



Entrepreneurs and Small Businesses Thriving Alongside Residents on the Westside

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A collaborative initiative to strengthen the entrepreneurial support ecosystem on the Westside of San Antonio, Texas, developed in partnership with the Aspen Institute Latinos and Society Program.





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In July 2021, the Aspen Institute launched the inaugural City Learning and Action Lab as part of their Latinos and Society Program. This effort focused on bringing their national resources and network to bear in supporting six Latino-majority cities to build a robust small business ecosystem. The Westside of San Antonio was selected as one of the six communities in this cohort. Each city was challenged to assemble a steering committee of community partners engaged in the work of small business development and to coalesce around a concrete set of strategies designed to bolster the local ecosystem and support small business success.

Currently, there is an abundance of resources offered to small businesses by our local nonprofits, agencies, and financial institutions on the Westside of San Antonio; but a lack of cohesion and coordination amongst these resources and partners has contributed to the difficulty of achieving meaningful impact at scale, particularly for our Latino-owned small businesses and entrepreneurs on the Westside.

After six months of deep exploration and collaboration with the Aspen Institute during the City Learning and Action Lab, the San Antonio Steering Committee is proud to launch the ESTAR West initiative – a collaborative effort to align resources and deliver a cohesive, coordinated system of small business and entrepreneurial support through specific strategies. Some of these strategies are focused on direct business assistance, while others are focused on improving the local business environment.

The next step is implementation of these strategies which will occur over the next 12 months. Each member of the steering committee has committed to participating in its implementation and oversight to ensure its long-term success and continued improvement.

Just as Latino-owned businesses led the economic recovery in the U.S. following the Great Recession in 2008, so too will they lead the post-pandemic recovery for the Westside and the rest of our city. We believe the Westside of San Antonio is THE place to be for small businesses and entrepreneurs in San Antonio. ESTAR West, along with support from our partners at the Aspen Institute, will help pave the way for their success through the recovery and beyond.

As the anchor organization for the ESTAR West Initiative, Prosper West San Antonio is proud to serve in this coordinating role and we look forward to the impact this local and national collaboration will have on our Westside small businesses.

Sincerely,

Ramiro Gonzales
President/CEO



Aspen Institute: Latino Community Initiatives

The Aspen Institute Latinos & Society Program (AILAS) seeks to empower Latino communities and promote long-term economic growth and resiliency. AILAS has enlisted diverse cross-sector leaders and stakeholders to develop solutions that support Latino-owned business in growing their ventures.

The Aspen Latino Business & Entrepreneurship Initiative (LBEI) works to accelerate Latino-owned businesses' immediate and long-term growth across the U.S. The LBEI portfolio comprises the inaugural City Learning & Action Lab and the Latino Business & Entrepreneurship Summit.

The City Learning and Action Lab (CLAL) focuses on 6 Latino-majority cities in regions with long-existing inequities, for communities to learn, innovate together, and connect to national networks. The initiative is a hub and spoke model designed to enhance the capacity and support anchor organizations in each city to form an entrepreneurial ecosystem steering committee composed of key cross-sector leaders. Committee members will coalesce around strategic priorities and implement solutions to boost and sustain the local Latino business economy.

As the country builds back from the pandemic, Latino business owners and entrepreneurs are a critical part of our economic recovery.

HISPANICS CHANGING AMERICA'S DEMOGRAPHICS



62.1 Million People



18.9% of the Population



30% of Americans
29 or Younger



50% of Population Growth
Since 2010



\$1.7 Trillion in Buying Power



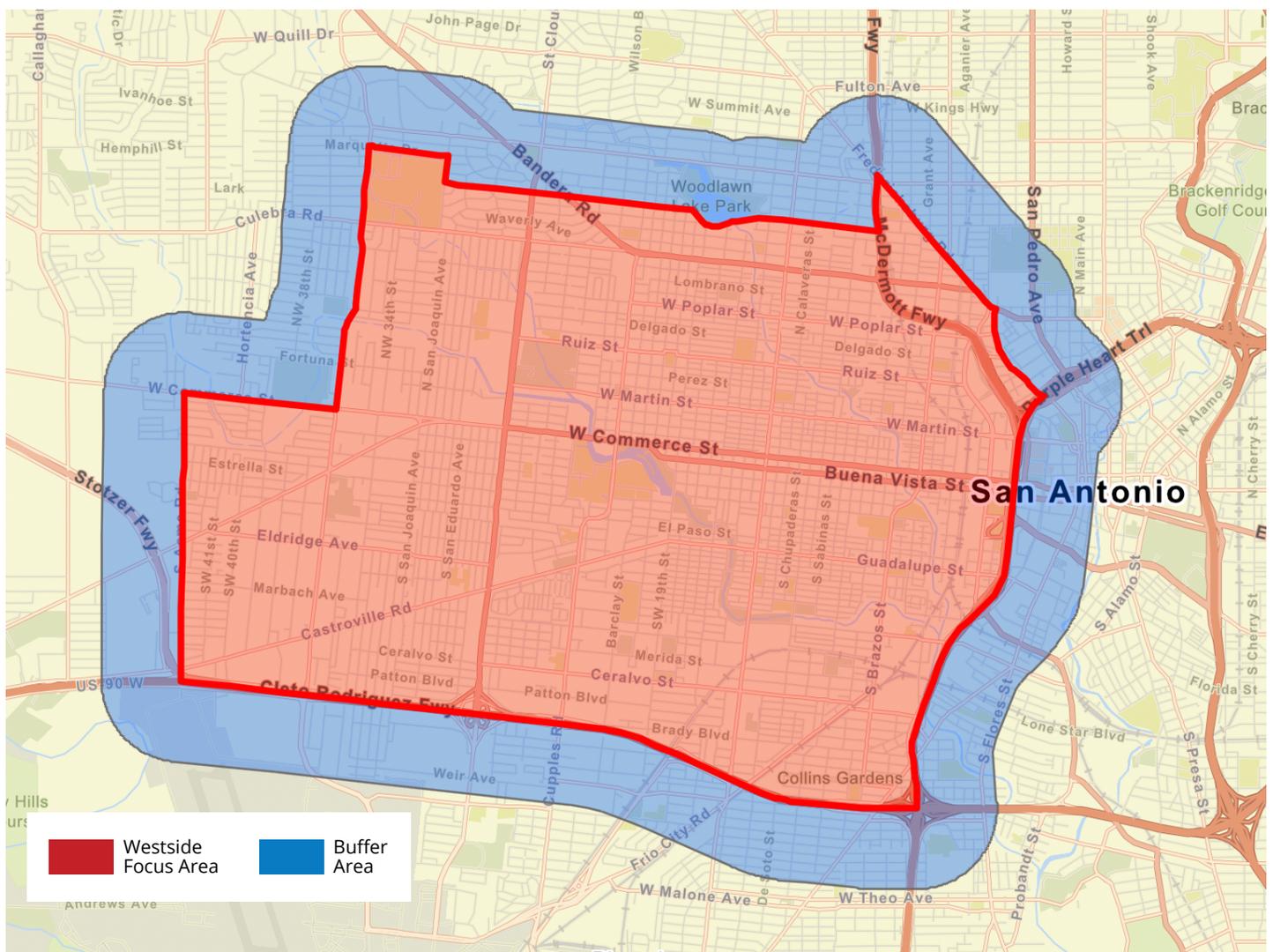
33% Greater Business Growth
Compared to All Americans

LATINOS & SOCIETY
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Westside Focus Area: Small Businesses & Entrepreneurs

We have a once in a generation opportunity to accelerate Latino small business recovery in San Antonio's Westside and catalyze long-term growth and investment in the community.

- Approximately 2,600 small businesses are located within 15 sq mi area
- Primary industries: food service/hospitality, retail, healthcare/social assistance
- 80%+ have less than 10 employees
- Most have less than 5 employees



About ESTAR West

ESTAR West is an initiative that emerged from the Aspen Latino Business & Entrepreneurship Initiative City Learning & Action Lab from a coalition of local, cross-sector leaders and community partners to build a cohesive, collaborative ecosystem that will equip our small businesses and entrepreneurs on the Westside with the resources, connections, and environment for long-term success.



MISSION

To implement community-based initiatives through a collaborative ecosystem that provides Westside entrepreneurs and small businesses the support, resources, and environment necessary to succeed.

VISION

Westside entrepreneurs and small businesses thriving alongside neighborhood residents in a way that balances economic advancement and progress with preservation and celebration of this historic community.



Overview

The Aspen Institute Latinos & Society team worked with the San Antonio Steering Committee to perform a comprehensive analysis of San Antonio's small business economy, and provide cross-city learning opportunities with other Latino-majority cities that are also implementing related recovery and resiliency strategies. Through this process, the local cohort identified key priorities for Westside business growth in a post-Covid economy, and coalesced these strategies into the ESTAR West initiative.



Strategies & Objectives

BACKBONE OUTREACH & CASE MANAGEMENT

Small business owners don't often know about all the resources that are available or they feel overwhelmed by the options. Prosper West San Antonio will serve as the "backbone organization" to conduct deep outreach using neighborhood ambassadors, connect business owners with other city-wide business service organizations (BSOs), follow-up for long-term success and system improvements, and serve as the "glue" to keep coalition efforts aligned.

OBJECTIVE:

Triage every Westside business, connect them with appropriate resources to achieve goals, and capture data to drive system improvements.



Strategies & Objectives

ROUNDTABLE ACCELERATOR

Different service providers offer different kinds of value. Most small business owners don't have time to shop them all to find the best fit for their specific situation. The Roundtable Accelerator will instead bring together the collective wisdom and expertise of several city-wide SBOs to rally around a small cohort of businesses over 4 months to drive progress toward a 50% increase in revenues/profitability.



OBJECTIVE:

Assist 30-50 businesses a year in making progress toward a 50% increase in revenue/profitability.

Strategies & Objectives

DIGITAL INCLUSION

The digital divide is a significant barrier for small businesses that impedes their ability to seize opportunities for growth and increased profitability. Our digital inclusion program, OptimizeSA, modeled after a similar successful program in Los Angeles, will equip digitally-disconnected Westside businesses with the equipment and training needed to better compete in the digital economy.

OBJECTIVE:

Provide equipment and training to over 750 businesses in the next 3 years.



Strategies & Objectives

CORRIDOR REINVESTMENT & COMMUNITY NODES

Successful places produce successful businesses. In order to attract more customers to support our small businesses, the Westside needs a comprehensive corridor reinvestment strategy to establish more economic destinations and improve vital infrastructure. Through one or more investment funds, ESTAR West will redevelop and activate property, and advocate for improved infrastructure to attract more customers and visitors to the Westside, strengthening nodes within the community.



OBJECTIVE:

Redevelop/activate vacant property and improve infrastructure to attract customers and visitors.

Strategies & Objectives

WESTSIDE MARKETING CAMPAIGN

A positive narrative change of the Westside and opportunities for/with small businesses owners and entrepreneurs in this part of town is integral to this effort, so that the public, policymakers, funders, and decision-makers understand and appreciate the vast contributions this community has made and will continue to make for our economy and society.

ESTAR West will launch an educational marketing campaign to transform perceptions of the Westside and highlight the positive, unique aspects of this community, including its culture, history, assets, and growth opportunities, that it make it the ideal home for small businesses and entrepreneurs in the city.



OBJECTIVE:

Attract more small businesses, entrepreneurs, customers, and visitors to the Westside by highlighting and celebrating its positive attributes and destinations.

Strategies & Objectives

NEIGHBORHOOD PRESERVATION

Low-income communities are particularly vulnerable to the potentially adverse affects of change and growth. ESTAR West will implement a series of preservation and retention strategies that are designed to mitigate displacement and protect those most vulnerable to the economic pressures of change on the Westside. Such strategies may include community land trusts, increasing the number of affordable housing and accessory dwelling units, and facilitating property ownership by businesses.



OBJECTIVE:

Balance efforts to attract growth with inclusive strategies to protect those most vulnerable and increase available assistance.

Implementation

OVERSIGHT COMMITTEE

Implementation of the plan will rely on continued oversight and collaboration amongst system partners, facilitated by Prosper West San Antonio and supported by the Aspen Institute's Latinos and Society Program.



ESTAR West Steering Committee

Executive Committee Members

Janie Barrera, LiftFund
Henry Cisneros, Chairman of American Triple I Partners (*Committee Chair*)
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Thank you, Sponsors!

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