours/week @ \$15/hour, 52 weeks	5,300 2,500	City Community Grant United Way Grant
<u>Business Resources</u>		
Membership Fees for participants 50 businesses @ \$150	7,500	City Community Grant
Travel to business sites within City of Merced 25 miles/week @ \$0.56/mile, 52 weeks	728	MCHCC in-kind support
<u>Administrative Resources</u>		
Office Supplies Estimated \$25/month, 12 months	300	MCHCC in-kind support
Office Services (internet, phones, printing) Estimated \$100/month, 12 months	1,200	MCHCC in-kind support
Receptions (coffee, water, snacks) Estimated \$25/month, 12 months	300	MCHCC in-kind support
Miscellaneous expenses (unspecified)	250	MCHCC in-kind support
TOTAL PROJECT COST	<u>18,078</u>	
	2,778	MCHCC funded costs
	2,500	United Way funded costs
	<u>12,800</u>	City Community Grant requested funding

REFERENCES

Tsunami Collaborations, Inc.

Sue Emanivong, 209-720-6850, 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
615 W. 15th Street, Merced, CA 95340

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

Students With Aspiring Goals (SWAG)

Devon Hilliard, 209-676-0335, dhilliard.swag@gmail.com
1404 W. Main Street, Merced, CA 95340

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

APPENDIX
Herrera Resume

Sarah Herrera

1705 Redwood Ave
Atwater, CA 95301
Herrer63@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

Associate of Arts Degree, Accounting, Business, and Economics

12 credits

El Paso, TX
October 2018-Present

University of Alaska Fairbanks

Certificate of Applied Business, Management

15 credits

Fairbanks, AK
May 2016-May 2018**Experience**

Merced County Hispanic Chamber of Commerce

Administrative AssistantMerced, CA
August 2021- Present

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 varies 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

Membership CoordinatorEl Paso, TX
February 2019-August 2019

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
General Manager

San Antonio, TX
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.