

# CVIIC's Immigrant Entrepreneurs Project: Helping Central Valley Latino Immigrants Reach the American Dream

*Latino immigrants in California's Central Valley contribute to the economic recovery by enhancing their entrepreneurial skills and establishing new businesses*

CLOVIS, CALIFORNIA, UNITED STATES OF AMERICA, February 17, 2021 /EINPresswire.com/ -- The recovery of the national economy requires strengthening the role of small businesses, which employ millions of American workers and are the lifeblood of local communities. Latino immigrants in California's Central Valley contribute to the economic revitalization efforts by enhancing their entrepreneurial skills and establishing new businesses through a unique pilot project established by the Central Valley Immigrant Integration Collaborative ([CVIIC](#)).



In the process of establishing their businesses, these Latino [immigrant entrepreneurs](#) are reaching for their personal versions of the American Dream. CVIIC's Immigrant Entrepreneurs project seeks to support these aspirations.

The project is designed to contribute to the economic wellbeing of immigrant families and their communities by providing intensive entrepreneurial training, support services, and one on one guidance to a cohort of Latino immigrants residing in California's Central Valley.

Most of the 40 participants did not have an established business before joining the program. A few did have an existing business but needed an opportunity to learn how to improve the set up

and operations of their enterprise.

The stories of the project participants are inspiring and reflect their entrepreneurial drive.

Ana Gomez, for example, lives in Pixley, a rural community of 3,300 residents in Tulare County. Ana is the owner of Chelsea's Boutique. She joined the Immigrant Entrepreneurs project because, despite her desire to be a business owner, she lacked access to business training opportunities and did not know the basics of starting a formal business. She states: "I did not know anything about what a business was. Having a business is not only buying and selling things; it is much more. You have to get a permit, go to court and register the business fictitious name. You have to go to the bank to set up a business account; you have to get an EIN for the business. To make a long story short, there are many things that a business requires."

Enrique Serrato from Fresno is the proud owner of EJ's Grooming, a pet grooming business that began as a hobby and is evolving into a growing enterprise. He explains how this opportunity has grown rapidly: "We started with only our neighbors, friends, and people we know as our customers. The business started growing, and from that growth we got the idea that we wanted to better develop our business. That's where CVIIC has given us understanding and ideas developing a business, it is something that I really appreciate. I appreciate the connections that they were able to give us with other helpful organizations."

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Another reason why I am starting my business is because I want to accomplish my dreams and my goals. Having a business of my own makes that a little more possible."

*Nancy Lopez*

For her part, Nancy Lopez, a Bakersfield resident, is developing not one but two business ventures. She has also found out that collaboration with family members can contribute to her entrepreneurial success. She is creating

two businesses under one LLC, Totus Tuus. One is a baking business, called Dulce Amor or Sweet Love, and the other business is Totus Tuus Love Creations which includes homemade personal care items. One of the reasons for starting her business ventures was to generate new sources of income. "Also, another reason why I am starting my business," she adds, "is because I want to accomplish my dreams and my goals. Having a business of my own makes that a little more possible." In the process of developing her ventures, Nancy recognized that selling is not her



Nancy Lopez Central Valley immigrant entrepreneur

strong point but that her father does possess those skills: “together we realized that he is a good sales person and I am not, so we created a team and are using the talents within our family.”

Serafin Ramos, a resident of Exeter, indicates that his desire to establish a business is because he wants to achieve financial freedom. “My company is based on creating systems for loading and unloading petrochemical products. We have 20 years of experience in the industry at an international level, but we do not know the organizational and structural needs in order to operate our business. The Immigrant Entrepreneurs project has guided us, has given us the guidelines to follow such as how to obtain credits and licenses.”

According to Jesus Martinez, Executive Director of CVIIC, “the project’s importance stems from the devastating impact that the pandemic has had on the wellbeing of millions of American families as well as the desire to help develop the entrepreneurial potential of immigrants residing in this region of California, which has some of the highest poverty rates in the nation but also lots of untapped talent that can blossom with the proper support.”

The Immigrant Entrepreneurs pilot project is unique in that is designed to offer a comprehensive approach to support immigrant entrepreneurship.

According to Clarissa Vivian Petrucci, CVIIC’s Special Projects Coordinator, “the Immigrant Entrepreneurs project is unique and comprehensive because, in addition to providing the participants tools to start or regularize their micro or small businesses, we also provide information and assistance for health, education, immigration, and other relevant issue. The ultimate goal is to pave the way for the participants to be successful in their businesses and also for them to contribute to the social and economic development of their families and their communities.”

Moreover, the project design and implementation have involved the collaboration of multiple agencies experienced in working with immigrant communities.

[Immigrants Rising](#), a nationally recognized agency for its pioneer work on immigrant entrepreneurship, has provided the initial entrepreneurship trainings, while adult education partners, such as the Sequoias Adult Education Consortium, the State Center Adult Education



Enrique Serrato Central Valley  
immigrant entrepreneur

Consortium and Fresno Adult School, have contributed their expertise in vocational education. In turn, Immigrant Legal Resource Center, Education and Leadership Foundation and SIREN, have enhanced the project through their knowledge of immigrant communities and resources in the region. The Justice Action Center, for its part, has recruited pro bono attorneys with expertise in business law, who are eager to assist project participants with business set up support.

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