



**Economic & Workforce
Development Department (EWDD) Weekly Updates**
NEWS FOR THE WEEK OF NOVEMBER 22, 2021

Success Stories



EWDD Incubators - Supporting LA's innovators
DOCTOR'S NON-PROFIT PROVIDES REMEDY TO EASE STUDENT DEBTS

With guidance from the [Los Angeles Cleantech Incubator's Founders Business Accelerator program](#), Dr. Nana Afoh-Manin established [Shared Harvest](#), a non-profit that provides individuals opportunities to ease the financial burden of student loan debts.

Dr. Nana (pictured above) was part of the first cohort of the program and she credits it with helping her navigate resources, connected her with a strong and supportive entrepreneurial network and exposed her to a pool of talent that she has hired. The program “gave me confidence. I learned to not quit. Progress is not linear, sometimes it looks like three steps back and one step forward,” Dr. Nana said.

Shared Harvest is a non-profit organization that pairs individuals with student loans, with companies and nonprofits who need their services. These volunteers help businesses and organizations with projects, and in return, Shared Harvest makes a payment to their student loans.

“Living their best life by volunteering to the projects and causes they care about the most,” is how Dr. Nana describes Shared Harvest volunteers.

Connecting volunteers to potential job opportunities

Dr. Nana was inspired to establish the non-profit based on her own experience. After her daughter was born prematurely, she worked fewer hours and was economically devastated. She realized how much of a burden student loans have on people. Even people with a medical degree like her, many cannot breathe easily and enjoy their hard-earned position without thinking about the hundreds of thousands of dollars they owe. She founded Shared Harvest on the premise of sharing and spreading compassion through wellness, service and debt relief. She wanted to provide people with the tools to be able to explore volunteer opportunities without the extra burden and worry of volunteering without generating income.

“There are so many organizations that are doing amazing work, but they don’t have access to people, so we want to fill that gap by connecting great people to great organizations,” Dr. Nana said.

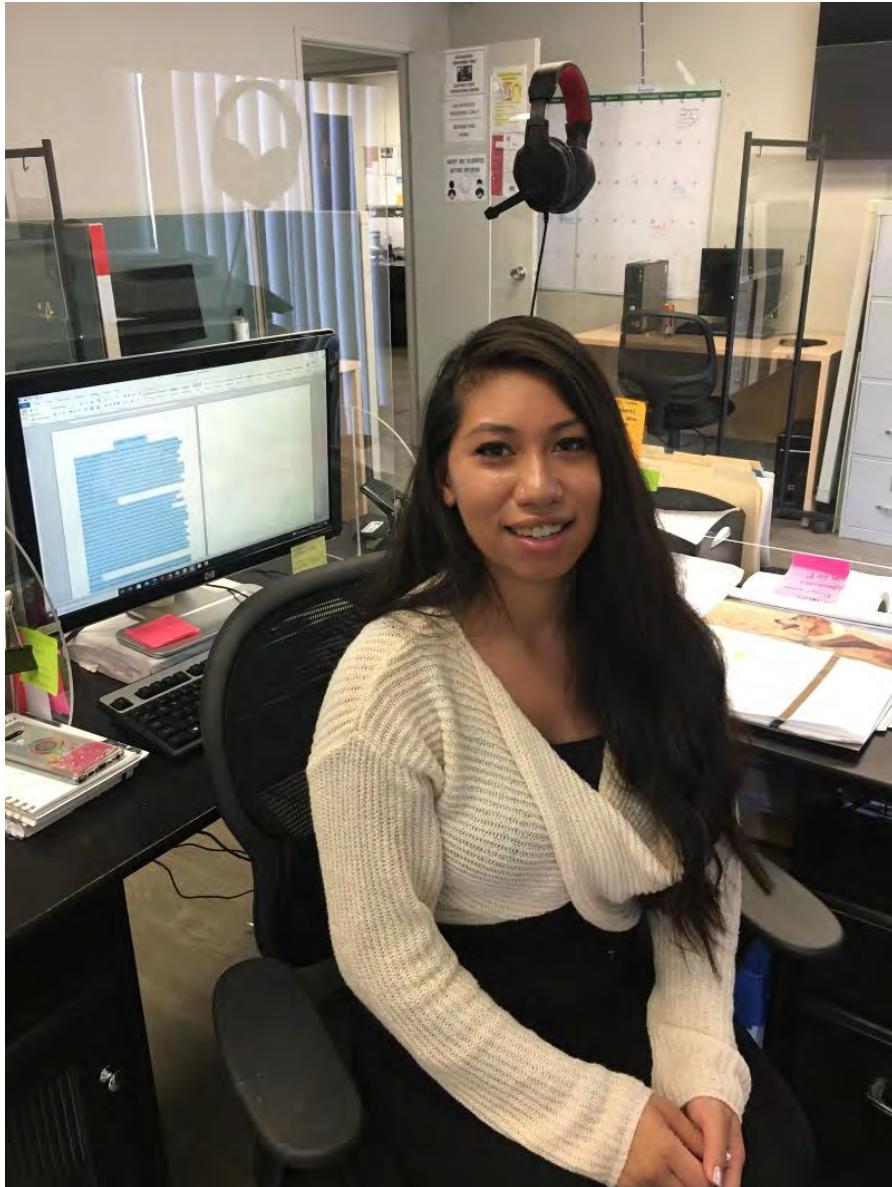
After connecting with Share Harvest’s partner companies, many volunteers are hired for permanent positions. One of the most successful stories of Shared Harvest is from a client named Shelly. Shelly was a first generation Black college student, one of nine siblings, which made it hard for her parents to afford her college tuition. She graduated with a graphic design degree from the University of California, Los Angeles. Finding herself unemployed and with a lot of debt, she started volunteering with Shared Harvest. Within a year, Shelly had paid off her student loans and was hired with a permanent contract.

COVID-19 community initiative

At the start of the COVID-19 pandemic, Shared Harvest launched the MyCOVIDMD initiative, a community centered response to help people access testing, vaccines, digital health, and wrap-around social services. They have helped more than 10,000 community members. More than 300 people have volunteered and received credit for their student loans.

As they continue to grow, Shared Harvest is hiring for four more positions and continues to provide volunteers with opportunities in the city of Los Angeles and remote opportunities nationwide.

EWDD has provided ongoing financial support and funding to [LACI](#)'s incubator and accelerator programs since 2012. LACI is located in [LA City Council District 14](#).



[LA:RISE HELPS RECOVERING PARTICIPANT FIND FULL-TIME JOB](#)

EWDD is a leadership team partner of the [Los Angeles Regional Initiative for Social Enterprise \(LA:RISE\)](#). This innovative, collaborative partnership unites the City and County of Los Angeles' Workforce Development System (WDS) with non-profit social enterprises and for-profit employers to help individuals with high barriers to employment get good jobs and stay employed. In this week's issue, we share an inspirational story from LA:RISE participant Michelle.

"For five years, I struggled with addiction. I believe I was lost for a really long time. I often found myself in dangerous situations. I dropped out of school when I was 17 and faced incarceration, homelessness, abuse, and unemployment. I struggled with co-dependency issues and physical abuse when I met the father

of my daughter. I became pregnant while I was in my active addiction. When my daughter was born, the hospitals contacted the Department of Public Social Services (DPSS) because of my substance abuse and neglecting myself while pregnant. My daughter was born with a lung infection and medical condition caused by my drug use. When the DPSS worker explained that they would place her in foster care, I felt hopeless and lost. I decided to go to treatment to do whatever it took to regain custody."

After seven months in treatment, Michelle was granted "home of parent" and her daughter was allowed to live with her.

"Overjoyed and filled with gratitude, I knew I'd overcome my first hurdle. I then transitioned to a sober living home and spent six months caring for my daughter. My public assistance check was not enough to cover our expenses and finding employment was difficult due to my gap in employment and lack of work experience."

Michelle discovered LA:RISE partner, the [Center for Living and Learning](#), where a community health worker helped connect her with LA:RISE. She was placed in the center's Customer Service Training program. Her duties included general office work, data entry, and customer service. She built skills fairly quickly and received recognition for her positive work attitude. Within two months, she was offered a permanent position as a Call Center Coordinator and Case Manager. The job gave her the confidence to obtain her driver's license and save to purchase her first car. She was also granted full legal physical custody of her daughter.

Michelle said that she appreciated the flexibility of the LA:RISE program and its aim to support participants in achieving their goals.

"My LA:RISE experience provided opportunities for much progress and success. I am very thankful for all the support I have received. I have become an effective leader and communicator. I feel a sense of belonging. Everything I do is meaningful and fuels my passion to help people."

LINKS to COVID-19 RESOURCES

JOB RESOURCES

LA JOBS PORTAL: jobs.lajobsportal.org

VIRTUAL ORIENTATIONS: bit.ly/LAjoblosshelp

BUSINESS RESOURCES

LA REGIONAL COVID FUND: lacovidfund.org

SMALL BUSINESS PROGRAM: ewddlacity.com/index.php/small-business-loans

LA CARES Corps: coronavirus.lacity.org/CARESCorps

BusinessSource Centers: bit.ly/LABusinessSource

WorkSource Centers: bit.ly/EWDDWorkSource

YouthSource Centers: bit.ly/EWDDYouthSource

EWDD Metrics

WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT DIVISION

WORKSOURCE CENTER CONTACT PERFORMANCE (COVID-19)

November 15, 2021 to November 19, 2021

Number of walk-ins	1,530
Number of walk-ins by appointment	596
Number of call/emails	2,551
Number of calls regarding Unemployment Insurance (UI)	299

YOUTH WORKFORCE DATA FY 20-21 (HIRE LA'S YOUTH)

Week ending November 19, 2021

Number of applications	6,250
Number of youth in lottery pool	1,507
Number of youth enrolled	2,646
YouthSource Center (YSC) enrollments	717
YSC enrollment goal	2100
Percent complete	34%

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT DIVISION

LOS ANGELES BUSINESSOURCE CENTERS (LABSCs) METRICS

November 15, 2021 to November 19, 2021

LABSCs Reporting:	North Valley, West Valley, South Valley, South LA, East LA, Mid City, Central West, Hollywood and Harbor
Microenterprises assisted	122
Microenterprises enrolled	15
Small businesses assisted	35
Small businesses enrolled	1
Number of BSC Clients who attended virtual workshops	96
Sidewalk vendors assisted	41
Sidewalk vendors enrolled	24



The Economic & Workforce Development Department is headquartered in the Garland Building located at 7th street and Garland Ave in downtown Los Angeles.

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711 for TRS (TTY)

If TTY/TTD is needed to contact us, please use 711 for Telecommunication Relay Services (TRS)

If you have any questions, comments, or wish to have a contribution considered for inclusion in an

upcoming "Updates," please feel free to contact Jamie Francisco at (213) 744-9048
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