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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**REDF Partners with the County of Los Angeles to Award \$500K in Grants to 59 Social Enterprises & Small Businesses**

*The first-of-its-kind publicly funded Employer Assistance Grant Fund will support the viability of local businesses and avert layoffs in the face of COVID-19*

**LOS ANGELES** (May 4, 2020) – 13 social enterprises and 46 small businesses across Los Angeles County have been awarded grants from the state of California’s first employer assistance micro-grant program. Totaling \$500,000, these grants will avert 311 layoffs and help small businesses weather the economic hardships caused by COVID-19.

REDF (the Roberts Enterprise Development Fund) and the County of Los Angeles Workforce Development, Aging and Community Services (WDACS) partnered to launch the Employer Assistance Grant Fund with funding from the California Employment Development Department. This micro-grant program is the first of its kind in the state.

“With millions of Californians out of work, the competition for jobs will be fierce as the economy reopens. The jobs, supportive services, and training that social enterprises provide will be in even higher demand by people whose experiences with homelessness and the criminal justice system not only make it difficult to access employment, but have left them vulnerable to the pandemic. We are committed to ensuring that social enterprises are ready, so that these men and women are not left out of the recovery,” said Carla Javits President and CEO of REDF. “REDF is proud to partner with the County of Los Angeles which made the decision to quickly distribute funds so that social enterprises and other small businesses emerge from the COVID-19 crisis strong and able to continue employing Angelenos.”

Businesses receiving grants from the Employer Assistance Grant Fund employ Angelenos in a variety of industries, including hospitality, technology, professional services, health care, and education. Two-thirds of recipients are minority, women, or veteran-owned businesses, and many serve communities most impacted by the pandemic.

Social enterprises receiving grants from the Employer Assistance Grant Fund are:

- Rose City Coffee, LLC
- The River Project
- New Earth Organization
- 5000 Pies, Inc.
- HelpGood LLC
- House of Refugee Care
- Project Impact
- Better Youth



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- Project Ropa
- Homeboy Recycling
- Verdical Group
- Community School of the Arts Foundation
- San Gabriel Conservation Corps

“COVID-19 has been especially hard on our small businesses,” said Otto Solórzano, Acting Director of WDACS. “To help, WDACS has responded quickly by launching this innovative program to provide funding where it could do the most good. Our team is working tirelessly to bring other resources and supportive services to employers and workers who are struggling, and the Employer Assistance Grant Fund was just the start.”

“This grant is a life saver for our social enterprise,” said Dan Davidson, Executive Director of Rose City Coffee. “Our social enterprise cafe was significantly impacted by the current pandemic. We were unsure if we would ever recover. But with this grant helping us immediately cover two months of rent, we have room to adapt, innovate, and rebound stronger than ever. This grant changed our future for good!”

Grant funds will be used for rent and mortgage payments, working capital costs, inventory, utilities, and other debt obligations incurred prior to the COVID-19 crisis.

Learn more about REDF’s response to COVID-19 and other funding provided to social enterprises [here](#).

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#### **ABOUT REDF**

REDF (the Roberts Enterprise Development Fund) is a pioneering venture philanthropy accelerating a national movement of employment social enterprises – mission driven, revenue-generating businesses that empower people striving to overcome employment barriers to get jobs, keep jobs, and build a better life. Independent research shows this approach works. It leads to greater economic security and mobility and a significant rate of return to society—\$2.23 in benefits for every \$1 invested.

For more information, visit [www.redf.org](http://www.redf.org).