

News Release | Dec. 14, 2020

## Pacific Coast Regional and Genesis LA receive \$2.6M from Wells Fargo Open For Business Fund to support small business recovery in LA County

*Funds will provide capital and technical assistance throughout the holiday season to bolster diverse small businesses impacted by COVID-19*

**Los Angeles, CA – December 14, 2020** - Wells Fargo today announced a \$2.6 million small business recovery grant to Community Development Financial Institutions (CDFIs) Pacific Coast Regional Small Business Development Corporation (PCR) and Genesis LA Economic Growth Corporation (Genesis LA) to help small businesses manage the economic effects of COVID-19 during the holiday season and beyond. Wells Fargo's funding will help increase access to capital with low rate loans for diverse Los Angeles County small businesses that have been negatively impacted by the pandemic.

The grant is part of Wells Fargo's Open for Business Fund (OFB) program, which launched as an approximately \$400 million small business recovery effort across the U.S. to help entrepreneurs recover and rebuild. The initiative focuses on three key areas: increasing access to capital through CDFIs, technical assistance, and long-term recovery and resiliency programs for diverse small businesses.

"The Open for Business Fund enlists the care and expertise of organizations like Pacific Coast Regional and Genesis LA to urgently assist the small business community with the capital and technical assistance needed to preserve jobs throughout LA County, especially during the holidays," said Gregg Sherkin, Senior Vice President, Wells Fargo Social Impact and Sustainability. "By working with these organizations and other CDFIs, we can ensure that local minority-owned small businesses receive the resources necessary to navigate the economic impacts of COVID-19 at this critical time."

With \$2.1M in funding from the Open For Business Fund, Pacific Coast Regional has established the People of Color Business Elevation Fund focused on helping Black and Brown small businesses across southern California recover. The People of Color Business Elevation Fund will provide low rate micro-disaster loans up to \$50,000 to eligible and impacted diverse small businesses. Those interested in applying can apply now at <https://pcr.lendwithspark.com/widget/leadframe/?version=16#step2>

"Across Southern California, we've seen economic disparities among Black and Brown communities widened as a result of the coronavirus pandemic. With this substantial donation from Wells Fargo, we can purposefully target these communities with vital grants, loans, coaching and the technical assistance needed to end the disparities around business ownership, job creation, and the development of generational wealth," said Mark Robertson, President and CEO of Pacific Coast Regional Corporation. "PCR could not be more grateful for Wells Fargo's support of our vision for a program specific to the needs of the African-American and LatinX businesses."

Genesis LA will deploy its \$550,000 award to provide financial support to small businesses who are struggling to pay bills due to lower profit margins and higher expenses as a result of the pandemic. With support from Wells Fargo, Genesis LA will provide flexible and forgivable loans to minority led businesses across Los Angeles County. Small business owners interested can begin applying early 2021.

“Many businesses that provide critical goods and services to low-income neighborhoods have experienced dramatic losses of revenue and will have a hard time paying expenses incurred before and during the pandemic,” said Tom De Simone, CEO, Genesis LA. “With support from the unique Wells Fargo Open For Business Fund, Genesis LA has expanded its scope to more directly assist businesses that serve low-income and minority communities. Our grant program will provide financial support to help these businesses make ends meet and begin to rebuild as we emerge from this pandemic.”

In 2020, Wells Fargo’s local Los Angeles giving also included donating \$2.1M to fund nonprofits that are focused on providing capital, technical assistance and networks of support for entrepreneurs.

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### **About Wells Fargo**

Wells Fargo & Company (NYSE: WFC) is a diversified, community-based financial services company with \$1.92 trillion in assets. Wells Fargo’s vision is to satisfy our customers’ financial needs and help them succeed financially. Founded in 1852 and headquartered in San Francisco, Wells Fargo provides banking, investment and mortgage products and services, as well as consumer and commercial finance, through 7,200 locations, more than 13,000 ATMs, the internet ([wellsfargo.com](https://www.wellsfargo.com)) and mobile banking, and has offices in 31 countries and territories to support customers who conduct business in the global economy. Wells Fargo serves one in three households in the United States. Wells Fargo & Company was ranked No. 30 on Fortune’s 2020 rankings of America’s largest corporations. News, insights and perspectives from Wells Fargo are also available at [Wells Fargo Stories](#).

### **About Genesis LA**

Genesis LA makes loans to community and economic development projects that create jobs, deliver vital services, and produce affordable housing for low-income people in Los Angeles County. We provide financing and development services to support community developers who have limited equity capital and struggle to secure financing needed to expand economic opportunities for low-income people. Our investments are generally directed to the 1,200 distressed census tracts in LA County where area median incomes average 59% of the County median income, poverty averages 29%, unemployment is 12% and where 73% of residents are African American or Latinx. Historically, two-thirds of our borrowers have been woman and/or minority owned/controlled enterprises. To date, we have invested over \$400 million in CDFI and New Markets Tax Credit loans in Los Angeles businesses and nonprofits.

### **About Pacific Coast Regional**

Pacific Coast Regional Small Business Development Corporation (PCR) is a private, non-profit 501-c3 corporation in the midst of its 42<sup>nd</sup> year of helping entrepreneurs take their places as vital contributors to the Southern California economy. PCR is certified as a Community Development Financial Institution (CDFI) by both the US Treasury and the California Organized Investment Network (COIN). PCR is also a Small Business Development Center (SBDC) in partnership with the US Small Business Administration (SBA).

PCR uses a combination of federal, state, and private resources to fulfill its mission to underserved small business persons and communities. PCR provides small business microloans through the California State Jump Start Loan Program and small business loans up to \$650,000 through a combination of its Direct Small Business and SBA Community Advantage Loan Programs. In addition to PCR’s loan programs, since 2014, PCR has managed the “Business Interruption Fund” (BIF) for Los Angeles County Metropolitan Transportation Authority (Metro). The BIF allows PCR to fund small business grants up to \$50,000 annually to reimburse those businesses for lost revenues due to Metro’s construction activities. Metro has committed \$10 million annually over eight years to support this program.

Technical assistance is an essential component to PCR’s ability to adequately service its underserved entrepreneurs. PCR’s mission-supporting educational services include entrepreneurial classroom instruction and one-on-one counseling; and are provided by virtue of its standing, since 2007, as a SBA Small Business Development Center (SBDC). As part of the Los Angeles Network of SBDCs, with the lead center based at Long Beach City College, PCR is the only SBDC in Los Angeles County that has internal lending capacity; which is testament to PCR’s standing as a true, full service CDFI.

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