

Southland Economic Transformation (SET) Fund

Grant Final Report

Grantee: Chicago Southland Economic Development Corporation

Activity as of September 30, 2021

Each written report should contain a narrative and financial account of what was accomplished by the expenditure of the Grant funds during the period covered by the report. The narrative account should contain a detailed description of what was accomplished by the grant, including a description of the progress made toward achieving the goals of the grant and an assurance that the activities under the grant have been conducted in conformity with the terms of the Grant. The financial account should contain a financial statement reporting, in U.S. dollars, all expenditures of the Grant funds and any income earned thereon during the period covered by the report.

Summary: The current incubator project is going well in the building renovation and the pilot program planning. Due to the COVID pandemic and the pending certificate of occupancy, the opening of the incubator shared space is rescheduled to 2022. The incubator team has rolled out the first ecommerce pilot cohort in which small business participants have completed the basic and the advanced ecommerce training. At the same time, the team has designed a video conference/live stream room for small businesses to practice and produce their video marketing and live stream contents. We maintain ongoing recruiting efforts of the new tenants to the building.

Project Activities to be undertaken:

Activities to Date:

- ***Equipment purchase***
 - We spent SET funding and some of our own funding to set up a video studio and zoom room, which is critical to support e-commerce small businesses. We have purchased equipment and tested how they worked.
 - We are ready to implement the room. We will set it up as soon as we can enter the building.
- ***Operations***
 - The building owner in Matteson is still negotiating with the municipality to get a final certificate of occupancy. We are getting close, according to the owner.
 - We have developed a membership agreement with legal consultancy and are working to set up a pre-enrollment application.
 - The incubator has been engaging actively with Amazon Community Engagement to connect the new Amazon jobs to the residents in our serving region via multiple hiring events
- ***Marketing and Recruitment***
 - The final name of the incubator is decided to be '4343 Ascending House'.
 - Purchased the domain of '4343ascendinghouse.org'.
 - The website has been created and linked to ecommerce learning platform.
 - Ecommerce Management LLC has provided support and consultation to help us set up keywords and SEOs for the website.

- Followed up with individual employers who have expressed interests.
- Market research by visiting other potential competitors' space.
- **Consulting and Workshops**
 - The pilot ecommerce cohort with minority small business owners has been completed successfully online via the introductory ecommerce workshop and the advanced ecommerce course.
 - We have 7 small businesses participants who are interested in the 2022 cohort.
 - The team is working on getting the ecommerce programs accredited by the Department of Labor so that we can use it to build future registered apprenticeships.

**Financial Report
Summary**

Category	Amount Spent		
	Budget Amount	to Date	Balance
Equipment Purchase	\$ 23,288.00	\$ 24,708.19	\$ (1,420.19)
Marketing & Recruiting	\$ 16,700.00	\$ 16,500.00	\$ 200.00
Consulting & Workshops	\$ 6,000.00	\$ 6,000.00	\$ -
Operations	\$ 4,000.00	\$ 4,000.00	\$ -
Totals	\$ 49,988.00	\$ 51,208.19	\$ (1,220.19)

