

**Organizer:** Tammy Deets, Commerce (Organizer)

**Attendees**

**Members:** Sam Cho, Tim Warden-Hertz, Karen Lewis, Monserrat Padilla, Rich Stolz, Keelcy Perez Woolley

**Guests:** Alejandro Sanchez, Special Assistant to the Governor  
Laura Fletcher and Mayra Gomez, Ventures Nonprofit  
Glenn Davis

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**Objective** Develop work plan on how to support immigrant owned small businesses & immigrants who are independent contractors

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**Review & Updates** No comments on last month meeting notes.  
Bill noteworthy to track is the one on health care workforce (SHB1411) Appropriation for Washington Immigrants Relief Fund in Senate budget.  
HB1170 – Strengthen women-owned & minority-owned manufacturing businesses, support innovation and R&D.

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**Special Presentation** Ventures Nonprofits, a nonprofit organization that provides access to business training, capital, coaching and hands-on learning opportunities for entrepreneurs with limited resources and unlimited potential.  
*By Laura Fletcher, Associate Director and Mayra Gomez, Financial Business Specialist, Ventures Nonprofits*

**Key takeaways:** The attached PPT sums up their presentation.

- Increase technical support in online marketing & sales.
- Services must be community oriented.
- Micro-loans need other support such as coaching, technical assistance, training, & advocacy to be more successful.
- Ventures is an expensive model. It relies on foundations and philanthropic giving.
- High success rates 80% of businesses assisted still in operation, but 2020 picture may look different.
- 2020 is a year of pivoting, more TA in grant applications & grant admin.
- Barriers are daunting for BIPOC to be successful in applying for the business grants.
- Barriers include language and access to technology.
- Great grant program with good intention but the work is so challenging for people who have so many barriers for a \$5K grant.
- 2020 has brought racial inequality to front and center and it has significant emotional toll on many BIPOC clients.
- Short turnaround time for small business grants is inherently inequity to the immigrant small business owners with language and cultural barriers.
- An undocumented immigrant small business owner faced extreme hardship in 2020. Like other small businesses, many saw their revenues

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dried up overnight, but there were still many business expenses to be paid including rents and payroll. For undocumented, they were unable to access many government programs. Ventures had stepped in and is very thankful to the new Administration that has removed some of the hurdles.

- On a happier note, a Ventures' client who received a \$20K grant used the money to build out their digital marketing in eCommerce. Their digital business is up and running.
  - Still, there are many other barriers for immigrant small business owners including access to technology, language support, discrimination based on how well one communicates, stereotypical perception of the viability or ability of BIPOC businesses.
  - There is no data on the percentage of small businesses that need the different levels of assistance that Ventures provides. Only antidotal evidence shows that the needs are huge.
  - Difference needs for micro-business business owners, need more coaching.
  - All entrepreneurs have the goal of hiring help (employees).
  - Eviction moratorium is not small business friendly
  - **It appears that financial institutions are tightening their credit.**
  - Ventures is looking for different ways to help small businesses to get back on their feet including micro-loans (\$500) or signing security for commerce lease, bridge loans, HR & bookkeeping specialists, etc...
  - Members are curious if there are potential partners that can bring Ventures' programs to eastern Washington.
  - Ventures' model is expansive, it's not easy to scale.
  - On the ground, local connections with people who have built trust is crucial.
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**Work Group  
Discussions**

Sam Cho has volunteered to lead the Small Business & Independent Contractors group.

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**Next Steps**

Next meeting will be on Friday, April 30, 2021.

- The meeting will focus on workforce development strategies in immigrant and refugee communities.
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