

EWDD'S WEEKLY UPDATES



SUCCESS STORIES WEEK OF FEBRUARY 14, 2022

BLACK HISTORY MONTH



EWDD INCUBATORS

EWDD administers and supports several incubators in the City of Los Angeles through Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) funding, including **Sustainable Enterprises of Los Angeles (SEE-LA)**, which supports food entrepreneurs. SEE-LA's Seasoned Accelerator program, now going into its third year, has continued to help empower local food and beverage businesses through its unique model of promoting intergenerational knowledge and exchange. Through individualized advising and coaching from food industry experts, the program offers Los Angeles-based businesses the opportunity to learn from mentors and help create thriving business conditions. The program's team of advisors and webinar instructors also share unique skills that assist small business owners in fostering business growth and longevity. This week's story is about SEE-LA participant Baba's Vegan Cafe.



SEE-LA ACCLERATOR HELPS VEGAN CAFE GROW

From his beginnings of rapping at local poetry and evening events, Wo'se Kofi realized that after shows, there were no healthy options at venues or nearby in

South LA. As someone who was raised vegan, Wo'se (pictured above right) thought it would be great to provide this option for audiences. He had prior experience in restaurants, so it felt like a natural calling to fill this need for people in the area.

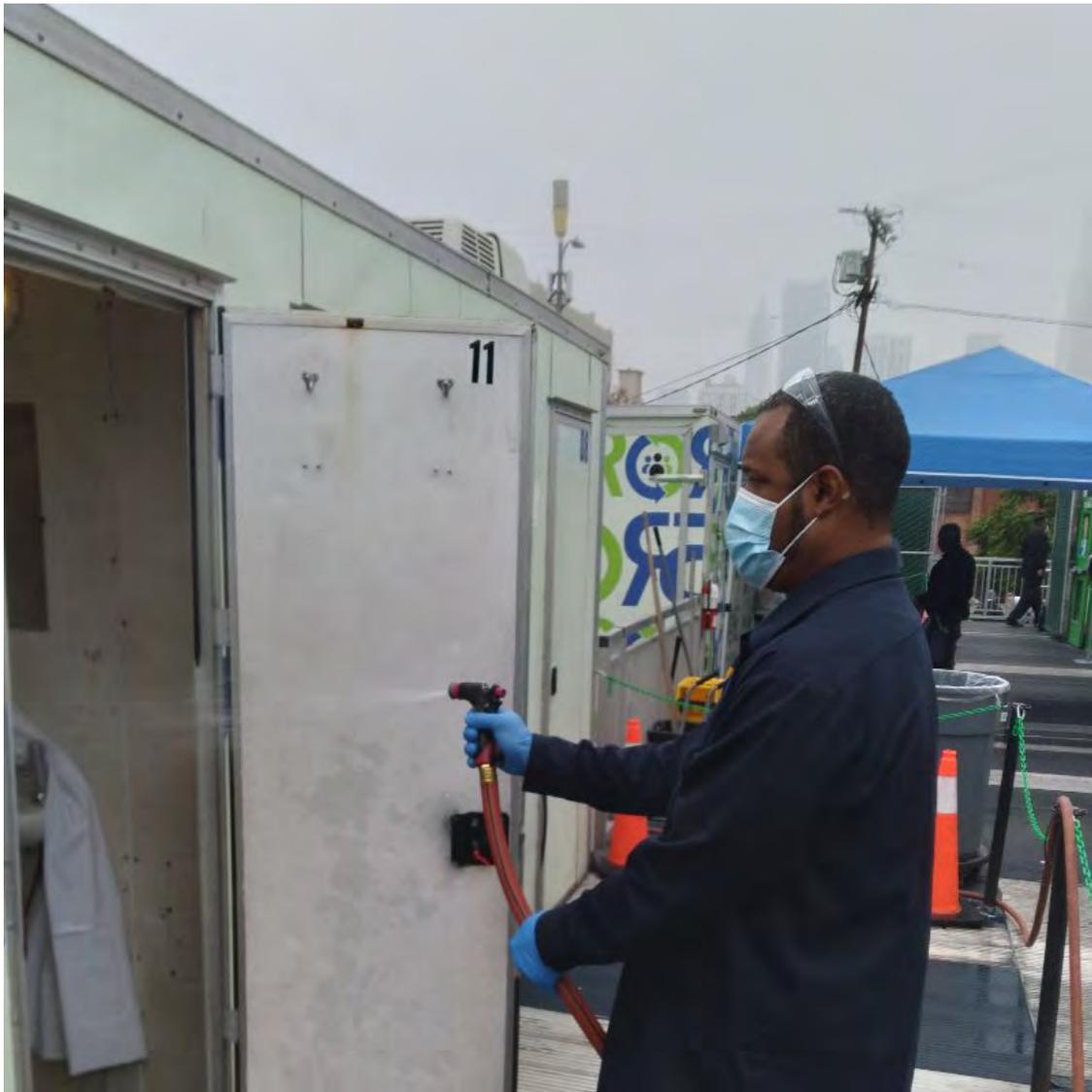
In 2013, he founded Wo'se's Gourmet. A year later, the business became [Baba's Vegan Cafe](#), which expanded to offer catering services.

When Wo'se joined the [SEE-LA Seasoned Accelerator Program](#), he and his partner Lauren had already successfully crowdsourced funds to open their first storefront and they were excitedly embarking on their search for the right space.

As part of the accelerator program, cohort members are paired with seasoned veterans of the hospitality industry to receive extra support in fostering a smooth and sustainable transition into a standing operation. SEE-LA connected the team with Kenny Lao, principal of [Culinary Task Force](#), a company that assists entrepreneurs who have just opened or are on the cusp of opening their first brick and mortar restaurant. Kenny has extensive experience in this area, having previously founded Rickshaw Dumplings, which was an Asian fast-casual restaurant group in New York City.

With the guidance of SEE-LA, Baba's Vegan Cafe opened a new restaurant in South LA off 67th and Western. The establishment specializes in vegan veggie patties, plant-based soul food, raw options and more. The cafe also offers poetry nights, monthly brunches and other gatherings. Wo'se is on a mission to enlighten people "one mouth at a time." SEE-LA is proud to have been a part of their journey.

Baba's Vegan Cafe is located in [LA City Council District 8](#).



LA:RISE PARTICIPANT GAINS JOB SKILLS

Ambonisyé, or “Ambo” as he likes to be called, came into the West Adams [WorkSource Center \(WSC\)](#) after receiving an email about the [LA:RISE](#) program. Ambo, 44, was looking for work and ready to start his career. After learning about LA:RISE requirements, Ambo (pictured above) was asked what he wanted for his future career path. Ambo shared his interest in facility maintenance and eventually becoming a supervisor. After this conversation, Ambo started the process to become an employee at social enterprise partner [Goodwill SoCal](#). As part of his training for transitional employment, Ambo learned about resume writing, workplace manners, and other tools to help him succeed in the workplace. The [West Adams WSC](#) provided Ambo with his work uniform and shoes, and he has been doing exceptionally well at Goodwill. “Since I’ve been working for LA:RISE, I have had the opportunity to expand my career growth. I have experienced homelessness off and on for over three years. The programs offered through the WorkSource Centers and LA:RISE have helped me develop more janitorial and retail training. I am currently

working at the [Downtown LA Refresh Spot](#). One of the things that I like the most about my experience is that I work daily with people in similar situations. My future goals are to increase my knowledge of my duties through work experience and training, and maybe eventually get into a supervisor position.”

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.

**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

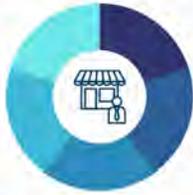
BusinessSource Centers: bit.ly/LABusinessSource

WorkSource Centers: bit.ly/EWDDWorkSource

YouthSource Centers: bit.ly/EWDDYouthSource

BLACK HISTORY MONTH METRICS

BUSINESSSOURCE



**304 ENROLLED
BLACK BUSINESS
OWNERS**

(1/1/20 - 1/31/22)



**\$8.3M IN CAPITAL
RECEIVED BY BLACK-
OWNED BUSINESSES**

(1/1/12 - 1/31/22)

*These numbers only reflect black business owners who were assisted through EWDD's BusinessSource Centers.

WORKFORCE



WORKFORCE ASSISTED:

7,287 BLACK ADULTS

**2,112 BLACK
DISLOCATED WORKERS**

(1/1/20 - 2/10/22) **951 BLACK YOUTH**

YOUTH

**HIRE LA
HELPED 1,388
BLACK YOUTH**



(1/1/20 - 2/10/22)

EWDD METRICS



WorkSource Centers assisted:

1,482 Walk-in visits

2,418 Phone calls and emails

311 Unemployment Insurance



YouthSource Centers - HIRE LA's Youth:

7,707 Applications

1,820 Youth in application pool

3,327 Youth enrolled



BusinessSource Centers assisted:

150 Microenterprises

57 Small Businesses

35 Sidewalk Vendors

77 Virtual Workshops



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

1200 West 7th Street
Los Angeles CA 90017

213-744-7300
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 or Jamie.Francisco@lacity.org
